

More than Just a Seat at the Table: Shared Governance for Graduate Student Mentorship

Katherine Canazzi

*Department of Education Foundations and Policy Studies,
West Chester University West Chester, Pennsylvania*

Author DOI: 10.48028/iiprds/ijartess.v4.i1.05

Abstract

Since its inception, public education in the United States has billed itself to the masses as an “equalizer” that “prepares the citizenry.” Although there are varying institutional types in higher education, Americans believe the myth that higher education is an extension of the same K-12 educational values. Despite higher education teaching the components of civic engagement separately, the skills are seldom combined for students to practice. Students do not learn how to transfer or combine these skills into their “real lives” outside of higher education. Since graduate students are electing to further their education, higher education has an increased responsibility to ensure their graduates are equipped to participate and succeed in civic life. An international literature evaluation demonstrates that student disenfranchisement is not a uniquely American problem nor is the discontent that arises from institutional personnel governing higher education. This paper provides a detailed examination of my understanding of education, the structures in American history that leave students disenfranchised from their educations, and options to reengage students in controlling their education, before then pressing forward to propose using shared governance for graduate student mentorship. Graduate students have been found to be the most politically stable student population, making them ideal partners as community leaders to guide student participation in shared governance (Love, et. al. 2003). *More than Just a Seat at the Table* provides the mentoring teams a cohort model to engage in curriculum, problem solve their experiences, demonstrate their learning, and make lasting change in their institution.

Keywords: *Shared Governance, Graduate Student Mentorship*

Corresponding Author: Katherine Canazzi

First Published: https://digitalcommons.wcupa.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1365&context=all_theses

Background to the Study

Education in the United States pre-dates Western conquest of the “New World.” However, the U.S. education system elected to blend Eurocentric Judeo-Christian ideology with radical Colonial thought as the foundation of the current U.S. education system. Much like primary education, higher education was founded with a religious function, training white Christian men of means to become future clergy (Geiger, 2014). While attending both K-12 and higher education in Catholic schools, community service was a means to increase our Catholic engagement in our community as well as proselytize. Every time I am asked about my community service experience, I share one of my earliest childhood memories. I was about four years old when I vividly remember the sheer joy that I had with my family distributing reelection fliers for our local mayoral race. We got to run from house to house to meet them and give them this shiny, brightly colored flier! We got to pick from an entire van full of normally restricted snacks and we got to do it with our entire extended family. Technically, my family's motives were not entirely altruistic because my father was the solicitor for the incumbent candidate, but his rationale stuck with me. No one can do everything all at once. Also, not everyone is good at everything. As a result, people elect other people to speak for them because they cannot or they are not good public speakers. More than thirty years have passed and now I have a much more nuanced understanding of his meaning. I am a very literal person. There are many belly-laughing stories about me following the exact directions versus the spirit of the directions or mischief I caused due to incomplete directions. My unconventional thought process has been lauded for producing unique solutions to previously unconsidered problems. My systems-based approach to a subject is what is colloquially called my “superpower.” I applied my superpower to an area of higher education that was a major source of my frustration, my inability to participate.

As a white, third-generation college student, daughter of two lawyers, with English as my first language, and previously being labeled gifted, I grappled with being gaslit about my participation in my own higher education career. My 6-12 guidance counselors told me that I had to take certain classes but I could pick a few from the electives to graduate. They insisted that I was legally required to endure the full gamut of the state-mandated curriculum. My family of teachers was unique in that they were honest and told me, “I had to take the classes to play the game and get the piece of paper.” Everyone kept saying, “College is different.”

Before I began my official college search, I was privileged to explore at least twenty-three institutions of higher education. From visiting family at work on campus to visiting family attending school, and family vacations to pillars of American educational ideals, I had visited Ivy Leagues, State, Private, Catholic, Military, Technical, and seemingly every other institutional type in between. During my actual college search, I did the traditional white suburban middle-class “college visit” process. I went on tours. I met chairs and deans. I slept in dorms. I ate in cafeterias. I still believed the myth, “College is different.”

To remotely deviate from the initial contract requires enough paperwork with signatures from some of the busiest people on campus so few attempt and less will undertake the feat again. As the daughter of lawyers, I read contracts carefully, and I am fastidious in pursuing the

exceptions to policy. I am an outlier in the data set. From the outset of life in the higher education system, higher education does not prepare students for civic engagement. All higher education institutions teach some combination of skills necessary for civic engagement:

- i. Communication skills (both expressing and understanding facts and opinions)
- ii. Democratic deliberation/collective decision-making
- iii. Critical analysis of political information. (CIRCLE Staff, 2010)

Although these skills are taught, they are not taught in relation to each other and/or then combined with actual civics practice to help students learn to transfer the skills into a new setting and apply them (Indeed Editorial Team, 2021). Since civic engagement is the only legally sanctioned way to affect policy and/or law open to all American citizens and Visa holders this practice has ripple effects throughout society. Most immediately, without civic engagement students can not affect the terms of their contract with their institution nor can they affect the terms of future contracts with theirs or any other institution. In the long term, unprepared students lead to unprepared graduates for civic engagement.

Basis for my Intervention

Multiple generations of my family endured military conscription so the irony is not lost on me that I am proposing the opposite of authoritarian rule. Through their military experience and my parents' participation in local politics, I learned that you need to learn the rules of power to effectively participate to really affect change. Mentoring both students and stakeholders through shared- governance committees is one of the least costly options to help people learn to navigate the murky waters of power to affect change. Democracy is not a perfect or flawless endeavor. To many options and participants to quickly devolve into inaction, the French say “Trop de choix tue le choix” (too much choice kills the choice) (Economist Newspaper, 2010). My hope is that structured training and participation in shared- governance leads to a larger pool of candidates to lead within our larger context of democracy.

What is Shared Governance?

Shared governance is complicated and messy. Shared governance is the sum of its parts. I define “shared” as equal means, opportunity, responsibility, and culpability. I define “governance” as the rulemaking process that controls actions within/ surrounding a society. The combination “shared governance” means every stakeholder has an equal position to impact the rules that maintain their society. This is adjacent to forms of Democracy that rule a nation, nation state, etc.: but a few key ways. Shared governance occurs within a larger form of government and is intended to rule a subset of people that join the organization i.e. companies, nonprofits, higher education, etc. In shared governance there is no illusion that leaders are elected, leaders are appointed and have governing roles written into their job descriptions. The organization decides what elementary teachers describe as the “five Ws,” who, what, when, where, and why, people can participate in governance (IT personnel contributions, 2022). In the instance of higher education, a place run by capable adults for capable adults, the most equitable ruling model is shared governance. The State University of

New York system has the most common higher education definition for shared governance, "...refers to structures and processes through which faculty, professional staff, administration, governing boards and, sometimes, students and staff participate in the development of policies and in decision-making that affect the institution" (t., Authors for the S. U. N. Y. Voices program, 2019). I specifically take issue with the trend of attend, work, live, eat, date, and socialize. Graduate students are posited to be the most politically stable student population, making them ideal partners as community leaders to guide student participation in shared governance (Love, et. al. 2003).

My Positionality

The basis for Critical Action Research is that the practitioner is intimately involved with their research. Although the researcher may never fully be able to commiserate or integrate with their research, researchers have life experiences that shade how they interact with their research. In the spirit of transparency, it is important for you, the reader to understand some of the relevant factors that influence how I view governance and why I believe in my intervention.

My Race/Cultural Identity

In every culture, your family is seen as your first teachers. My life did not stray from this paradigm. My conception of race is tied up in ethnicity because I was raised in a multigenerational family that heavily influenced my life. As a preschooler, my father and his parents would fight about their neighborhood. Although there was a new playground built one house away from my grandparents' house, we were not permitted to play there. Understandably, my parents were concerned about the dime bags and hypodermic needles littering the field. My grandparents abided by my parents' wishes but maintained that drug dealers, drug paraphernalia, drug raids, etc. did not make their neighborhood unsafe. Since my family continued to come and go from that house for another twenty-plus years, I have to wonder if either side was really wrong in their assessment of the neighborhood. My father was a first-generation American. He was mixed Albanian and Italian, making me "mixed" by default. When I asked my grandmother to explain the neighborhood fight, she explained that some people do not like other people for things that are completely outside of their control. She explained that her family was disliked in our community for being Gypsies. I was confused because my family looked and lived nothing like Walt Disney's Gypsies (Disney, 1964). In fact, our "Gypsy status" is something that my generation knows nothing about. We often forget that we are Albanian. However, whenever my friends from Italy bring up "Dirty Itals" or "Dirty Gypsies," I know that they are talking about my heritage. Albanians have gone through two ethnic cleansings since the American Civil War so it is unsurprising that they choose to relocate. But twenty years after having this talk with my grandmother, I do not know why Albanians have a lower social status than African refugees. Knowing no other Albanians, I can tell you decidedly that my family in no way resembles the caricature used for this ethnic cleansing. I always understood race to be a color descriptor and ethnicity to be a cultural descriptor. I have lived almost my entire life with people disbelieving that I am Irish- Italian-Albanian American so few believed that I was not my physically expressed race either. People believed that I was the Irish part of my heritage so I am "white." After many years trying to

make sense of how I am white, but only sometimes, to some people, in certain circumstances, I still have this nagging feeling of “other.”

Race and Class

Before I had a concept of race, I had a strong sense of class because access to resources seemed more divisive than anything else in life. My grandfather's aunts and uncles lived across the street from a rail line so I quickly learned that there is no “right side of the track.” Living anywhere near a track is undesirable due to the environmental impact and negative class connotations of trains. Most of my racial identity development happened long before my undergraduate years. I explored my “white shame” and “racial victimization,” as described by Thandeka (1999) in my elementary and middle school years. Though I did not have a word for it yet, I have never been able to conceive “race” or “class” without Kimberlé Crenshaw's explanation of intersectionality. Her theory is that a person cannot divorce themselves from part of their identity to have life only impact one part of their identity (TED, 2016). Lacking formal training about race relations and occupying a homogenous bubble, I had no scheme to navigate my “White Working-Class Privilege.” I could literally see the disparity between my “White Working-Class Privilege” and race/class differences through the campus fences staring at housing projects but I did not have the vocabulary needed to really research the causes of these major structural inequalities.

My Undergraduate Years

By American convention, it is often considered impolite to discuss sex, religion, politics, money, and any other subject that makes people uncomfortable in any mixed social setting. Then, no longer under the watchful eyes of family enforcing “conventions,” people go to college. Although I had no one kicking me under the table when I spoke “out of turn,” the topic of race made me uncomfortable. I started my undergraduate career at a place that resembled a more urban version of my hometown. Even though I was in the International Relations and Diplomacy program, I could not tell you if there were any other races in my classes. There were many international students but as far as I could tell, everyone identified as “white”. In fact, during our racial and cultural sensitivity training in Freshman Seminar, I asked how we were going to practice these skills if there is such a lack of diversity in our program. I got a wholly unsatisfactory answer about respecting our roommates, the off-campus community, and the international students/faculty. As the weeks progressed, after endless campus alerts about off-campus violence, the gates were closed to the poorer, browner sections of town and it was suggested that we only stay on campus. Since I could literally see high-rise projects daily off of our highly gated campus, I interpreted the message to mean that model minorities and international students are good but everyone else should be kept on the outside.

Graduate Student Participation in shared Governance

Graduate students are expected to have one of the largest enrollment increases in higher education in future years (RNL & PLEXUSS, 2021). As the graduate student numbers grow, logically graduate student engagement should also grow. One way to increase engagement plus the viability and competitiveness of graduate programs is to increase graduate student involvement in shared governance. Students can learn and practice skills necessary to become

actively engaged citizens while increasing their connectedness to the university. Revising institutional bylaws to include shared student governance will increase diversity, equity, inclusion, and student engagement. Institutions will benefit from having diverse student perspectives represented in decisions, increasing graduation rates, and cultivating strong student relationships to convert to strong alumni relationships. The major catch to this change in processes is training mentors and students to actively engage in shared governance. Currently, there is often little mentorship for graduate students to participate in higher education governance. For students to learn to effectively participate, they need a robust employee-student mentorship program. This mentorship program will increase faculty/ staff engagement through responsive professional development and student engagement beyond graduation.

Economic Impacts of Engagement to Increase Retention

Schools hemorrhage talent through graduate/PHD student attrition and faculty and staff resignation. This wound is at a detriment to the individual as well as the institution. There is reputation loss locally and nationally from graduate attrition numbers. (Colloquially, attrition translates to quit/ resign but since it is the term used in literature, I have adopted the usage.) There is an institutional knowledge loss and disruption in services due to staff/faculty resignations. There is a regional loss because skilled positions are perpetually unfilled (Meador, 2021). As a basic example, in Jaret 2020, describes the success of a government-funded program billed as “attracting the next generation of rural doctors.” Although it is fantastic that the U.S. government is formally backing a recruiting effort for rural Americans, it does beg the question, “If more than 50% of people graduated from their graduate program, would the doctor shortage be as severe” (Cassuto, 2013)? It is notable that in 2021 Meador and countless others researchers explain the lack of representation in medical school contributes to the rural doctor shortage but it is conceivable that the lack of graduates equally contributes to the doctor shortage. This attrition issue is not specific to a region, program, class, or career, the issue is much larger (Cassuto, 2013).

If the opportunity cost of brain drain due to attrition is not concerning enough, think about the money. In a neoliberal society, “She Works Hard for the Money,” by Donna Summers comes to mind because there are endless needs but finite resources (t. Island Def Jam Music Group, 1983). Conventional human resources wisdom states that it costs from 1.5-2% to tens of thousands of dollars to recruit new employees (Altman, 2017). The search process to fill a position in a university typically involves a search committee, conference interviews, and an in-person interview before a position is offered (t. Career Center at the University of California Berkley, 2022). This lengthy and involved process can often be drawn out across several weeks/months (t. Career Center at the University of California Berkley, 2022). When time equals money, the higher process in higher education is extremely costly. During the “Great Resignation” higher education is struggling to recruit and retain talent. These staffing issues are not unique to higher education however they greatly impact regional stability as students decide if, when, and how to continue their education. Less costly but still significant is the cost of recruiting students. In 2019 Simpson Scarborough's survey determined, “institutions spend between \$429 and \$623 per enrolled student, per year, on marketing.”

Despite a pandemic dip, consulting company Kantar reported college “advertisement spending nearly doubled in the first quarter of 2021 compared with the same period last year, to \$870 million” (Marcus, 2021). These marked increases in both for-profit and non-profit education marketing spending have made it to Congress with bills requiring, “colleges to report what they spend on marketing and advertising” (Marcus, 2021). Can schools increase both graduate/PHD student and staff/faculty retention with the same intervention? Can a formalized mentoring program increase civic engagement and retention in different but related populations?

Preview of Thesis

In order to fully understand the context of my thematic concern, I will guide you through my entire thought process. Chapter two explains my positionality. As you read my educational philosophy you will glean the passion that I have for student participation in governance. In chapter three you will learn how I currently understand the history and research surrounding graduate student participation in shared governance. In chapter four you will review my proposal to use mentorship to provide consistent training for graduate students to engage in service learning surrounding shared governance. The final chapter you will see *More than Just a Seat at the Table's* budget, leadership requirements, limitations, and future considerations.

Philosophy of Education, Higher Education, and Student Affairs

Education is a curious field because in a compulsory society, everyone has experienced “formal education.” (When I use the term “formal education,” I mean education in a classroom, with other students, monitored by a trained educator, for a mandated number of hours, with legally defined goals for the people meeting.) Some of those that have experienced formal education feel experienced enough to regulate educational practices without formal data or training. As attacks on formal education regularly pepper the national news, I am reminded of the insight from celebrated French author *Honore De Balzac*, “Opinions are caught like infection, and put into practice without examination” (De Balzac, 2021). I am extremely socially justice-oriented so I believe in the American mythology about what education could and should be.

In 1848, as cited by Growe (2003), Father of Public Education Horace Mann succinctly states, “Education, then, beyond all other divides of human origin, is a great equalizer of conditions of men—the balance wheel of the social machinery”. Like many new inventions, the common school had equity issues that have had people question for the last 150+ years, “Who is public education really for?” Mann's proposal, as described within the pages of this Twelfth Report, makes it clear that the choice to employ local property tax to fund school was for the purpose of maintaining inequality, not fixing it. This question is extremely important to understand in the higher education context because if K- 12 education is not equitable, how can students be admitted into college equitably? From the outset, there was divisiveness about the Protestant leaning values of Mann's schools which spurred a stronger religious school movement and the basis of the Church versus State cases in schools currently (Warder, 2022). This dilemma of what should be taught gave me great anxiety as a middle school and high school teacher. As a former Long-Term Substitute Teacher extraordinaire, M. K.

Ashante's memoir *Buck* resonated with me because he wondered some of the same things. Much like I felt in school, Buck said that in his private Quaker school, "Nothing they teach here is useful—just a bunch of stuff to memorize and spit back, like this is karaoke night. I don't see the point". Ashante was decrying the "Banking Model of Education" also condemned by Paulo Freire (2020).

In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire (1970) explains the Banking Model of Education to be: "knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing" (p.11). This unequal power dynamic between the educator and the student has oppressive side effects. Oppression is a widely used term to explain and justify many forms of injustice. Apple (2015) "The denial of respect and the stigmatization of "others" reinforce material disadvantages... (and) can lead to their production. Furthermore, inequalities in class can themselves "impose harms of disrespect" as well". Reminiscent of modern victim shaming, Hegel (2019) used the oppression inherent to the servant master relationship to suggest complicity in consciousness for both parties. Hegel explained that without an unequal balance of power within relationships, people cannot truly know their roles because there is nothing outside of human interaction that can validate a person's place in life (Hegel, 2019). In direct opposition to Hegel's ideas, Angela Davis wrote about the acts of resistance against slavery.

Despite the prevailing racism of the time, African Americans have always been searching for knowledge. Following African-American history in the United States, Davis (1984) began, "As early as 1787, Black people petitioned the state of Massachusetts for the right to attend Boston's free schools". As African Americans demanded more rights and education through things like the Nat Turner Revolt in 1831, "legislation prohibiting the education of slaves was strengthened throughout the South. In the words of one slave code, "... teaching slaves to read and write tends to dissatisfaction in their minds, and to produce insurrection and rebellion". While enslaved people begged their masters and snuck Bibles to learn to read (Davis, 1984). After the Civil War, the quest for African American education grew. White Northern women joined the African American Southern women to eradicate illiteracy (Davis, 1984). W.E.B. DuBois and Adams both wrote about how the "white man's education" was designed to gaslight minorities to confirm white superiority. In *The Souls of Black Folk*, W.E.B. DuBois (2007) that due to the extreme hatred of white people, all black people enter into a state of double consciousness to survive. DuBois (2007) explained double-consciousness is "this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity". While trying to succeed in the face of hatred African Americans study the knowledge of the white man despite its lack of relevance to African American life (DuBois, 2007). DuBois explained that education is a step towards liberation but African Americans cannot be tricked into thinking that they approach education without knowledge or they will lose their true identities. (DuBois, 2007). While African-Americans tried to integrate into society while living within society, contemporaneously, Native Americans were sent to boarding schools for acculturation.

Adams (1995) explained, if they (Native Americans) were to become economically self-sufficient, and if they were to adopt the values and sentiments of American civilization, then they must be instructed to achieve these ends. For this reason, while new recruits were adjusting to life in the total institution, they were also being introduced to the world of the classroom, and with it, the curriculum of the white man's civilization. Similar to African-Americans, Native Americans were taught to be ashamed of their heritage. The most insidious part of boarding schools is that they proudly broke up tribes so that students had to learn to exclusively communicate in English (Adams, 1995). By making the children ashamed of their language and culture, students could no longer communicate with members of their tribe let alone their elders if they survived the school and returned home (Adams, 1995). Between the extreme shame about their identities, the language barriers, and the cultural barriers, Native Americans did not frequently address the slave labor that they were subjected to in these schools (Adams, 1995).

More than one hundred years later, M. K. Asante (2013) explained that school was still designed to make minorities feel bad about their culture, their material possessions, and their family situations etc. Despite all of the sacrifices Asante's family made to send him to a private Quaker school that did not respect him, he did not share the daily insults with his family. According to Asante (2013), Buck's father shared in a television interview, "I can honestly say that I have never found a school in the United States run by whites that adequately prepares black children to enter the world as sane human beings". The irony was not lost on Asante as he was left wondering why he still had to endure this form of education. Asante's experience is just one of the many examples of how the "white-man's schooling" is still not relevant to minorities. There is a very specific reason that education does not serve minorities, as explained by the Gramscianism theory of "hegemony." Backer (2019) explained from the first two chapters of *The Prison Notebooks* that hegemony, "(is a) function that the dominant group exercises throughout society... (It) creates "spontaneous consent... to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant (class). This consent is ideological so no violence or coercion must be applied to the complicit masses (Backer, 2020). Backer reported, "Intellectuals are the dominant group's "deputies". These deputies perpetuate hegemony through government action and education of societal norms (Backer, 2020).

Norms are socially constructed standards for the ways people interact with each other. Like humans recognized before, babies are not born knowing how to survive or interact; they must be taught usually by society and schooling. Althusser explained teaching social interactions can only happen through a personal reflection of external responses, "interpellation" (Backer, 2019). Interpellations teach us how to act to get the desired reaction from others. When explaining Althusser, Dr. Backer (2019) stated that "(I)nterpellation makes it so that acceptable behavior is now part of who you are. It's second nature". Since norms are created by the ruling classes to maintain domination (Althusser, 2020, p. 4), by reproducing behavior, people participate in the cycle of oppression. Hegemony is precarious for the ruling class because a delicate balance must be maintained to remain in power. Backer (2020) quoted Althusser, "When nothing is happening, the Ideological State Apparatuses have worked to perfection... (but) when they no longer manage to function, to reproduce the relations of

production in the 'consciousness' of all subjects, 'events' happen,...at the end, ...the revolution” Educational reformists have been writing to address the negative effects of hegemony, interpolation, and oppression. Krupskaya (1957) stated,“In a bourgeois state,...the school serves as an instrument for spiritual enslavement of the masses....The school's objective determines the entire organization of school”. She thought that schools must be revolutionized to provide education to every part of a child within their developmental boundaries to create physically healthy, emotionally capable, socially well-adjusted and productive children. Dewey (1916), was also concerned about the aims of education,

Each generation is inclined to educate its young so as to get along in the present world instead of with a view to the proper end of education: The promotion of the best possible realization of humanity as humanity. Parents educate their children so that they may get on; princes educate their subjects as instruments of their own purposes. Wills further proved Dewey's concerns through youth participatory action research in Hammertown, England. Wills (1981) observed fifteen male students,“in class, around the school and during leisure activities; regular(ly) recorded group discussions; informal interviews and diaries”. Through this observation, Wills was able to closely examine his research question, “How do working class kids get working class jobs?” and determined that it was a large combination of factors between parental attitudes, teacher attitudes, school curriculum, neighborhood resources, etc. that perpetuated the class phenomena. Oppressed people within the superstructures that reinforce and replicate oppression are less likely to be able to critically analyze hegemony and make changes. If universities continue to perpetuate the oppressive norms of a society, they will never grow to meet the needs of their students and/or their communities. To disrupt this phenomenon the options are abolishing, reforming, or transforming the current education system.

Given the options, I propose transforming education into the “great equalizer” as it was mythically promised. Education must give students the tools and practice necessary to transform students into independent learners to succeed in life. Education is a lifelong process that is most successful when it is internally driven. Once you get past education for basic survival, education should be to deepen every individual's understanding of the world. Should be, could be, and reality seldom align. Schools are obligated not only to teach students to be metacognitive but to ensure that skill is practiced and honed so that it can be easily transferred into multiple situations. Metacognition is a vital life skill for reflection to be able to improve and communicate that must be well developed to become a habit. In this Capitalist society driven by social media and consumerism, students must be taught to carefully evaluate products and sources to make the most educated decisions as savvy consumers. Metacognition and savvy consumerism require constant practice and a strong knowledge base so that people can be confidently engaged civically. Education needs to be more than surface knowledge to achieve both goals. Instead of an “an inch deep and a mile wide” approach to education, education must provide deeper knowledge for students to develop and practice the skills necessary for civic engagement.

Educational Philosophy and Technology

Technology has advanced the survival of humanity in food production, germ theory, vaccinations, refrigeration, etc. In the last 150 years, food production was considered vital enough that schools like Penn State University were started through the Morrill Act land grants to promote the development of more technology to stabilize the food supply (t. Staff Authors of Encyclopædia Britannica, 2013). Seemingly, every technological advancement comes with a cost. The Morrill Act gave away stolen land to educate white men and exclude the majority of the population. These schools did devise new agricultural technology to produce food more reliably but some of these innovations were disastrous for the ecosystem. Mechanization developed at universities made farming technically easier but lead to over-tilling, non-native food planting, famine, and massive migration (Trimarchi, 2021). After World War II, veterans came back to their homesteads with a mosquito killer that they found overseas, DDT, dichloro-diphenyl-trichloroethane. DDT was so effective in killing mosquitos that farmers applied it to kill their crops, inadvertently they poisoned themselves, killed the wildlife, contaminated the water, and pushed the Bald Eagle to the brink of extinction (Conis, 2021). DDT, won the inventor a Nobel Prize and protected millions from mosquito-borne illnesses but caused an environmental catastrophe (Conis, 2021).

Inside the classroom, technology has equally mixed results. Assistive technology has brought communication and movement to people that would otherwise struggle to participate in public spaces and improve life for the general public. Talk-to-text features and read-aloud features help people with visual impairments, processing issues, dexterity issues, and people chasing toddlers while working (Castello, 2021). The struggle with many educational technology tools is access. One of the positive effects of COVID was putting educational technology under a microscope. Daily, news reports of school district closings, continuity of learning plans, and alternate opening plans to “traditional” K-12 schools plastered the news for months. Initially, the hodgepodge of paper-packet pickups, asynchronous, and synchronous learning were foreign terms but as weeks turned into months in the Spring of 2020, the disparity between classes was becoming impossible to avoid.

In April 2020, the New York Times reported, Los Angeles is trying to get them (devices) to more than 100,000 students (Goldestein, 2020). In November 2020, the Philadelphia School District delayed hybrid learning because they had still not provided devices to every student (6 ABC Digital Staff, 2020). Even in places that had devices, internet access/bandwidth is still an unsolved problem. Giving out hotspots and free internet to low-income families only helped people near lines. Rural America is still left with major dead zones without fiber-optic lines, cell phone towers, and satellite services, and students struggled with online learning (Siegler, 2020). Digital Citizenship and Media Literacy are the foundation to teaching and learning in a digital world. Unfortunately, Mister Rodgers stopped producing shows before the digital age because he taught generations of children how to handle their emotions and treat people with dignity. In the smartphone age where people share the most intimate details of their lives, people are conversing in private with people and bots instantaneously. Technology advances ahead of regulations. Cyberbullying and sexting are being litigated while the policy is trying to keep up. Media literacy is a fickle beast. As disinformation

campaigns become more sophisticated, people struggle to adapt. Children cyberbully over fake posts, social media platforms are pulling non-science- based medical advice, and deep fakes are being passed as news. As bot farms assault democracy, people need to learn to become more sophisticated consumers of information or they will fall victim to being manipulated by fake news (Vincens, 2020).

Role of Student Affairs in Higher Education

When people ask me to explain my master's degree, I explain, "A degree in Higher Education Policy and Student Affairs helps me get a job in the behind-the-scenes offices that make a college run. This field covers everything from academic advising to Federal Work-Study and the vast world in-between. After many puzzled faces, I searched for a more academic answer. According to TopHat, a popular learning platform for college students, "Student affairs is the department or division of services for student success. ... This office ensures that appropriate and student-friendly services and programs are accessible to a school's student body" (t. Staff Author at Top Hat, 2021). This definition contains two ambiguous areas that can be stretched widely to become giant umbrellas, "appropriate / student- friendly services and programs" that "are accessible to a school's student body."

Appropriate

This is a dangerous colonizing word that imposes majority cultural norms onto the group. "Appropriate" is often coded language for civility and manners which translate to "acting in a way that is acceptable to the majority." From the colonizing ideology perpetuated through meals served during events to the American myths codified through programming during Native American History Month, student affairs professionals must work diligently to combat colonization (Maharaj, 2020). Student affairs professionals must ensure that "appropriate" means culturally competent programming to retrain and recruit a community that is as diverse as its catchment areas.

Accessible

This is another potential pitfall for student affairs professionals. As a person that self-identifies as "handi-capable," I often report that the shortest distance between two points is the fully able-bodied way. From my handi-capable perspective, accessibility is typically an afterthought in new construction and haphazard in retrofits. Even though it might technically be possible to get to a place, it may not be reasonable to attempt. (Some examples of this design flaw include: handicap ramps that are opposite not adjacent to the front door, hybrid events held in spaces without speaker microphones, in-person-only meetings, etc.) Accessibility does not only refer to the disabled, colloquially in this context, it typically means, "Will students get there?" Since student affairs programming is typically evaluated on at least one of the following: turnout, engagement, and/or completion of learning outcomes, professionals want seats filled. Staff utilize various data collection models to predict when students are most likely to attend events and what types of events drive student participation to make the most of their program's potential impact due to a scarcity of resources (National Geographic Society, 2020). Schools face unlimited needs in the face of finite funding and

resources, so they try to stretch their programming dollars to provide the largest number of programs to the largest number of students.

Critical Participatory Action Research

Thinking back to elementary school, my first experience with something labeled “Science” was predicated on the “Scientific Method.” Since the standards-based system has swept K-12 education, schools have implemented Scientific Method standards into their curriculum. Similar to other states, Pennsylvania has elected to base their “Inquiry and Design” standards section on the Scientific Method in 3.2 C to ensure that 4th, 7th, 10th, and 12th grade students progressively display their understanding of this singular way of “knowing” (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2002). There is strong value in modifying a hypothesis and repeating an experiment in a controlled environment with controlled ingredients until the results are consistent (T. Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, 2021). However, life is not a controlled environment and living subjects are not controlled ingredients.

This indoctrination into the scientific culture can make it difficult to see or accept other forms of science but there are other ways to know. For research to be effective the method must be appropriate to yield valid results. My coursework helped me to readjust my bias to realize that there are a lot of ways to conduct research. “At different times in different social contexts, what constitutes valid ways of creating knowledge will vary. It is not by accident, for example, that emancipatory, grass-roots approaches to research emerged from the oppressive social conditions of the third world” (Anderson et. al., 2007). These less formulaic but equally valuable research methods stem from the Action Research tradition. The Action Research tradition is similar to the Scientific Method in that reflection on results informs future action however Action Research has zero expectation of producing replicable results (Anderson et. al., 2007). Criticism of action research warns that “attempts (to) formalize the process were intended for social control and lose its inherent value as a tool for liberatory practice”.

Action researchers have constructed their own methods to determine the validity of work in their field. To coincide with my concerns about equity, I found evaluating action research is through examining the process and outcomes to be the most telling. “Process validity or trustworthiness asks to what extent problems are framed and solved in a manner that permits ongoing learning of the individual or system” (Anderson et. al., 2007). Researchers must undertake multiple reflective cycles and adjust processes before submitting outcomes. The researcher is encouraged to employ “triangulation” to ensure that multiple perspectives, observation methods, and sources of data are included before an outcome is declared (Anderson et. al., 2007) “Outcome Validity... is the extent to which actions occur that lead to (a) solution of the problem or a deeper understanding...in the context of the site and is “solved” or “understood” within those parameters, possibilities, and limitations” (Anderson et. al., 2007). All of this data is then scrutinized via a peer review before it can be published, dialogic validity, before it is further scrutinized by the wider scientific community (Anderson et. al., 2007). Since action researchers' lifeblood is dependent on their ability to validate their field and given the multiple redundancies built into this system, I am a convert to action research as science.

In Higher Education, the most effective method to authentically research complex beliefs, behaviors, and attitudes in response to intervention appears to be Critical Participatory Action Research. Traditional college-age students are well beyond the age of reason. Graduate students have fully formed brains. Faculty and staff are equally capable adults. Conducting research on people without their informed consent is both unethical and illegal. Conducting research on people instead of with people is illogical and insulting at best. Many minority groups have co-opted a famous disabilities rights slogan, “Nothing About Us Without Us” to echo the same sentiments (Carmel, 2020). In 2020 Rusoja expressed that all research must be done with the community not upon the community to have a decolonizing effect. Potentially well-intentioned groups with “Savior Complexes,” imposing changes into strangers' lives without consultation is both presumptuous and offensive (Raypole, 2020). From the pre-planning stages of an institutional review of committees to joining the mentoring program and leading training to proposing community partners, the goal is to engage mentors and mentees in their development. Reflection and multiple forms of data collection are necessary to ensure the goals of the program are being met. Universities can work for the community with the community through critical participatory action research. Changes to the fundamental university approach to interacting with the community would help institutions serve their communities, improve students' lives, and help communities thrive. Universities will be most successful in changing their approach if they remember to bring all of the interested parties into all stages of the planning process so that the changes make sense for their communities.

Historical Context: American History

Formerly being a hopeful social studies teacher, I struggled to narrow down the history of this problem. As I broke down the issue into its simplest form, I realized that America's governance issue started long before the country was founded. The history of this problem is at the base of American History. It permeates every facet of every underpinning structure of American life. It is well beyond the scope of this project to be able to provide a comprehensive history of power inequities, education or governance in the U.S. My intention in this section is to give you a very brief introduction into topics that have entire dedicated sections in libraries. I have attempted to give you the basics of the who, what, when, where, and whys of the issues that created the power imbalances that shape my thematic concern. As you read, please remember a major philosophical question that faces every educator: “Education of whom and for what purpose?”

Limitations & Looking Ahead

As with any program there are limitations to *More than Just a Seat at the Table*. Students can only participate if mentors agree to serve. Even as this program builds capacity, there will always be more students than committees limiting who can experience this program. For further details about additional limitations. Given more time, a deeper dive into South African research on shared governance could be valuable background knowledge. South Africa has imposed legal mandates for student participation in higher education's shared governance. There is some research about staff/faculty attitudes about their and/or undergraduate student participation in shared governance. I found anecdotal comments

about undergraduate attitudes regarding their participation in shared governance but no longitudinal studies about their continued civic engagement. I could not locate any data about mentorship for shared governance nor graduate student participation in shared governance. A future collaboration for research could be comparing student participation in shared governance between the U.S. and South Africa to learn from each other. This would inform how to strengthen this mentoring program.

Conclusion

Governance is a complicated beast further convoluted by higher education processes. Each institution has to decide on limits to impose on its implementation plan to mitigate some of the challenges your team will face during your inaugural implementation years. Despite the challenges, the implications for diversity, equity, and inclusion, graduate student persistence, and civic engagement are worth the endeavor. As with any change in governance, there is a possibility that this program could be implemented as a placation attempt by people in power. If students are only admitted to low level committees with low level mentors, it is possible that they will be completely shielded from the real inner workings of government. On the surface, participants might be able to practice governance roles and effect low level change. However, the process may not have enough meaning to have long term impacts on participant behavior and/or attract new participants to the program. This is a concern that the entire *More than Just a Seat at the Table* community must be vigilant to protect against.

References

- Adams, D. W. (1995). Chapter 5: Classroom. In *Education for extinction: American Indians and the boarding school experience, 1875-1928*. (p. 136-163). book, University Press of Kansas.
- Althusser, L. (2020). *Ideology and ideological state apparatuses (Notes towards an investigation)*. Ideology and ideological state apparatuses by louis althusser 1969-70. <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/althusser/1970/ideology.htm>.
- Altman, J. (2017). *How much does employee turnover really cost?* Business. https://www.huffpost.com/entry/how-much-does-employee-turnover-really-cost_b_587fbaf9e4b0474ad4874fb7
- Anderson, G. L., Herr, K., & Nihlen, A. S. (Eds.). (2007). *Studying your own school: An educator's guide to practitioner action research*. Corwin Press.
- Apple, M. W. (2015). Reframing the question of whether education can change society. *Educational Theory*, 65(3), 299–315. <https://doi.org/10.1111/edth.12114>
- Asante, M. K. (2013). Chapters 14 and 19. In *Buck: A memoir* (pp. 2–19). PDF excerpt of book, SPIEGEL & GRAU.

- Backer, D. I. (2020). *Antonio Gramsci: Hegemony*. [class zoom session]. EDF 511-50 foundations of transformative education presentation, West Chester University.
- Backer, D. I. (2019). Chapter 1: A beginners guide to interpolation. In *The gold and the dross: Althusser for*
- Backer, D. (2020). *Do teachers help or hurt the ruling classes?* [Class discussion]. EDF 511-Foundations of transformative education, Zoom.
- Career Center at the University of California Berkley. (2022). *Academic job search - The hiring process from the other side*. The Career Center. <https://career.berkeley.edu/PhDs/PhDhiring>.
- Carmel, J. (2020). *Nothing about us without us': 16 moments in the fight for disability rights*, The New York Times: US. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/22/us/ada-disabilities-act-history.html>.
- Cassuto, L. (2013). *Ph.D. attrition: How much is too much?* The Graduate Advisor. https://www.chronicle.com/article/ph-d-attrition-how-much-is-too-much/?cid2=gen_login_refresh&cid=gen_sign_in.
- Castelo, M. (2021). Using assistive technology to empower students with disabilities." *Technology Solutions That Drive Education*, EdTech Focus on K-12. edtechmagazine.com/k12/article/2020/03/using-assistive-technology-empower-students-disabilities-perfcon.
- Cherry, K. (2020). *Cognitive dissonance and ways to resolve it*. Theories > Cognitive psychology. <https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-cognitive-dissonance-2795012>.
- Circle, S. (2010). *Civic skills and federal policy*. [archive.civicyouth.org. http://archive.civicyouth.org/PopUps/FactSheets/FS_10_Civic_Skills_final.pdf](https://archive.civicyouth.org/http://archive.civicyouth.org/PopUps/FactSheets/FS_10_Civic_Skills_final.pdf).
- Conde, M. Á., García-Peñalvo, F. J., Rodríguez-Conde, M. J., Alier, M., Casany, M. J., & Piguillem, J. (2014). An evolving learning management system for new educational environments using 2.0 tools. *Interactive Learning Environments*, 22(2), 188–204.
- Conis, E. (2021). Beyond silent spring: An alternate history of DDT." *Distillations: Using Stories from Science's Past to Understand Our World*, Science History Institute, 7 June, www.sciencehistory.org/distillations/beyond-silent-spring-an-alternate-history-of-ddt.
- Cooper, M. (2019). Chapter 6: in locus parentis: human capital, student debt, and the logic of family investment. In *Family values: between neoliberalism and the new social conservatism* (pp. 215–257). Zone Books.

- Crenshaw, K. (2016). The urgency of intersectionality.” TedWomen. www.ted.com/talks/kimberle_crenshaw_the_urgency_of_intersectionality?language=en.
- Darwin Exhibition, *What is a theory? A scientific definition: Amnh.* (2021). <https://www.amnh.org/exhibitions/darwin/evolution-today/what-is-a-theory#:~:text=In%20everyday%20use%2C%20the%20word,incorporate%20laws%2C%20hypottheses%20and%20facts>.
- Davis, A. Y. (1983). Education and liberation: Black women's perspective. In *Women, race & class*, (p. 1- 11). Book, Vintage Books: a Division of Random House.
- Del Grande, K. (2022). *Basic education*. PA Schools Work. <https://paschoolswork.org/basic-education/>
- Dewey, J. (1916). Chapter seven: The democratic conception in education. In *Democracy and education: An introduction to the philosophy of education*. (p.1-13). PDF excerpt, The Macmillin Company. Disney. (1964). *Babes in Toyland* [VHS]. United States.
- DuBois, W. E. B. (2007). Chapter 1: of our spiritual strivings. In *The souls of black folk* (Ser. Oxford World's Classics, pp. 7–14). Oxford University Press.
- Economist Newspaper. (2010). *The tyranny of choice: You choose*, The Economist. <https://www.economist.com/christmas-specials/2010/12/16/you-choose>.
- Freire , P. (2020). Excerpt from chapter 2 of pedagogy of the oppressed by Paulo Freire . in *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. <http://www.historyisaweapon.com/defcon2/pedagogy/pedagogychapter2.html>.
- Geiger, R. L. (2014). *The history of american higher education: Learning and culture from the founding to world war II* (Course Book). Princeton University Press.
- Grove, R., & Montgomery, P. S. (2003). Educational equity in America: Is education the great equalizer? *Professional Educator*, 25(2), 23–29.
- Harper, D. (2021). *community* (n.). Index. Online Etymology Dictionary. <https://www.etymonline.com/word/community>
- Harper, D. (2021). *pupil* (n.). Index. Online Etymology Dictionary. <https://www.etymonline.com/word/pupil>
- Harper, D. (2021). *in loco parentis*. Index. Online Etymology Dictionary. https://www.etymonline.com/word/in%20loco%20parentis#etymonline_v_9291

- Harper, D. (2021). *teacher* (n.). Index. Online Etymology Dictionary. <https://www.etymonline.com/word/teacher>
- Harper, D. (2021). *university* (n.). Index. Online Etymology Dictionary. <https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=university>.
- Hegel, G. W. F., Pinkard, T. P., & Baur, M. (2019). Paragraphs 190-196. In *The phenomenology of spirit* (pp. 113–116). book, Cambridge University Press.
- Indeed Editorial Team. (2021). *Transferable skills: Definitions and examples*. Indeed Career Guide. <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/resumes-cover-letters/transferable-skills>
- IT personnel contributions. (2022). *Remember the 5 W's*. Remember the 5 W's | IT Best Practices | Nebraska. <https://its.unl.edu/bestpractices/remember-5-ws>.
- Jaret, P. (2020). *Attracting the next generation of physicians to rural medicine*. Medical Education- Health Care- Workforce. <https://www.aamc.org/news-insights/attracting-next-generation-physicians-rural-medicine>.
- Krupskaya, N. K., & Ivanov-Mumjiev, G. P. (1957). Chapter II: Polytechnic education: Concerning the question of socialist schools . In *NK krupskaya on education: Selected articles and speeches*. Foreign Languages Publishing House.
- Love, R., & Miller, M. (2003). Increasing student participation in self-governance: A comparison of graduate and undergraduate student perceptions. *College Student Journal*, 37(4), 532–544.
- Maharaj, J. (2020). *We need to rethink the way we teach kids table manners*. Today's Parent. <https://www.todayparent.com/family/parenting/we-need-to-rethink-the-way-we-teach-kids-table-manners/>.
- Marcus, J. (2021). *From google ads to NFL sponsorships: Colleges throw billions at marketing themselves to attract students*. Education. https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/colleges-marketing-student-recruitment/2021/09/30/b6ddd246-2166-11ec-8200-5e3fd4c49f5e_story.html.
- Meador, C. (2021). *In rural areas with health care shortages, these doctors are answering the call*. PBS Newshour. Retrieved February 8, 2022, from <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/health/rural-areas-health-care-shortages-these-doctors-are-answering-the-call>

- Myers, V. (2021). *Pennsylvania's state system of higher education seeks \$72.5m increase in appropriation for 2022-23*. Erie Times-News. <https://www.goerie.com/story/news/education/2021/10/14/passhe-seeks-550-million-state-appropriation-pennsylvania-legislature-higher-education/8449955002/>
- National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics. (2020). *State support for higher education per full-time equivalent student | State Indicators*. National Science Foundation - State Indicators. <https://nces.nsf.gov/indicators/states/indicator/state-support-for-higher-education-per-fte-student>
- National Geographic Society. (2020). *Scarcity*. Resource Library| Encyclopedic entry. <https://www.nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/scarcity/>.
- Northouse, P. (2019). *Leadership: Theory and practice* (eighth ed.).
- Pennsylvania Department of Education. (2002). *Academic standards for science and technology*. Pennsylvania Department of Education. <https://www.stateboard.education.pa.gov/Documents/Regulations%20and%20Statements/State%20Academic%20Standards/ScienceandTechnologyStandards.pdf>
- Raypole, C. (2020). *Always trying to 'save' people? You might have a savior complex*, Healthline. <https://www.healthline.com/health/savior-complex>.
- RNL & Plexuss. (2021). *RNL 2021 graduate student recruitment report*. 2021 Graduate Student Recruitment Report. https://learn.ruffalonl.com/rs/395-EOG-977/images/2021_Graduate_Student_Report.pdf
- Rusoja, A. (2020). *Flip this notion that only academics can be "experts:" Latinx immigrants teaching and learning for their rights*. [zoom session]. 2020 Race, Class, Gender, and Education Series, West Chester University.
- Siegler, K. (2020). *In internet dead zones, rural schools struggle with distanced learning*. *National*, National Public Radio, 28 Sept., www.npr.org/2020/09/28/916571273/in-internet-dead-zones-rural-schools-struggle-with-distanced-learning.
- Simpson Scarborough. (2019). *The 2019 state of higher ed marketing*. <https://f.hubspotusercontent30.net/hubfs/4254080/The%20State%20of%20Higher%20Ed%20Marketing.pdf>
- T. Editors of Encyclopædia Britannica. (2013). *Land-grant universities*. Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., www.britannica.com/topic/land-grant-university.

- T. Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica. (2020). *Protestant ethic*. Encyclopædia Britannica, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Protestant-ethic>.
- T. Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica. (2021). *Scientific method*, Encyclopædia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/science/scientific-method>.
- T. Editors of Merriam-Webster. (2022). *Capitalism definition & meaning*, Merriam-Webster. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/capitalism>.
- T. Staff Authors for the American Association of University Professors. (2021). *FAQs on shared governance*. Shared Governance. <https://www.aaup.org/programs/shared-governance/faqs-shared-governance>
- T. Staff Authors for the Public Library of Youngstown and Mahoning County. (2020, November 14). *Library blog*. Library Blog. <https://www.libraryvisit.org/blog/books/myths-legends-and-fables-helping-kids-decipher-the-difference/>
- T. Staff Authors of PBS Online. (2001). *Horace mann (1796-1859)*. PBS online: Only a teacher: Schoolhouse pioneers. <https://www.pbs.org/onlyateacher/horace.html>
- T. Staff Authors of the University of Pennsylvania Archives. (2018, September 6). *Benjamin rush*. University Archives and Records Center. <https://archives.upenn.edu/exhibits/penn-people/biography/benjamin-rush>
- T. Staff Author(s) Top Hat. (2021). *Student affairs definition and meaning*. Top Hat. <https://tophat.com/glossary/s/student-affairs/>.
- T. Island Def Jam Music Group. (1983). *She works hard for the money*. YouTube. United States. from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tuUEpbGVV2Y>.
- T. Editorse System. (2021). *Changes From vietnam to now*. Selective Service System. <https://www.sss.gov/history-and-records/changes-from-vietnam-to-now/>.
- Thandeka. (1999). One: White. In *Learning to be white: Money, race, and god in america* (pp. 1–18). Bloomsbury.
- Trimarchi, Maria. “What caused the dust bowl?” *How Stuff Works Science*. science.howstuffworks.com/environmental/green-science/dust-bowl-cause.htm. University of Illinois at Chicago. “Job details: Assistant director for graduate recruitment and retention - Graduate college.” *Job Details*, 20 Oct. 2021, <https://jobs.uic.edu/job-board/job-details?jobID=154354&job=assistant-director-for-graduate-recruitment-and-retention-graduate-college>.

Warder, G. (2022). *Education: Essay horace mann and the creation of the common school*. Disability History Museum. <https://www.disabilitymuseum.org/dhm/edu/essay.html?id=42>