8-2021

NOT YOUR QUEER MODEL MINORITY: EXPLORING THE REALITIES OF LGB ASIAN AMERICAN STUDENT AFFAIRS PROFESSIONALS

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A Dissertation

Presented to the

Faculty of

California State University,

San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

in

Educational Leadership

by

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August 2021

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ABSTRACT

LBG Asian Americans are a minority group in higher education and among Student Affairs administrators. LGB Asian Americans and their experiences have received little attention due to the intersection of sexual orientation and race. It is critical to understand the realities that this community faces and to provide an opportunity for this community to claim an identity that is both honest and transparent.

The goal of this research is to better understand how the intersection of racial identity and sexuality has influenced the experiences of Asian American lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students in Student Affairs roles at colleges and universities. In general, research on Asian Americans has received little attention. Furthermore, the intersection of sexual orientation and Asian American identities has received little attention.

This study used a qualitative research approach with a phenomenological approach to analyze lived experiences and understand how meaning is created (Sokolowski, 2002). It was discovered that the sexual identity of Asian Americans who identify as LGB had no significant impact on their career trajectory in student affairs.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Throughout the writing of this dissertation, I received a great deal of encouragement, love, and help from people from all walks of life. First and foremost, I would like to thank my faculty Chair, Dr. Jay Fiene, and my committee members, Dr. Sharon Brown-Welty and Dr. Mariam Lam, for their expertise, guidance, and feedback, which pushed me to sharpen my thinking and elevate my work.

I'd like to thank my Cohort 12 members for the amazing experiences of being the last cohort to experience the quarter system and transitioning to the semester system while in pandemic. Thank you for all of the memories, laughter, and happiness. A special thanks to Ellen Whitehead, my ride or die buddy. I would not have applied or progressed this far in the program if it hadn't been for you.

I'd also like to thank my family for their support during this period of my education. Being a first-generation doctoral student and the first member of my family to achieve this level of education has been an adventure! Thank you for always being there for me and allowing me to do what I needed to do to focus and complete this program.

Finally, I could not have completed this program without the help of my village. My friends, the UCR family, the students, and the APAHE family. Thank you for continuing to encourage and challenge me to be and do better in order to pave the way for future generations.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Problem Statement

LGB Asian Americans are a minority community amongst higher education and Student Affairs administrators. White Americans dominate the field. Given how few Asian American individuals are in the field, ethnic diversity may be limited and not reflect Asian American population. Represented participants may have roots from East Asia (China, Japan, and Korea) to Southeast Asia (Vietnamese, Filipino, Cambodian, Hmong, Laotian, Indonesian). Still, the study may lack in South Asian countries (India). Like ethnic diversity, many participants may disclose that they are gay, while a few may identify as lesbian or bisexual.

This study explored the barriers and issues that LGB Asian Americans face in the workplace. The problematic stereotypes about Asian Americans, as the model minority myth projects, classified this population as not needing support which has resulted in them being excluded from research studies (Talusan, 2016) or likely access to support they did need. It is also challenging to explore sexual orientation when the status quo or the norm is assumed straight unless otherwise notified. With the intersection of sexual orientation and race, LGB Asian Americans and their experiences have been largely unexamined. It is

critical to understand the realities faced by this community and provide an opportunity to claim an identity that is both honest and transparent.

This study will encourage institutions and organizations to rethink their structures and processes in recruiting, hiring, supporting, and retaining a diverse staff. With the rapid growth of Asian American students and Asian American students who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual, it is crucial to have effective role models that reflect the student population and represent them in senior-level positions (Neilson, 2002; Penteretto, 1990). With culturally sensitive and competent services needed to support the diverse students who attend college and universities in the U.S., LGB Asian American students remain underserved. By having representation of LGB Asian Americans in positions, they are better equipped to understand the complex hardships of this particular community and have the ability to allocate the necessary resources to ensure institutional change (Neilson, 2002).

The study may shed light on how sexual orientation and race can impact the various interactions and relationships between these individuals and multiple groups. There is more research on race relations that continues to surpass the Black and White paradigm. There is also more research on the impact of sexuality and how this is continuing to surpass heterosexism. This research includes the experiences of other racially marginalized communities and the experiences of those in the LGBTQ communities. However, each of these connections is not simple to develop. The way White and Black individuals

interact with one another is different from how they would interact with Asians. The same goes for how two heterosexuals interact versus how they interact with those who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual. These complexities of identities influence how each community treats one another, and by focusing on the experiences of LGB Asian Americans, this study may inform how this group makes social and behavioral decisions based on a specific environment.

As institutions and organizations continue to work on achieving workplace diversity, this study is needed to provide another perspective for organizational leaders and policymakers to understand how specific barriers, challenges, and exclusionary practices are created and accept their responsibility to make a change (Arnett, 2018; Shemla, 2018; Wolfe & Dilworth, 2015).

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study is to understand how the intersection of racial identity and sexuality has influenced the experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, Asian American individuals in Student Affairs roles at colleges and universities. Research regarding Asian American issues has grown over recent years, and the most current literature focused on identity development and college student success. Research on sexuality continues to develop, and the lyexisting literature focused on human development and mental health. The research focused on both racial identity and sexuality reflects experiences of gay, White men. As such, it has limited comparative value to other intersections, such as LGB and

Asian Americans. Due to the cultural barriers of Asian Americans in the workplace, the literature on the experiences of LGB Asian Americans in Student Affairs is not well developed, and this study seeks to contribute to this area of research and share some of the realities of this community.

The primary research question will examine the advantages or disadvantages when identifying as both LGB and Asian American in Student Affairs; the impacts of Asian stereotypes on LGB Asian Americans Student Affairs professionals; the impacts of LGBT stereotypes on LGB Asian Americans Student Affairs professional; and how the intersection of being LGB and Asian American affected their employment, career advancement, job responsibility, professional development, and mental well-being.

Through this chapter, the literature will provide a deeper understanding of the various factors that contribute to LGBT Asian American Student Affairs professionals experiences. For the specific area of knowledge that this study seeks to add to, the thematic sections of the literature review will provide context to LGB Asian American Student Affairs professionals' experiences and their perceptions of their Asian race, sexuality, and workplace culture. This review will examine three major themes within the literature Student Affairs, racial identity, and sexuality.

Theoretical Framework

This study incorporates three theoretical frameworks that concurrently analyze the realities of lesbian, gay, or bisexual Asian American Student Affairs professionals. Considering that this study focuses on LGB Asian Americans, multiple layers shape this study that needs proper attention. To better understand how sexuality, racial identity, the intersectionalities of the uniqueness, the internalized process, and the external factors, interact there is a need to look at this topic through both a non-heteronormative framework and a racial framework to be cognizant of LGB Asian Americans experiences. Critical Race Theory (CRT), Asian Critical Race Theory (AsianCrit), and Queer Theory all serve different purposes and view the world according to the lens and frames that guide within the theories. These theories try to illuminate issues related to Asian Americans and LGB Asian Americans. Provided below are essential components of the theoretical frameworks and how they seamlessly work together for this study.

Critical Race Theory

An investigation of United States history uncovered that race is a socially constructed classification created to different racial groups to show superiority or privilege of one's race (Banks, 1995). Specifically, Whites being the dominant race (Banks, 1995). For the purposes of this study, racism is defined as the belief in implicit superiority of one race over all others, which leads to the right of dominance (Lorde, 1992). Along with Lorde, Marable (1992) further interpreted

racism as “a system of ignorance, exploitation, and power used to oppress African Americans, Latinos, Asians, Pacific Americans, American Indians and other people based on their ethnicity, culture, mannerism, and color,” (pg. 5). Marable’s definition is critical because it contextualizes the discussions of race and racism from a Black-White discourse to one that is more inclusive of other races, ethnicities, and people of color. Society identifies race as a powerful concept that influences an individual's experience and shapes someone's life. In a society that privileges White people and whiteness, racist ideas such as discrimination and microaggressions are considered normalized through media, culture, social systems, and institutions (Lawrence & Dua, 2005). This brings in the notion of anti-racism. Anti-racism is fighting against racism. Racism takes several forms and works most often in tandem with at least one form to reinforce racist ideas, behavior, and policy (Lawrence & Dua, 2005).

Critical Race Theory (CRT) was initially created in the mid-1970s in response to the failure of critical legal studies to sufficiently address the racial structures and racism in the United States jurisprudence Delgado & Stefanic, 2001). CRT is rooted in the social thought of Native Americans, African Americans, and Latinos/ (Ladson-Billings, 2000; Parker & Lynn, 2002). Critical race theorists, such as Kimberle Crenshaw, analyzed the critical legal studies and their failure to address the racial inequities and the importance of race and racism in the construction of American’s legal foundation (Parking & Lynn, 2002). CRT was derived from Derrick Bell, Alan Freeman, and Richard Delgado

(Delgado & Stefanic, 2001). Matsuda (1991), an activist and law professor, defined CRT as “the efforts of legal scholars of color who advocate creating a jurisprudence that accounts for racism in American law and continues to eliminate racism the larger goal of getting rid of subordination” (p.131). Overall, race and racism are the foundation of this theoretical framework (Parker & Lynn, 2002). Parker and Lynn (2002) mentioned that the main goals of CRT are “ to present storytelling and narratives as valid approaches to examine race and racism in the law and society; to argue for the eradication of racial subjugation while simultaneously recognizing that race is a social construct, and to draw important relationships between race and other axes of domination” (p. 10).

CRT was employed in education around the mid-1990s, which centralized racism and how the systems of education were not created for all people and continuously reinforced the dominant ideas and constructions. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) introduced the concept of using Critical Race Theory to analyze better and understand the inequities (Gottesman, 2016). Following this concept, Daniel Solórzano published his first article on Critical Race Theory and outlined the widely used and referenced five tenets, which are “the centrality of race and racism and their intersectionality with other forms of subordination; the challenge to dominant ideology; the commitment to social justice; the centrality of experiential knowledge; and the transdisciplinary perspective” (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 34).

It supports the centrality of race and racism with forms of subordination, which includes the intersection of marginalized factors (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002: Russell, 1992). The marginalizing factors are identified as gender and class, among others, with racism being the primary focal analysis (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Pertinent to this study, the intersection of CRT, pedagogy, and the experiences of lesbian, gay, and bisexual Asian Americans. In this case, intersectionality examines how power structures in higher education, Student Affairs, and identities are molded by race, gender, sexuality, class, for example, which influenced the social interactions and relationships (Andersen and Collins, 2015).

CRT also challenges the dominant narrative in education (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). These narratives include experiences and stories that continually perpetuate whiteness as being the superior race and marginalize the disenfranchised communities of color (Calmore, 1992; Solórzano, 1997). The scholars also insist that this dominant narrative of whiteness being the superior race masked experiences of other racial groups in the United States. CRT also focuses on the commitment to social justice and highlights how minority groups can engage in political resistance actions to become more empowered (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

CRT is crucial to experiential knowledge; critical race theories propose the lived realities of these experiences as essential and assets instead of deficits (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). CRT also provides a transdisciplinary perspective

(Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). CRT's methodology stems from ethnic studies, women's studies, sociology, history, law, and education Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). This transdisciplinary perspective allows critical analysis of how racism, sexism, and classism frame people's experiences of color (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

Specifically, CRT is about the endemic nature of race and racism in the United States. CRT shifts the public discourse to acknowledge race as an essential factor in social constructions and human development (Misawa 2006). With this study, CRT addresses the various layers of complex identities of the participants, especially their experiences in higher education and Student Affairs. (Grace & Hill, 2004; Johnson-Bailey, 2002).

A strength of CRT was how it focused the attention on marginalized experiences and voices. Yet, CRT's perspective on various issues was still binary, and not all experiences of people of color can be defined by the tenets of CRT without referring to the Black and White dichotomy (Kolano 2016; Chang, 1993; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). In acknowledgment of this, other marginalized groups have used CRT as the foundation to understand racism beyond the Black and White binary, and other frameworks evolved for those communities such as AsianCrit, LatinCrit, and TribalCrit (Kolano 2016; Chang, 1993; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001).

Asian Critical Race Theory

According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2017), there are approximately 17.3 million Asian Americans in the United States, continuing to grow. AsianCrit supports guiding scholars to center Asian American voices in racial discourse. This theory brings attention to Asian Americans and how Asian Crit plays a significant role in community organizing around the Asian American community. Asian Critical Race Theory emerged from the various group-specific of the Critical Race Theory movements to address the complex racialization of people of Asian descent in the United States (Curammeng, Buenavista, Cariaga, 2017). One of the first efforts to articulate Asian Americans to reveal the historical, moral, and cultural basis of law was in 1993, the Asian American Legal Scholarship framework (Chang, 1993). Asian Critical Race Theory utilizes Critical Race Theory as a guided framework that acknowledges historical anti-Asian racism, violence, and discrimination. It also mystified the racial positionings of Asian Americans and stereotyped them as the model minority, which then excluded them from being within the political groupings of people of color. Lastly, it captures the complexity and impact of Asian American ethnic communities (Curammeng, Buenavista, Cariaga, 2017).

AsianCrit utilizes Asianization and refers it to how American society views and racializes Asian Americans in distinct ways (Museus & Iftikar, 2013). Asianization focuses on how American society lumps all Asian Americans into a group and perpetuates stereotypes such as the model minority, foreigners, and

threatening yellow perils (Chon 1995; Espiritu 2008; Lowe, 1996; Museus & Kiang, 2009; Saito, 1997a; Yu, 2006). Also, Asianization is a standard tool that society uses to oppress Asian Americans. It is crucial to use this tenet to redefine and develop laws and policies that affect Asian Americans and influence Asian American experiences. For example, the stereotype of the model minority has negatively impacted the various Asian American individuals' experiences in society. This stereotype has constructed that Asian Americans are honorary White within Affirmative action discourse and frames Asian Americans as the victims of race-conscious policies that affect influence society's perspectives and decisions about Affirmative Action pertaining to Asian Americans.

AsianCrit also focuses on the transnational context to bring attention to important national and international contexts for Asian Americans and how racism structures Asian Americans' lived experiences and their living conditions (Takaki 1998). AsianCrit provides a more comprehensive understanding of how racism affects Asian Americans' lives through historical and national processes such as various wars, migration, imperialism, and global economies (Takaki, 1998). There are many examples of how transnational context shapes the lives of Asian Americans in the United States. Some of those cases are military interventions in Southeast Asia that displaced Cambodian, Hmong, Laotian, and Vietnamese Refugees, immigration laws, and bring in highly educated immigrants to meet the job market (Chan, 1991; Takaki 1998).

AsianCrit reconstructs Asian Americans' narratives to understand better and articulate the Asian American story (Museus, & Ifkitar, 2016; Takaki 1998). By reconstructing Asian American history, uncovers racism towards Asian Americans and further goes beyond to re-investigate how Asian Americans have been racially excluded from the United States history and advocate for the invisibility and silence to construct a more accurate and inclusive historical collective of Asian American lived experiences, voices, and realities (Chan, 1991; Takaki 1998; Tamura, 2001; 2003; Umemoto, 1989). By doing so, the narratives of Asian Americans can highlight the shared challenges and struggles that contribute to the development of the common Asian American culture, therefore fostering a stronger sense of the Asian American identity (Takaki 1998.)

AsianCrit feeds into strategic (anti) essentialism, which assumes that race is a social construct and can be transformed based on economic, political, and social forces (Museus & Iftikar, 2013; Spivack, 1987). Asian Americans are racially categorized and racialized in American society; the realities of Asian Americans are negatively impacted by the oppressive economic, political, and social forces. Thus, Asian American researchers and activists can engage in coalition building and redefine the racial categories to gain political power and combat racial oppression (Coloma, 2006; Umemoto, 1989). In higher education, Asian American researchers and educators unite together as one collective to engage in advocacy that reveals the diversity, inequity, struggle, and voices within their communities (Museus & Iftikar, 2013).

Like CRT, AsianCrit echoes the same sentiments when it comes to the intersectionality tenet and acknowledges the intersectionality and the systems of social oppression (Crenshaw, 1993). On the contrary, AsianCrit acknowledges how specific systems must be selected as the focus of an investigation that can highlight the phenomenon under investigation. The intersectionality application can help develop a deeper understanding of the multilayer analysis of the ways social structures, political practices, and identities intersect to create those conditions and realities (Museus & Iftikar, 2013).

AsianCrit contributes to the notions of counterstories, theoretical work, and practices to analyze Asian American experiences and advocate for the Asian American community (Delgado 1992; 1984). The narratives of counter storytelling, theories, and practices also recognize the voices of people of color who have been historically marginalized in academia (1992; 1984). Building from CRT, scholars who stress the importance of storytelling can connect story and theory, theory, and practice (Yamamoto 1997; Brayboy 2005). AsianCrit utilizes storytelling to develop tools for transformative purposes (Museus & Iftikar, 2013). AsianCrit suggests that using the voices and work of Asian Americans can inform theory and praxis in scholarly arenas. Again, echoing the same notion of committing to social justice, AsianCrit advocates ending all forms of oppression and marginalization (Matsuda, 1991). AsianCrit aims to eliminate racism and recognize the intersections between racism and other systems of subordination.

AsianCrit also advocates for the elimination of sexism, heterosexism, capitalism, and other forms of oppression (Matsuda, 1991).

AsianCrit continues to work on experiential knowledge and explores the issue of heterogeneity. AsianCrit can formulate and frame the ways of LGB Asian Americans as a phenomenon. This theoretical framework allows this study to fill a gap in the literature that lacks components of race and institutional barriers. AsianCrit also supports studies to acknowledge its relations to broaden conversations about race in education and further challenge the way people of color, especially Asian Americans, navigate racism, xenophobia, and oppressive environments. Multiple studies utilized Asian Critical Race Theory (AsianCrit) to bring attention to Asian Americans and their perspectives. Museus & Iftikar (2013) used AsianCrit to delineate how society is shaped and built on White supremacy (pg. 45). The AsianCrit framework brought attention to Asian Americans' voices and perspectives and filled in the gaps of Critical Race Theory (Museus & Iftikar, 2013).

In a study, Kolano (2016) had explored how Asians being defined as a model minority made them an invisible community of color (Kolano, 2016). Through the AsianCrit framework, this study was able to share the counternarratives of what it means to be Asian American and how assimilating to whiteness is essentially a way of obtaining cultural wealth (Kolano, 2016). The implications of utilizing AsianCrit for these studies provide a counternarrative for Asian Americans and their experiences and realities.

While AsianCrit provides a racial understanding, an additional theory was needed to supplement the identity of sexuality. Queer theory aims to share non-heterosexual individuals' experiences within a heteronormative environment (Butler, 1999; Sedgwick, 1990; Spargo, 1999). Queer theory also recognizes that experiences may differ from one individual to the next based on their sexual orientation, gender expression, and society expectations (Butler, 1999; Sedgwick, 1990; Spargo, 1999). Queer theory also considers the power dynamics on sexual orientation and gender expression while criticizing the system that created gender norms and expectations (Butler, 1999; Sedgwick, 1990; Spargo, 1999).

Queer Theory

Heterosexism has been constant in American society. It is assumed that everyone is heterosexual or that heterosexism is superior to homosexuality (McNaught, 1993). Heterosexism has also become a worldview, and it is not probably at the forefront of everybody's consciousness. This lens of heterosexism limits the scope of diversity when it comes to sexuality and sexual orientation. Heterosexism is also stigmatizing to non-heterosexism. This is a perspective that is based upon limited opportunity to experience diversity, and it is also biased. American society has historically been heterosexist, and due to this lens, there has been mistreatment, discrimination, and harassment of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, gender-queer, and queer community. Many of the individuals who are a part of this community internalize this attitude, which

leads to the denial of their true selves, low self-esteem, self-hatred, and other mental perceptions of who they are (McNaught, 1993). Heteronormativity is the use of heterosexuality as the norm for understanding gender and sexuality (Warner, 1991).

Queer theory critiques the dominant social construction of gender and sexuality. The first critique is how heteronormativity creates this binary between identifying as heterosexual and non-heterosexual, in which non-heterosexuality is abnormal (Warner, 1991). The second critique is how heteronormativity consolidates the “other,” and the other, in this case, would identify within the LGBTQ community rather than the various sexualities and gender (Muñoz, 1999). The third critique is the privilege of heterosexuality and how society does not acknowledge gender and sexual orientations in power structures (Foucault, 1976).

Queer is an umbrella term that encompasses individuals within the LGBTQ community, including sexuality and gender identities outside the heterosexual and binary norms. According to Abes and Kasch (2007), “Queer theory does not explicitly refer to an identity but rather to the framework of methods that examines the meaning of identity, the intersectionalities of those identities, and resisting oppressive social construction of sexual orientation and gender” (p. 620). Queer theory is derived from post structure theories of Foucault (1976/1978), Derrida (1967/1978), and Lyotard (1984). Foucault argues, “there are no objective and universal truths, but that particular forms of knowledge, and

the ways of being that they engendered become naturalized in cultural and historical ways" (p. 39). Renn (2010) asserted that "among education researchers, LGBTQ, queer, and queer theory are contested terms, and the prevalence and quality of LGBTQ/queer scholarship vary across fields within education research" (p. 132).

Queer theory also views sexuality as a social construct (Stein & Plummer, 1994). Queer theory highlights the construction of heterosexual identities as much a non-conforming identity. Many studies utilized Queer Theory to challenge the heteronormative structures that are in place. By using Queer Theory, the researchers were able to retell the developmental narratives of the participants' identities and challenge the heteronormative society (Abes & Kasch, 2007).

Bendl, Flesichmann, & Hofmann (2009) utilized Queer Theory to approach the organizational discourse to investigate the heteronormative hierarchical process in diversity management. Bendl, Flesichmann, and Hofmann (2009) used this as a framework to examine companies and their code of conduct to develop a better work environment. Based on Bendl, Flesichmann, & Hoffman's analysis and perspectives of the workforce, they discovered that it only benefitted those who identified or fit the heterosexual mold. The implications of using Queer Theory as a lens for these studies create a counter-narrative perspective for the LGBTQ community and provides a platform for their experiences.

Theoretical Rationale

In research, theoretical frameworks are there to serve as a foundation and assist in the direction of interpretation of the research (Rocco & Plakhotnick, 2009). The theoretical frameworks for this study are rooted in Asian Critical Race Theory and Queer Theory. Critical Race Theory views this study through a critical and racial frame that focuses on race and racism and how it differentiates the racialization of Asian Americans and other people of color in the United States (Museus & Iftikar, 2013; Buenavista, 2010; Teranishi, 2002). In conjunction with AsianCrit, Queer Theory views this study through a critical frame focused on non-heterosexism in America. For example, self-identified gay Asian Americans may experience navigating the job search a little differently compared to non-gay Asian Americans, so having a queer perspective focuses on how sexuality changes that experience (Harris, 2014). Researchers in higher education have used queer theory to investigate the experiences of queer students (Abes, 2009; Kasch & Abes, 2007).

Having CRT, AsianCrit, and Queer Theory frame my study is crucial to understanding the complexity and layers of the lived experiences of lesbian, gay, or bisexual Asian Americans working in a designed heterosexual environment to disadvantage them systematically. CRT and AsianCrit explain racism and its institutional presence in American society, while Queer Theory underlines the importance of non-heterosexism and non-binary structures. These theories use a different lens to capture the understanding of this research topic. The best way to

understand the intersection of identities and roles as manifest in the lives of LGB Asian American student affair professionals, I need to consider the participants' stories which acknowledge the various systems they are in (Caine, Steeves, Clandinin, Estefan, Huber, & Murphy, 2017). Theoretically speaking, both AsianCrit and Queer Theory can stand alone in research, and there are some aspects of each theory that compliment and enhance one another. Queer theory centers the focus on sexuality amongst Asian Americans.

Research Questions

There have been a few studies on lesbian, gay, or bisexual Asian Americans in the workplace, especially within higher education and Student Affairs. Therefore, to contribute to the literature on lesbian, gay, or bisexual Asian Americans in Student Affairs, this study will focus on a sample of self-identified lesbian, gay, or bisexual Asian American individuals who serve in Student Affairs roles in higher education to understand and investigate their perceptions of sexual orientation, Asian ethnicity, and values within the workplace. My primary research question that drives this inquiry is, "for Asian Americans who identify as LGB, how does this impact their career trajectory in student affairs?"

Delimitations

This study focused explicitly on self-identified lesbian, gay, or bisexual Asian American individuals, which were identified as the targeted population. This study did not include members of the Pacific Islander community due to the limited

access to this community and the unique challenges this community faces that are different from other Asian ethnicities in the workplace; thus, they deserve their own study to provide sufficient data collection and analysis (Davis & Huang, 2013).

Also, another delimitation to this study was the exclusions of those who identify as transgender or trans. Due to the limited access to this community, the idiosyncrasies, and the various challenges of the trans community, their realities are different from those who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual. Thus, they deserve their own study in order to provide a more robust data collection and analysis.

Another delimitation to this study was the exclusions of those individuals who are not working in U.S. Territories. This study only targeted individuals working at four-year, two-year, private, and public higher education institutions in the United States, Alaska, or Hawaii. This study also did not include employees working abroad in American universities. The customs and cultures of the various host countries may affect the environment of the employee; hence, this study will only focus on colleges and universities that are part of the United States.

Even though this study recruited participants employed at a higher education institution, this study did not include faculty members or administrative staff. It will only examine professionals in traditional student services roles in Student Affairs. The ability to focus solely on these experiences provided a more narrow focus to explore the findings of this study.

Moreover, to receive a strong sense of one's personal reality, this study focused on the experiences of lesbian, gay, or bisexual Asian American Student Affairs professionals. This study did not include those who are undergraduate, graduate students, or part-time employees. This requirement was used as a qualifier to indicate one’s readiness to navigate their role within higher education and allow participants to reflect on various facets of their journey, including challenges, success, and strategies they have developed to manage their identities in the workplace.

Significance of Study

By investigating LGB Asian Americans' experiences in Student Affairs roles in colleges and universities, this study provided a platform to a community that has not been meticulously researched. In general, research on Asian Americans has been under examined. Furthermore, the intersection of sexual orientation and Asian American identities remains rarely explored. As a result of the model minority stereotype, a common misperception in literature is that Asian Americans do not need to be studied since they do not require supports to succeed. Therefore, this study validated the lived realities of this specific community and possibly shed light on narratives that have not been given attention to current Asian American issues.

With the growth of Asian Americans enrolling in higher education and how college is a time where many students explore their identities, such as sexuality,

this study contributed knowledge and factors to senior administrators in providing adequate support and resources. Senior administration can also employ the physical representation of LGB Asian Americans or LGB Professional of Colors in higher education better to reflect the growing diversity of the student population within the United States. This study brought awareness to Asian Americans' experiences of different genders, sexual orientations, and various ethnicities to describe their unique challenges and issues when working in Student Affairs at a higher education institution.

This study may also be notable to the field of higher education and student affairs, especially those who identify as LGB Asian Americans. Asian Americans are one of the fastest-growing racial groups in the nation. Many complexities may fall within this racial group, such as sexuality; it would be beneficial for leaders in higher education to recruit, prepare, support, and retain leaders of diverse backgrounds who can work effectively with students of similar backgrounds (U.S. Census, 2018).

They were contributing a new lens to the field of Asian American Studies and Ethnic Studies by providing another lens of Asian Americans or ethnic Americans. In addition, this study added the field of Gender and Sexuality Studies by providing another lens of sexuality, specifically those who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual. With more research supporting how students succeed more when they see themselves in the curriculum, this study can reduce Asian Americans' stereotype of being a model minority. By contributing to the body of

research on both Asian Americans and Sexuality, this study can assist in identifying those challenges and stressors that environments may have overlooked.

In addition, with the underrepresentation of LGB Asian Americans in the field of Student Affairs, this study discovered how LGB Asian Americans may contribute to the field of education through their identities of being lesbian, gay, or bisexual and Asian American and possible encourage a generation of leaders to emerge.

Definitions of Key Terms

There will be various terms used throughout this study that are key components to the research topic. Provided below is a list of terms that are defined and elaborated on how they will be utilized throughout the study:

- *Asian American:* This term is an umbrella term for pan-Asians to address social injustices (Espiritu, 1992; Talusan, 2016). For this specific study, Asian Americans will be the term used throughout the study.
- *East Asian:* This term identifies individuals who are from or have descent from Japan, China, Taiwan, and Korea.
- *Southeast Asian:* This term identifies individuals who are from or have descent from Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, Myanmar, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Philippines, Timor, and Brunei.

- *South Asian:* This term identifies individuals who are from or have descent from Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives.
- *Pacific Islander*: This term identifies individuals who are from or has descent from 20 distinct pacific islands throughout the United States that include the Polynesian group (Hawaii, Tokelau, Samoa, Tahiti, and Tonga), the Micronesian group (Marina Island, Saipan, Guam, Yap, Chunk, Kosrae, Kiribati, Pohnpei, and Palau), and the Melanesian group (Solomon Islands, Fiji, Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea) (Hixon, Hepler & Kim, 2012).
- *Model Minority*: The social construction of this cultural expectation placed on Asian Americans as a group that each individual is smart, wealthy, hard-working, docile, and spiritually enlightened (Neilson, 2002).
- *Race:* This term is a concept that symbolizes sociopolitical conflicts and interest in reference to different types of humans based on the color of their skin and where they are from (Winant, 2000).
- *Sexuality:* This term incorporates the view of sexual orientation (a desire of specific gender) and also includes who individuals express their gender, identify their gender, and who they are physically and emotionally attracted to (Brickell, 2006; Foucault, 1978). For this specific study, sexuality will be defined as those who have a desire for a specific gender based on their gender.

- *LGBTQ*: This is an acronym that stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer and is widely accepted within higher education when discussing marginalized sexual orientation (Renn, 2007).
- *LGB*: This is an acronym that stands for lesbian, gay, and bisexual, and this acronym will be the only acronyms used for this particular study.
- *Student Affairs Professional:* This term is defined as professional in higher education that is dedicated to serving students holistically and to complement the academic mission of the institution, usually through career guidance, multicultural centers, residential life, student life, and many more (Nuss, 2003).
- *Queer:* This term is an all-inclusive term that encompasses sexuality and gender as a spectrum; this relates to any sexual expression that is not nonheterosexuality (Doty, 1993).|

Summary

LGB Asian Americans must tackle the perception that they are not genuinely accepted into mainstream America, and at the same time, be used as the "example" immigrant that can start from the bottom and rise to success in American (Ahuna, 2009). In particular, LGB Asian Americans are still under-researched, and there is minimal literature, if any, on this specific population. In consideration of American higher education systems, whites continue to be

represented in various institutions, while Asian Americans do not, especially those who identify as LGB Asian Americans.

The purpose of this study was to understand how sexuality and racial identity intersect to affect the experiences of LGB Asian American Student Affairs professionals in four-year, two-year, public, and private American colleges and universities. Research about Asian Americans has increased over the years, with the most current literature focused on college students, student success, identity development, or mental health. Also, most research focused on sexuality focuses on the experiences of those who identify as white. Again, there are minimal studies on the experiences of LGB Asians or Asian Americans. This study explored LGB Asian Americans' perception of their racial/ethnic identity, their sexual orientation, and how they navigate the workplace based on the intersections of their identities through the theoretical lens of AsianCrit and Queer Theory. In the following chapter, the research continued to explore the current research to understand the participants' lived experiences.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature provides an overview of the scholarly foundations for this study on LGB Asian American Student Affairs professionals and the phenomenon of identities impacting their experiences in the workplace. The review of the literature was separated into sections: the field of Student Affairs, research on the characteristics of Asian Americans, and research on the characteristics of LGB Asian Americans. The chapter ends with theoretical frameworks utilized: Critical Race Theory, AsianCrit, and Queer Theory.

The Field of Student Affairs

The history of Student Affairs can be traced back to when higher education institutions needed to hire administrators to primarily be responsible for students' welfare and behavior (Hevel, 2016). Many scholars noted that the field of Student Affairs emerged and was influenced by the Progressive Era (Nidiffer, 2000; Caple, 1998; Bledstein, 1976). The Progressive Era was a period that developed many vocations such as education, urbanization, industrialization, and immigration (Nidiffer, 2000). Caple (1998) claimed, "the influence of progressivism continued to be a major factor in college student personnel during the 1960s" (pg. 85). *The Student Personnel Point of View* was the necessary foundation and rationale for the field of Student Affairs due to the emphasis on

"student as a whole" or "holistic development of a student" (Hevel, 2016; Caple, 1998).

The early years of Student Affairs had witnessed racism (Hevel, 2016). African Americans were excluded from Student Affairs positions at predominantly White institutions in the 20th century (Nidiffer, 2002). Research has shown that men of color who served in senior-level positions in Student Affairs remained mostly absent (Hevel, 2016). Similarly, there were issues related to the National Association of Deans of Women, founded in 1916 (Hevel, 2016). Lucy Diggs Slowe, an educator, and activist challenged the National Association of Deans of Women to be inclusive (Nidiffer, 2002). Although the National Association of Deans of Women did not discriminate when it came to membership, it excluded African American women from leadership roles and speaking engagements. They also held segregated meetings, racially differentiated entrances, and the use of service elevators to separate participants (Hevel, 2016; Eisenmann, 2006). Later generations of Student Affairs administrators who worked at various institutions throughout the civil rights movement of the late 1960s and 1970s exhibited a more proactive pedagogical approach to tackling racial inequality and assisting minority students, according to historical research (Gaston-Gayles, Wolf-Wendel, Tuttle, Twombly, & Ward, 2005; Herdlein, 2005; Sartorius, 2014).

Also, the early years of Student Affairs were perceived as homophobic (Hevel, 2016). From 1920 through the 1960s, heterosexual, cisgender male higher education administrators moved quickly to remove faculty and staff

members who were perceived to be "homosexual" (Hevel, 2016; Dilley, 2002; Nash & Silverman, 2015; Wright, 2006). Some of those administrators also did purges on their campuses to catch gay students and punished them (whether they were gay, perceived as gay, or rumored to be gay) (Hevel, 2016; Dilley, 2002; Nash & Silverman, 2015; Wright, 2006). Early Student Affairs administrators could expel gay students at any time, even right before graduation, leading some students to commit suicide (Hevel, 2016; Dilley, 2002; Nash & Silverman, 2015; Wright, 2006). However, with the expansion in the 1970s, or gay student organizations, state legislatures and Student Affairs administrators tried terminating their existence (Beemyn, 2003; Clawson 2014). State legislatures and Student Affairs administrators claimed that these organizations violated the law and went against campus morals (Beemyn, 2003; Clawson 2014). Yet, some Student Affairs professionals were against the homophobia and heterosexual norms created by their peers (Hevel, 2016). By the 21st century, Student Affairs began to embrace individuals who identified as LGBTQ (Clawson, 2014; Sartorius, 2014).

The field of Student Affairs has evolved tremendously over the last hundred years or so and has multiplied in size and scope.

> Currently, Student Affairs encompasses some or all of the following offices: admissions, financial aid, Deans of Students, career services, mental health and wellness services, residential life, student activities, minority affairs/multicultural centers, women's affairs/centers, pre-

> professional affairs, student abroad placement, TRIO/HEOP offices, study skills center, and orientation programs (Barr, 2000; Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education [CAS], 2001; Sandeen, 1991). These areas are at the forefront of supporting students in conjunction with the academic mission through co-curricular activities, services, and programs. Today, most of the senior-level administrators in Student Affairs are considered crucial partners within their institutions and their management team (Barr, 2000, pg.58).

One of the most prominent Student Affairs organizations that exist is the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, also known as "NASPA" (NASPA, 2020). The National Association of Student Personnel Administrators was established in 1919. Today, NASPA has over 15,000 members representing 50 states, 25 countries, and 8 U.S. territories (NASPA, 2020). NASPA is one of the leading professional associations that promotes career advancements, innovative initiatives, and Student Affairs sustainability. This organization equips students and professionals who want to create an environment to cultivate student learning and success for holistic development (NASPA, 2020). Using the NASPA membership database, Wang and Teranishi (2012) examined the membership makeup of Student Affairs professionals and found that membership records, 61% of members were Caucasian, 16% African American, 8% Hispanic, 4% Asian American/Pacific Islander (AAPI), and 1% Native American (p.19).

Student Affairs has transformed itself based on the various political climates (racism, sexism, and homophobia) that emerge within American Society (Hevel, 2016). In order to understand the problems of the past, this study plans to explore the intersection of race and sexuality and its impact on student affairs professionals. There is little existing historical knowledge about Asian Americans and openly LGB administrators (Hevel, 2016; Ocampo & Soojinda, 2016).

Research on Asian Americans

Asian Americans come from different ethnic, cultural, linguistic, religious, and social backgrounds. Asian American is a term used for individuals living in the United States from various Asian and Pacific Islander backgrounds. According to the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (2017), they are among the fasting growing racial groups in the United States. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2019), there was an estimate of 22.2 million Asian American and Pacific Islanders alone that resided in the United States in 2019. Out of the 22.2 million, the largest ethnic populations among the Asian American community are Chinese, Taiwanese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, Asian Indian, and Vietnamese (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019). Out of the 22.2 million Asian Americans, about a million are Native Hawaiian and Another Pacific Islander (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019).

Barriers for Asian Americans

The literature on Asian American Student Affairs professionals discusses potential barriers they had to overcome. These barriers were defined as societal barriers or cultural barriers (Phan, 2013). Societal barriers are considered stereotypes, racial bias, and discrimination (Wong, 2002; Chong, 2003; Li-Bug, 2011). Cultural barriers are regarded as a language, traditional Asian values of hard work, and obeying the family (Phan, 2013; Wong, 2002; Chong, 2003; Li-Bug, 2011). These variables may have influenced the perceptions of decision-makers about Asian Americans in the hiring process or experiences Asian Americans may encounter within the institution (Mella, 2012). These characteristics, according to language and other challenges, prohibit Asian Americans from seeking employment as rapidly. Employers may prefer U.S. citizens for a variety of reasons, including immigration limitations, simpler paperwork for U.S. citizens, preferences for native-born workers, and others (Sakamoto & Furuichi 2002; Kim, 2010). Higher-educated Asian Americans encounter greater prejudice in the workplace than lower-educated Asian Americans (Sakamoto & Furuichi 2002; Kim, 2010).

Cultural Barriers

Asian cultures impact the ways Asian Americans, even LGB Asian Americans, view themselves in society. Many Asian Americans experience several conflicts as they become more exposed to the majority of society's traditions, values, and norms (Neilson, 2002; Teranishi, 2002). These individuals

are living in two differing world-views, their Asian culture, and the American culture. Thus, living in an American Society and identifying with Asian cultures can present navigation challenges. Many Asian American families are highly collectivistic, focusing more on the family as a whole instead of its individual. It pushes the family member to prioritize the goal of the family over their personal needs and desires. Due to this collectivist mindset, Asian American families have instilled this notion of success and failure in the individual and the whole family (Neilson, 2002; Teranishi, 2002). It is difficult for Asian Americans to live their reality due to the family's facts. Some of the cultural barriers that impact Asian Americans are this concept of collectivism instead of individualism, traditional values, and language barriers.

One study was conducted to examine the effects of stigma, cultural barriers, and acculturation of Asian American college students. Han and Pong (2016) wanted to explore the importance of acculturation, this collectivist mindset, and how Asian American college students experience their reality and any mental health challenges. This study was a quantitative study that utilized a cross-sectional survey in-person survey questions pertained to stigma and mental health, acculturation issues, cultural barriers, language barriers and psychological issues for Asian American college students, and their willingness to seek mental health services (Han & Pong, 2016). The researcher was able to recruit 76 participants from a community college and had to dismiss ten

participants due to the eligibility criteria. Of the participants, 66.5% participants identified as females, and 33.5% were male.

Regarding ethnicity, 24.2% of the Vietnamese participants, followed by 21% Filipino and 19% Chinese; the rest were Korean, South Indian, Cambodian, and Japanese. The findings for “seeking mental health help” showed that Out of 66 participants, 65.2% responded that they were willing to seek mental health services, and 34.8% reported that they were unwilling to do so (Han & Pong 2016). In addressing culture, stigma, and mental health seeking behavior, Han & Pong utilized a bivariate analysis using an independent t-test to test the relationship between acculturation, cultural context, preference for racially/ethnically concordant counselor, stigma, and mental-health-seeking willingness among the participants. The test resulted in an average score of participants; those who answered no to seeking mental health were 32.6. Participants' answer yes to seeking mental health was 36.4, indicating that the participants who were willing to seek mental health were acculturated to American society.

The current study's main finding confirmed the significant effect of stigma and mental health seeking behaviors among Asian American students (Han & Pong, 2016). Han & Pong (2016) expanded on how the collectivist mindset negatively affects their sense of personal well-being. Han & Pong also discovered that many participants indicated they were discouraged from expressing their emotions due to how it leads to showing personal weaknesses.

They would suppress it for the family. This study's limitations were the geographic location, the number of participants, and the underrepresentation of Asian ethnicities.

Societal Barriers

Societal barriers are obstacles and setbacks created by external factors and the environment that impact an individual based on how they navigate society. In general, people are resistant to change, especially when social constructs and norms are in place, such as racism. Some of the societal barriers that impact the Asian American community are the lack of community support, stereotypes of being the Model Minority, racism, and xenophobia. In this study, it is important to examine the external factors and how LGB Asian Americans navigate their day based on their racial identities.

One societal barrier of Asian Americans is the stereotype of Asian Americans. The main stereotype associated with Asian Americans is the model minority (Kim, 2013; Chou & Feagin, 2008). This stereotype emerged in the mid 1960s, where there was a growing awareness of African Americans and Chicano/Latinos (Kim, 2013; Chou & Feagin, 2008). As society continued to portray poverty, dysfunctional families, and crime to those specific groups, Asian Americans became the group that was able to follow the American dream (Kim, 2013; Chou & Feagin, 2008). Asian Americans are known as the "model" minority due to their achievements in education and high socioeconomic status (Kim, 2013). As the model minority, many view Asian Americans as quiet, hard

workers, obedient, and able to assimilate in a quick manner (Kim, 2013; Chou & Feagin, 2008; Osajima, 1988).

The stereotype of Asian Americans as submissive; not rocking the boat; passive and quiet (Kim, 2013; Chou & Feagin, 2008) can have positive connotations, from a leadership perspective, they make Asian Americans appear ill-suited to lead (Osajima, 1988; (Lee et al., 2018; Wong, Lai, Nagasawa, & Lin, 1998; Kiang, Witkow, & Thompson, 2016). In essence, the attributes for which Asian American students have earned the reputation of "model students" appear to work against their career advancement. Conformity, obedience, and quietness turn into disadvantages, seen as the lack of communication and leadership skills. As a result, individuals in positions to mentor or sponsor Asian Americans and enable their career ascension often track into lower to middle-class jobs. Asian Americans pursuing leadership positions have to confront a widely shared belief that they lack leadership skills and do not possess the attributes associated with management potential (Sue, Zane, & Sue, 1987).

A study conducted by Gupta, Szymanski, and Leong (2011) investigated how the endorsements of stereotypes of Asian Americans contributed to Asian's distress and their attitudes towards finding help and support. This study intended to use "status-based resection sensitivity" to explore the relationship between internalized racism with the Asian community and psychological distress. Gupta, Szymanski, and Leong's study posited Asian Americans internalized the stereotypes, which can negatively impact their feelings and affect their academic

trajectory and career aspirations. This study recruited 291 participants who identified as Asian Americans. Twenty-five percent of the participants identified as male, and 75% of the participants identified as female. Regarding ethnicity, 27% of the participants identified as Chinese, 6% identified as Filipino, 31% identified as Indian Asian, 8% identified as Japanese, 11% identified as Korean, 7% identified as Taiwanese, 7% identified as Vietnamese, and 16% identified as other.

The participants were given a web-based survey, and 291 of them completed the survey. The survey used for this study measured the endorsement of positive Asian stereotypes, endorsement of positive stereotypes on self, psychological distress, attitudes towards seeking assistance. Collectively, the Attitude Towards Asian Scale was used to assess the stereotypes, and the Hopkins Symptoms Checklist was used to explore psychological distress, and the Attitudes Towards Seeking Professional Psychological Help Scale was used to assess those seeking help. Based on the results, the participants believing the model minority myth was related to more complaints, higher levels of psychological distress, and less favorable attitudes toward help-seeking. The results of this study highlighted that these stereotypes and internalized racism puts pressure on Asian Americans who do not feel like they are carrying out the Model Minority Myth, and these stereotypes lead to differential treatment and discrimination (Gupta, Szymanski, & Leong, 2011).

The Bamboo Ceiling

The term "glass ceiling" was coined in 1986 to address the challenges women experience in achieving upward mobility in the workplace. Women who have played by the rules and aspire to leadership positions at the top found an invisible barrier between them and their goals. The glass ceiling is not merely an obstacle for an individual but applies to women as a group whose careers are limited because they are women (Morrison, White, & Velsor, 1992; Woo, 2000). People of color have been more aware of the glass ceiling effect in recent years. When Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders graduate from college, they typically have no trouble finding entry-level jobs; but, once they reach the point where a mid- or higher management position is the logical next step, they encounter sudden career plateauing (Morrison, White, & Velsor, 1992; Woo, 2000).

The Bamboo Ceiling arose from this occurrence and Asian Americans' experiences (Hyun, 2005). The Bamboo Ceiling is a term that has been used to describe the various challenges and difficulties that Asian Americans have experienced in their quest for upward mobility (Hyun, 2005). The absence of Asian American representation in leadership posts is the outcome of this "bamboo ceiling." Despite the fact that they are much more likely than the average population to acquire a college degree (Hyun, 2005).

The bamboo ceiling in higher education has been the subject of a few studies (Lee, 2002; Yan & Museus, 2013). To figure out why the Bamboo Ceiling

exists, researchers used a variety of regression techniques. Lee (2010 and 2019) did two research to learn more about the Bamboo Ceiling and Asian Americans in higher education.

For the researcher's first study, Lee used multiple regression techniques to examine the 2010 data from the Higher Education Research Initiative Faculty Survey from public and private, two-year and four-year American universities and colleges (Lee, 2019). Lee (2019) examined the existence of the bamboo ceiling, the explanation of the bamboo ceiling, and the underrepresentation of Asian Americans in leadership. The data included over 35,000 faculty members. Regarding race, 89.5% of the faculty members identified as White, followed by 5% identifying as Asian American and Pacific Islander, 2.8% identifying as Black, and 2.7% identifying as Latinx. Lee (2019) discovered that the model was statistically significant and race, with Asian American faculty as the reference category, was significantly and negatively related to holding a leadership position. Based on the regressions, Lee (2019) also discovered that the salience of the bamboo ceiling or lower likelihood of Asian Americans to attain leadership positions was the same at different levels of rank and tenure status.

For the researcher's second study, Lee used an experimental paradigm to explore how the stereotypes of Asian Pacific Islander Americans affected their experiences as leaders in higher education. This study recruited 178 participants, where 75.3% of the participants identified as White, 10.7% identified as Asian Pacific Islander Americans, 10.7% identified as Black, and 4.5% identified as

Latinx. The participants completed a survey to evaluate a faculty member as a potential candidate for the President of the university (Lee, 2019). Lee (2019) compared perceived leadership effectiveness between stereotype Asian Americans and Whites with identical skills and conducted analyses of covariance on perceived leadership effectiveness with the experimental condition as the independent variable. The findings showed a contrast showed that stereotype-consistent APIAs had lower ratings for “good job” and lower rankings for “should be hired” compared to Whites with identical skills.

From both studies, participants indicated the Asian Pacific Islander Americans have low ratings or negative comments and were not recommended for leadership opportunities due to the various stigmas of identifying as Asian Pacific Islander Americans. The main findings lie in the perceptions of stereotypes of Asian Americans, such as Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders are not able to make decisions; they are passive and not knowing how to lead, and they are unable to mentor those under them (Lee, 2013; Hyun 2005).

Lesbian, Gay, And Bisexual Asian Americans

The current literature and research on Asian Americans have been overwhelmingly focused on the development of lived Asian American experiences and deconstruction of the model minority stereotype (Ng, Lee, & Pak, 2007; Teranishi; 2002). The literature and research on the intersections of sexuality within the Asian American community have been limited (Hom, 2009;

Manalansan, 2003). Many LGB Asian Americans value traditional Asian culture, such as collectivism and conformity to norms, which protects them from the discrimination and racism of Asian Americans (Kim, Atkinson, & Yang 1999; Sue & Sue, 1999). However, the traditional values also can be stressors that contribute to isolation and marginalization as a sexual minority within the Asian American community (Boulden, 2009). Within the Asian culture, identifying as lesbian or gay can be seen as negative behaviors in the family who have to adhere to traditional Asian values, therefore bringing shame to the family (Szymanski & Sung, 2010). Identifying as a sexual minority within the Asian family can lead to rejection and failure (Chan, 1989; Chung & Katayama, 1998; Fukuyama & Ferguson, 2000).

Coming Out as Asian Americans

Those who identify as Asian Americans come from various backgrounds and ethnic groups, and with those with dual identities as LGB and Asian American, there is an added level of complexity. Those who come out as lesbian, gay, or bisexual in the Asian American community share similar experiences and challenges (Human Rights Campaign Foundation, 2018). Some of the challenges for those individuals who come out as lesbian, gay, or bisexual in the Asian American community are homophobia within the Asian American Community, family expectations, and mental health (Human Rights Campaign Foundation, 2018).

With society creating images and perceptions of what it means to identify within the LGBTQ community, it is difficult to come out for Asian Americans (Ocampo & Soojinda, 2016). Furthermore, the intersectionality of race can also affect the various experiences of someone who identifies within the LGBTQ community.

There are several barriers that lesbian, gay, bisexual Asian Americans face, such as homophobia, not meeting family expectations, and mental health (Human Rights Campaign Foundation, 2018). According to Ocampo and Soodjinda (2016), sexual identity within the Asian American community is complex. Asian Americans instill a sense of pressure and obligation to excel academically and to secure an excellent job as a sign of respect for their parental sacrifices (Ocampo & Soodjinda, 2016; Schneider and Lee, 1990). Consequently, identifying as "gay" within the Asian American community would deviate from the collectivist mindset of the family, also going against heteronormative society (Ocampus and Soojinda, 2016; Chang 1989; Akerlund & Cheung, 2002). Ocampo and Soodjinda (2016) stated that it was tough for Asian Americans to find the compatibility of their sexuality and their ethnicity (Hahm & Adkins, 2009). Secondly, Asian Americans opt-out of embracing their sexual identity because it could alienate them from their community (Ocampo & Soodjinda, 2016). Thirdly, being "gay" within the Asian American community often leads to different levels of harassment and bullying., such as in school (Ocampo & Soodjinda, 2016).

Disclosure of Being A LGB Asian American

Identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual can potentially bring harm and disgrace to the family. Therefore, there are many LGB Asian Americans who often hide their sexuality to protect their family (Chan,1998). Coming out as a lesbian, gay, bisexual can be challenging, depending on the support system of the individual (Ocampo & Soodjinda, 2016; Chan, 1998). Happiness for an Asian person may be defined in the context of the joy of the family unit rather than on an individual level. Therefore, contrary to the American culture, an Asian person may be more concerned about how their coming out will affect the collective family rather than just themselves.

The literature was underdeveloped when it comes to Asian Americans and disclosing their sexuality. Chan (1989) conducted one of the earliest empirical studies to examine the issues of identity development among Asian American Lesbians and Gay Men and coming out. This study explored the various factors that affect an Asian American's choice to identify as lesbian or gay. Chan did quantitative research, where she distributed 60 questionnaires and ended up with 35 participants. In her study, 19 participants were women, and 16 participants were men. Of the participants, 90 percent of them were Chinese, Korean, or Japanese, and 10% were from Filipino, Bangladesh, and Asian Indian backgrounds. They were surveyed about family, racial identity, sexual orientation, coming out processes, and discrimination. Twenty-five percent of the participants disclosed their lesbian/gay identity to their parents, while 75% have

not disclosed their lesbian/gay identity (Chan, 1989). Also, 77% of participants said that it was harder for them to come out to other Asian Americans due to similar traditional cultures and values (Chan, 1989). Lastly, 97% of the participants disclosed their sexual orientation to their friends due to the acceptance and sense of belonging (Chan,1989). The results of the survey suggested that Asian American lesbians and gays struggle with the fear of being dismissed from their families and stigmatized in both the Asian American and LGBTQ communities. Amongst the participants, Chan (1989) discovered that many of the participants mentioned Asian culture ostracizes those who identify as lesbian or gay.

"The LGB community racially discriminates against people who belong to the Asian American group," Chan (1989) claims (p. 18). Most notably, Chan (1989) discovered through the surveys that participants could not choose one identity over the other, and that they would reject their identities as a whole. Given how difficult it is to come out to their family, participants also expressed how tough it was to seek advice from their community due of their race (Chan, 1989). The participants in this survey stated that identifying as lesbian or homosexual while also being Asian American has resulted in increased prejudice (Chan, 1989). Despite the fact that this research is now obsolete, it gave us a better knowledge of Asian American lesbians and homosexuals and why they choose or refuse to reveal their identities to their friends and relatives.

Individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual (LGB) continue to suffer difficulties as a result of their sexual orientation and the extent to which they are out. Being out can result in a range of negative experiences, including bullying, discrimination, and, in some circumstances, physical assault. Nonetheless, the contributions of Student Affairs workers who identify as LGB are vital in supporting others who are dealing with sexual orientation and identity concerns. Given the variety of student and staff populations on college campuses, these concerns are especially common.

Even as popular acceptance and inclusive policies, both private and public, have progressed, workplace discrimination has remained (Embrick, Walther, & Wickens, 2007). The Lavender Ceiling is a structural obstacle that openly gay and lesbian people face in the workplace (Swan, 1995). Discrimination based on sexual orientation is one of the remaining socially accepted biases in the workplace, according to Bell, zbilgin, Beauregard, and Sürgevil (2011). Because queer professionals are responsible for creating an inclusive environment for student development and advocating for their lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students, discussions must delve into their own experiences and reveal the difficulties they face in disclosing their orientations due to potential workplace discrimination.

Queer Student Affairs workers confront prejudice when it comes to advancement to higher leadership positions because of the many ways sexual orientation can affect workplace socialization and competence. The lavender

ceiling outlines the explicit regulations and implicit perceptions that may limit professional mobility as a barrier to development (Swan, 1995).

According to Renn (2007), LGBTQ young adults become advocates on college campuses, causing younger students to become more outspoken; however, because of their advocacy tendencies, individuals may be asked to speak on behalf of their marginalized community on a regular basis, making them feel tokenized (Balsam, Molina, Beadnell, Simoni, & Walters, 2011; Russell & Bohan, 2016). Lavender ceiling rules act as a barrier to this trend in the workplace, since a dearth of LGBT leaders leads to a lack of role models for young LGBT professionals (Renn, 2007). If a person does not fit within gender normative notions, such as a male, homosexual teacher, gender ceiling practices may have an influence on their professional options (Ragins & Cornwell, 2001; Rocco & Gallagher, 2006).

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Restatement of Purpose

The goal of this research was to find out how the intersection of racial identity and sexuality has shaped the experiences of LGB, Asian American Student Affairs professionals at US universities and institutions. The following are the main research questions that are driving this investigation:for Asian Americans who identify as LGB, how does that impact their career trajectory in student affairs?

Researcher Background

In San Bernardino, California, the researcher was an Ed.D. student in the Department of Educational Leadership and Technology at California State University San Bernardino. At the University of California, Riverside, he is currently the Assistant Director for Leadership and Engagement in Residential Life. He previously worked at UCR as a Program Coordinator for Asian Pacific Student Programs and at the University of Southern California as a Program Manager for Asian Pacific American Student Services. At Merrimack College in North Andover, Massachusetts, he received his Master of Education in Higher Education Administration. He worked in the Dean's Offices for both the School of Education and Social Policy and the School of Science and Engineering during

his graduate career as a Student Services Coordinator. At California State University, Fullerton, he also received a Bachelor of Science in Biochemistry.

The researcher is the son of Vietnamese immigrants and is a first-generation Vietnamese American. He grew raised in Orange County, California's Garden Grove, commonly known as "Little Saigon." His neighborhood was primarily Latinx, Asian, and Southeast Asian, with Korean, Vietnamese, and Mexicans accounting for the majority of the population. His upbringing took place in a conservative neighborhood. At a young age, the researcher developed a passion for leadership. His K-12 teachers were all White men or women, and the only non-white employees were secretaries and custodians, he noticed. It was a heteronormative culture and atmosphere. The researcher was going through a period of identity development in terms of his sexual orientation and what it meant to be Asian American at the same time. After graduating from high school, the researcher founded the Gay Straight Alliance.

He eventually chose California State University, Fullerton in Southern California, after applying to a number of schools. Due to financial constraints and a lack of knowledge about higher education at the time, staying local and assisting his family when needed would be preferable. The researcher failed to grasp the principles of being at a university as a first-generation college student, and after his first semester, he was placed on academic probation. He stayed motivated during his time at Cal State Fullerton by participating in school activities. He was a member of Alpha Phi Omega, the Gay Straight Alliance, and

the Alumni Student Ambassadors, among other groups. He also worked as an Orientation Leader, Information Specialist, Marketing Assistant, and Membership Assistant while still a student on campus.

Because of his experiences, he was able to refine his leadership abilities. He recognized the importance of advocating for justice, challenging society norms, and educating himself and others about the need of being a good ally. His work and attention were directed toward raising awareness of the community's socioeconomic predicament and its ramifications for the higher education pipeline. His experiences in a variety of occupations and organizations shaped him into the leader and scholar he is today. By contributing to research and effecting positive change, the researcher hopes to have a positive impact on higher education.

The researcher noticed a lack of social fairness and variety in his community. Because of the lack of access to and injustice of resources, he aspired to study something that would contribute to positive transformation and holistic growth in his community. Student Affairs was that field. The researcher observed that by working in Student Affairs, he could not only provide representation in a higher education environment and act as a resource for current college students, but he could also provide information on the higher education pipeline to the K-12 community. Working in higher education will allow the researcher to relieve some of the difficulties that first-generation college students, students of color, and LGBTQ students encounter. As a result, the

researcher decided to pursue a PhD in order to advance his career as one of the few LGB Asian Americans working in higher education.

Research Design

This study used a phenomenological methodology to investigate lived experiences and understand how meaning is generated to better understand how identities influence experiences of lesbian, gay, or bisexual Asian American Student Affairs employees at American colleges and universities (Sokolowski, 2002). Phenomenology is a method of investigating the truth underlying a phenomena (Sokolowski, 2002; Adamos, 2019). Participants were able to communicate their reality using this qualitative technique, which captured their lived experiences that are rarely portrayed in the existing literature (Sokolowski, 2002; Adamos, 2019).

Similarly to Adamos (2019), the researcher will be using Creswell's (2013) phenomenological principles, the researcher focused this study on a group of LGB Asian Americans working in Student Affairs at colleges and universities while staying objective throughout one-on-one interviews (pg. 78). Creswell's (2013) proposals will serve as a procedural map for this investigation (page 81):

1. To ensure that the research topic is properly investigated using a phenomenological methodology;
2. To appropriately identify the study's key phenomenon;

3. To observe the phenomenon as it is, without regard for the external environment;

4. Collecting data regarding the experience through in-depth and multiple interviews with participants; and

5. The interview protocol centers on four general questions, which are followed by more specific inquiries aimed at understanding the phenomenon of the participants' lived experiences (pg 81).

The three-interview series approach of interviewing proposed by Schuman (1982) in Siedman was also adapted in this study (2013) (Adamos, 2019). The three-interview approach started with an initial interview to establish the context of the participants' experiences, then moved on to a second interview to allow the participants to reconstruct the details of their experiences, and finally to a third interview to encourage participants to reflect on the meaning of their experiences (Adamos, 2019; Siedman, 2013).

With this in mind, and with respect for the format, the researcher embraced this paradigm and performed a single 1-2 hour interview focused on the participants' personal histories, present experiences, and reflections on how their experiences brought them to where they are now. This handled all three areas and provided direction control without sacrificing the method's value and strength of reasoning (Adamos, 2019) Siedman, 2013). The interviews were performed according to an interview procedure, and voice recordings were made for transcription and record keeping. The researcher will write a reflective memo

on his first ideas, observations, feelings, and review following each interview (Adamos, 2019).

The transcripts of each interview were evaluated to find similar statements, resulting in a list of similar themes (Creswell, 2013). After identifying a set of themes, the researcher created textural and structural descriptions of the experience to offer context for describing what and how the participants as a group experienced the phenomena (Creswell, 2013). This study explored the professional experiences of lesbian, gay, and bisexual Asian Americans in the area of Student Affairs using this approach.

Research Setting

Participants for this study were found through a variety of ways, ensuring that the most appropriate match is the research's criterion. The majority of participants were contacted through introductions from members of the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NAPSA), NASPA – Asian Pacific Islander Knowledge Community, NASPA – Gender and Sexuality Knowledge Community, American College Personnel Association (ACPA), ACPA – Asian Pacific American Network, ACPA – Coalition for Sexual Violence Prevention, American College Personnel Association (ACPA), ACPA – Asian Pacific American Network, ACPA – Coalition for Sexual Violence Prevention, American College Personnel Association (ACPA).

Population

Individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual Asian Americans and work in Student Affairs at a college or university are of special relevance to this study. The population will be made up of LGB Asian Americans from various levels of Student Affairs, jobs, institutions, institution types, Asian ethnicity, gender, and US areas. To account for the inherent characteristics in the social and political background that affect higher education environments, this group will be confined to people employed at a higher education institution in the United States (Adamos, 2019).

Sampling

The participants for this study were chosen using a purposive sampling method that included no more than 25 people who had witnessed a phenomenon of interest (Adamos, 2019; Creswell & Clark, 2007). According to Creswell (2013), the ideal sample size for involvement in qualitative research to achieve saturation is 5 to 25. This study attempted to interview 8 - 15 persons who met the particular requirement in accordance with this approach's traditions (pg 80)(Adamos, 2019). Different experiences are included in the LGB Asian American Student Affairs professional's study. Although data from individuals who have encountered the phenomena and a description of their experience may be sufficient to reveal the key parts, various samples may give a larger range from the phenomena (Adamos, 2019; Starks & Trinidad, 2007). Each participant

was chosen based on eligibility criteria and snowball sampling processes until sufficient data was gathered to correctly characterize the phenomena of interest and answer the study objectives (Adamos, 2019; Creswell, 2013).

For participants reflective of purposeful, homogenous sampling, the following criteria must be met:

- Individuals must be residents of the United States of America;
- Individuals must identify as Lesbian, Gay, or Bisexual (LGB);
- Individual must identify as Asian American;
- Individuals must be in a Student Affairs role;
- Individuals must be employed in a higher education institution.

Participants were unable to continue with the study if they did not match the requirements. Participants were chosen for the study based on their willingness to share their personal tales. “It is impossible to separate individuals from their lives,” Tripp (1994) writes, “and the research of people's lives is inevitably the analysis of people themselves” (pp. 74-75). For any participant, the danger of exposure is high and frequently terrifying. “In certain research scenarios, you may not know the appropriate persons to examine because of the... intricacy of the event,” Creswell (2013) said, “because of the... intricacy of the event” (p. 208).

Sampling Procedures

Participants in this study were chosen using a snowball sampling approach and eligibility criteria, with each participant being recruited using different ways. Members of the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NAPSA), NASPA – Asian Pacific Islander Knowledge Community, NASPA – Gender and Sexuality Knowledge Community, American College Personnel Association (ACPA), ACPA – Asian Pacific American Network, ACPA – Coalition for Sexual and Gender Equality Knowledge Community) and Asian Pacific Americans in Higher Education (APAHE). The researcher used email communication to contact with and introduce individuals, allowing the researcher to interact with them quickly. Following up on the email from the association members, details on the study will be given through email, along with a request to talk over the phone or through video conference to discuss the study in further detail.

Facebook and Instagram, two online social media sites, as well as word of mouth, were used to recruit participants for the study (Adamos, 2019). Facebook and Instagram were utilized to connect with a few people who may be useful to the researcher since they had a Facebook account for their job (Adamos, 2019). The researcher spoke with possible volunteers through Facebook and Instagram's direct messaging function, which worked similarly to email and allowed direct communication to participate in the study(Adamos, 2019). The participant's information will be sent through email, along with a request to speak

with them over the phone or through video conference to discuss the study's contents(Adamos, 2019). Finally, the researcher shared a status update on Facebook and Instagram outlining the study's main themes and inviting interested volunteers to contact the researcher via their personal email addresses (Adamos, 2019).

This study used snowball sampling, which allowed participants to suggest additional possible volunteers for the study, whom the researcher might contact or not (Adamos, 2019; Creswell, 2013). Because the study's criteria were so broad, snowball sampling was an integral part of the sampling method. The goal, background, and problem being addressed in the study, as well as the participants' expectations, the secure anonymity of their involvement, and an online survey, were all crucial to being eligible to participate in the study (Creswell, 2013). All electronic study records were kept on a password-protected disk, and all paper documents were kept in the researcher's secured cabinet. The researcher looked over all of the survey results from all of the applicants to see who would fulfill the criterion.

A welcome email was sent to the selected participants, which contained an informed consent form, a timeline for the interview procedure, and a request for individual availability, which would be used to arrange the interview over the phone or through video conference (Adamos, 2019). All of the participants were required to provide a detailed interview. Interviews lasted 60–90 minutes, depending on the number of participants. The interview procedure will begin

once the individual has signed the informed consent form and verified the day and time of their interview (Adamos, 2019).

Instrumentation

A collection of interview questions was designed to utilize in the interview and permitted probing queries based on the theoretical framework and the study's key research topics. The questions centered on the participant's lived experience as a lesbian, homosexual, or bisexual Asian American working in Student Affairs and how their identities influenced their experiences. The researcher will use a semi-structured framework to allow participants to engage in genuine conversation.

Reviewing each of the research topics that guided this study helped to construct the interview methodology. The questions' design would aid in eliciting precise facts that would eventually feed each of the study topics. To completely reflect the aims of the study questions, the interview questions included a wide range of topic subjects. The questions answered during the interview with participants centered on the participant's life history, specifics of their experiences, and reflections on how their experiences brought them to where they are now. The questions (Appendix A) will be asked during the interview with participants.

Data Collection

The researcher performed one-on-one phenomenological interviews with the participants in this study to understand more about their lived experiences. According to Seidman (2013), "a phenomenological approach to interviewing focuses on participants' experiences and the interpretation they make of those experiences" (p. 16) (Adamos, 2019). Seidman (2013) identified four phenomenological themes to provide the rationale and logic for the structure: (a) phenomenology emphasizes the transitory nature of human experience; (b) through interviews, researchers strive to understand a person's experience from their point of view; (c) this approach focuses on human beings' "lived experiences," and (d) interviewing emphasizes the importance of human beings' "lived experiences (Adamos, 2019)."

Following Creswell's (2013) suggestions, the data collection procedure began with the design of a demographic survey that would be distributed and gathered from a chosen group of participants (Adamos, 2019). The demographic data gathered was used to compile a list of possible volunteers for the researcher to choose from. Participants will be contacted by email to create rapport, comprehension of the study, and how their contributions to the study would appear based on the criteria needed. The Informed Consent Form, research information, and an interview invitation were also given to participants (Adamos, 2019). Each participant got an email confirmation after the interview date was set, detailing the day, time, and place of the interview (Adamos, 2019). They

were also instructed to come up with an alias that they would use during the research to hide their true identity. During the fall of 2020 and winter of 2021, each interview was performed in person, by video conference (Zoom), or by phone, and was recorded for later review. The interviews followed a series of questions and allowed for off-the-cuff questions to explain or further investigate an event, resulting in a more accurate grasp of the context and experience being shared. The interview used a modified form of the three-series approach with a focus on setting the context of the participants' experience, allowing them to reconstruct the specifics of their experience and reflect on the significance of their experience (Adamos, 2019). According to Seidman (2013), the purpose of this round of interviews should be to allow participants to connect intellectually and emotionally to their job and life, as well as examine the causes that led them to their current condition. According to Seidman (2013), "anything shorter than 90 minutes for each interview seems too short considering that the aim of this technique is to have the participants rebuild their experience, put it in the context of their life, and reflect on its significance" (p.24) (Adamos, 2019). Before each interview, the researcher and the participant agreed on the amount of time available.

After the interviews were completed, the researcher transcribed the conversation and gave each participant a copy to examine for member checks to verify their replies were appropriately documented (Adamos, 2019). Follow-up interviews between the researcher and the participant were given and planned to

address any difficulties that were discovered.

Data Analysis

After the transcriptions of the obtained data were checked with the participants, the data analysis process commenced. The field notes and memoranda acquired during the interview were transcribed by the researcher (Adamos, 2019; Creswell, 2013). The information was then examined in greater depth. The researcher reread the data once the transcriptions were completed and uploaded to acquire a sense of the content offered by the participants and to create an understanding of the phenomenon conveyed through the interviews (Adamos, 2019; Creswell, 2013).

During the data collection and analysis phases, the researcher used reflexivity and implemented a bracketing process to identify and set aside biases that might interfere with truly understanding the participants' experiences rather than manipulating their positions to fit the researcher's points of view (Adamos, 2019; Creswell, 2013). To maintain validity, the researcher used a qualitative methodology to assess their own biases and preconceived notions before and during the investigation. The researcher took notes during the whole study process, including data collection, analysis, and the finalization of the study report, to check for biases that could affect the data acquired.

The researcher began a coding process after the data was transcribed and reviewed, which included labeling areas of the transcriptions with codes,

examining the codes for repetitiveness and overlap, and collapsing the codes into broader themes to aid the researcher in focusing on the most relevant data (Adamos, 2019; Creswell, 2015). Several cycles of coding were used to help the researcher narrow down the findings from broad themes into a list of codes that were then trimmed into three to five emerging themes from the data (Adamos, 2019; Creswell, 2015). The researcher created a written account of each finding of what the participants experienced and the surrounding environment that influenced the occurrence after identifying the key themes (Adamos, 2019; Creswell, 2013).

The researcher used a modified version of Creswell's (2013) three description phases to complete the data analysis phase of the study. To begin, the researcher constructed a textural description of the phenomenon and recorded specific instances of the participants' experiences from the interview that help explain a particular feature of the phenomenon (Adamos, 2019). The researcher then went on to explain the setting in which the occurrence occurred (Adamos, 2019). Finally, the researcher put the textural and structural descriptions together and developed a composite description to "reflect the culminating feature of the phenomenological study" (p. 194) (Adamos, 2019).

Limitations

Several limitations were highlighted as specific issues during the study's development. It was vital to discover and secure participants who satisfied the

research's qualifying standards because this study focused on the experiences of LGB Asian Americans working in Student Affairs. Participants must identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual, as well as working in Student Affairs and being Asian American. The study's initial challenge was finding LGB Asian Americans who were willing to participate in Student Affairs. Finding LGB professionals willing to participate in the study was a significant challenge because there were already a limited number of Asian American professionals in Student Affairs.

White Americans or race have been the focus of several studies and study on Student Affairs professionals. There has been little research on the experiences of professionals of color, notably Asian Americans, in Student Affairs. Furthermore, when it comes to sexuality research and studies in Student Affairs, the focus has been on White LGB Student Affairs personnel. The experiences of professionals of color who identify as LGB, particularly LGB Asian Americans, have received little attention. Due to the low amount of research and studies accessible, some limitations were considered.

A second limitation that developed was the representation of Asian Americans. Asian Americans originate from more than 40 different countries and speak more than 200 different languages and dialects, according to the United States Census Bureau (2019). For this inquiry, obtaining perspectives from all Asian civilizations would be tough. South Asians, Southeast Asians, East Asians, and Middle Easterners, for example, would all have their own distinct traditions

and values. Furthermore, rather than representing the entire community, the research participants would speak about their own personal experiences.

The question of sexual identification was a third limitation. Given that a person's sexual identity is defined by how they see themselves in terms of romantic or sexual attraction, The participants in this study were lesbians, gays, and bisexuals. It was challenging to depict the diverse identities that exist among the LGBTQ community. Many different sexual identities exist, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, asexual, pansexual, transgender, and many others. The participants in this survey only spoke about their own personal experiences and did not represent the general public.

To gain a deeper understanding of those who work in Student Affairs, this study focused on LGB Asian Americans in Student Affairs. Another difficulty that developed was the difficulty of Student Affairs to identify participants. Student Affairs encompassed admissions, financial aid, the Dean of Students, career services, mental health and wellness services, residential life, student activities, multicultural centers, women's affairs/centers, pre-professional affairs, student abroad placement, TRIO/HEOP offices, study skills centers, and orientation programs (Barr, 2000; Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education [CAS], 2001; Sandeen, 1991). Participants may only speak for themselves, and their experiences may not represent Student Affairs as a whole.

Positionality of Researcher

When doing research, researchers must be aware of their biases and stay objective in order for the findings to be interpreted correctly. Researchers should be able to recognize and be aware of their biases, which may include racial and ethnic affiliations, sexual orientation, language, and ability (Adamos, 2019; Machi & McEvoy, 2009). Researchers must be able to evaluate diverse perspectives in order to compare and contrast these forces and the environment in which they operate (Adamos, 2019; Fennell & Arnot, 2008).

I have also worked in various organizations that value the identities of identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and identifying as Asian American. However, these organizations have yet to allow me to be my authentic self as a gay and Asian American. It has always either been one identity or the other. Sometimes, within the affinity organizations, I was not “Asian” enough or “gay” enough. As a gay Asian American Student Affairs professional, I have insider positionality regarding the workplace, field, sexual orientation, and racial and ethnic identities. This research explores the experiences and journeys of other Queer Asian American Pacific Islander leaders in higher education and Student Affairs. With my identities, I have experienced various moments where I have to play up one of my identities more than the other to prove my status in different communities. I also want to recognize that my experiences of being a gay, Asian American Student Affairs leader may differ from those of other lesbian, gay, or bisexual Asian Americans in Student Affairs roles. This may also impact those

who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual and identify with a specific ethnic group within the Asian American community. These identities may or may not influence who they are leaders in higher education and Student Affairs.

Summary

The information in this study was gathered using a phenomenological methodology to better understand how the interaction of sexuality and racial identity affects Student Affairs workers' experiences. They identify as Asian Americans who are lesbian, gay, or bisexual. The interview protocol was carried out by the researcher in a one-on-one semi-structured interview with open-ended questions, which was authorized by the Institutional Review Board at California State University, San Bernardino (IRB). The participant's life story as a Student Affairs professional who identifies as a lesbian, gay, or bisexual Asian American was the emphasis of the interview questions. Transcribing the audio recordings and classifying the salient themes to describe the collective participant experiences in the study were all part of the data analysis for the interviews.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of LGB Asian American student affairs professionals by explicitly looking at the intersectionality of their sexual orientation and racial identity. Through a qualitative approach, this study explored the experiences of LGB Asian American entry-level student affairs professionals through senior-level professionals at 14 different institutions to answer the following question, "for Asian Americans who identify as LGB, how does this impact their career trajectory in student affairs?"

The findings in this chapter reflect the participants' perceptions of their career trajectories in student affairs. Again, AsianCrit and Queer Theory provided a backdrop to professionals' various experiences in student affairs and helped outline the participants' choices that led to their particular career or position. In an attempt to answer this research question, 13 semi-structured interviews were conducted with professionals of student affairs who identified as both Asian American and LGB. Inductive analysis of the interviews through the constant comparative method yielded rich data that provided insight into LGB Asian American student affairs professionals' unique and complex experiences. Shared experiences, as well as some dissenting experiences, are presented in this chapter through four major themes that emerge from the data: (1) Making

Meaning of Identities, (2) Familial Support and Influences, (3) Perceived Discriminations and Challenges and (4) Career Trajectory. In addition, a few significant themes had subthemes. Making Meaning of Identities was the first theme, followed by subthemes of Racial Identity, Sexual Identity, Disclosure, and Student Affairs Professional. The second theme was Familial Support and Influences, followed by the subthemes of Unconditional Support from Family Members and Understanding of Student Affairs. The third theme was Perceived Discrimination and Challenges, followed by the fourth theme of Career Trajectory.

Demographics

This study identified 13 participants who were able to participant in one-semi structured interview between February 2021 and March 2021. The participants in this study all come from different backgrounds and experiences.

Table 1. Interview Participant Characteristics

Name	Gender	Sexual Orientation	Racial Identity	Years in Student Affairs	Degree of Outness
Jordan	Female	Lesbian	Asian American; Biracial	Mid-Level	Yes; Completely
Shae	Female	Lesbian	Asian American	Senior-Level	Yes; Completely
Cameron	Female	Bisexual	Asian American; Biracial	New Professional	Yes; Completely
Peyton	Male	Bisexual	Asian American	New Professional	Yes; Only certain aspects of my life
Zion	Male	Bisexual	Asian American	New Professional	Yes; Only certain aspects of my life
Morgan	Male	Gay	Asian American; Biracial	Senior-Level	Yes; Completely
Salem	Male	Gay	Asian American	Mid-Level	Yes; Completely
Rory	Male	Gay	Asian American	Mid-Level	Yes; Completely
MacKenzie	Male	Gay	Asian American	Mid-Level	Yes; Completely
Sawyer	Male	Gay	Asian American	Mid-Level	Yes; Completely
Riley	Male	Gay	Asian American	Mid-Level	Yes; Only certain aspects of my life
Quinn	Male	Gay	Asian American	Mid-Level	Yes; Completely
Avery	Male	Gay	Asian American; Biracial	Mid-Level	Yes; Completely

Three of the participants were female and ten participants were maie. They are directors, assistant directors, and program coordinators at 4-year higher education institutions from all throughout the United States. Of the participants, two participants identified as lesbian, three participants identified as bisexual, and eight participants identified as gay. The participants all identified as Asian Americans with four of the participants also identifying as biracial, mixed-race, and multi-ethnic. In regards to ethnicity, they identified as Filipino American, Vietnamese American, Korean, Chinese American, Indian American and Japanese American. The participants are all out with the exception of three participants who is only out in certain aspects of their lives.

Making Meaning of Identities

As a principal aspect of this study's research question, participants were asked to describe their sexual orientation, racial identity, the intersectionality of both identities, and how it impacted them. Most, if not all, of the participants did not hesitate to describe both their sexual orientation and their racial identity. For most of them, their racial identity was more notable due to the visibility of their appearance. In addition, most of the participants' developmental understandings of their identities happened in their young adulthood.

Racial Identity

All of the participants (*n*=13) identified as Asian American. Nine of the participants identify as Asian American, while four of the participants also

identified as biracial. All the participants also disclosed their ethnic identity. With racial identity, many of the participants discussed how they came to terms with their racial identities early on based on how they look and their families' upbringing. Rory, Riley, Salem, and Quinn identified as Filipino American. Zion and MacKenzie identified as Chinese American. Peyton identified as Vietnamese American. Sawyer identified as Korean American.

Furthermore, Shae identified as Desi American (Desi American is defined as individuals who are of descent of Indians or certain South Asian countries). Avery, Cameron, Jordan, and Morgan heavily identified with being Asian American; however, they all identified as biracial Asian Americans. These four participants found their Asian American identity to be more dominant than their other racial identity. This was due to their upbringing and having learned more about their Asian American heritage.

> Jordan stated I am half White and half Chinese. My mom is the White one, and my dad is the Chinese one. And for me, it's really been a blessing. I really enjoyed being biracial. I feel that I get the best of both worlds. So, I feel unique. There is one downside, and it is sometimes if I'm in a room full of all Asians, I feel like I'm not fully the Asian person. And then when I'm in the room with White people, I feel like the token minority. They will look at me and see that I'm Chinese (Jordan, personal communication, February 13, 2021).

Jordan's statement of feeling not included in one community versus the other was similar to how Avery felt about himself in the workplace. Avery added experiences of feeling biracial in student affairs.

> Avery addedI identify as Japanese American. Half Japanese, but so American that I don't speak it because I'm White. I had attended a conference once in student affairs, and they had affinity groups, and one of them happened to be the LGBT Asian Pacific Islander group. It was interesting to engage with other people that fell into that bubble…The realities of being a biracial person versus a fully Japanese person or a fully Chinese person that added a whole other layer to this whole thing of well who are you, what do you mean who am I (Avery, personal communication, February 19, 2021)?

Avery commented about the complexities of identities and how it is not a one size fits all. Each individual has their own experiences that are very different when comparing themselves to another individual. Morgan had a different outlook on his racial identity.

> Morgan revealedGrowing Up in Southern California. I was surrounded by a lot of other Asian folks and a lot of other mixed Asian folks like me. So I really came more into my identity, leaving California and realizing that it was not the norm elsewhere. The word pride is another word I would use being more outward about sharing that identity with others professionally in my work setting. I run a food blog on Instagram, so I care a lot about my

> identity and share Chinese restaurants, so, for example, people in New Orleans can support local and support Asian-owned businesses (Morgan, personal communication, February 16, 2021).

Morgan touched upon the various states in which he has worked. Morgan noted that not all communities are alike, there will be areas that are progressive and liberal and other areas not so much. Thus, he tries his best to find the pockets of diversity wherever he goes. While Morgan, Avery, and Jordan came to their identities based on their upbringing and experiences, Cameron is still trying to understand her identity as a biracial Asian American.

> Cameron voiced, I'm Filipino but really Filipino and Mexican. My dad is the Filipino one, and my mom is the Mexican one. In regards to how I form my identity is really interesting. I feel I'm just barely coming into identity right now because, at least with my parents, they never really acculturated me (Cameron, personal communication, February 19, 2021).

Also, within Cameron's interview, she mentioned that she physically looks more Filipino than Mexican, and she ended up navigating her experiences towards more Asian American/Filipino environments. The four participants all shared similar experiences regarding not feeling complete and feeling like they try to belong the best they can.

Sexual Identity

The participants' descriptions of their sexual orientation identity consisted of progression from awareness to acceptance to representation for those who

identify within the LGB community. For nine of the participants, they identify as gay men who are attracted to men. Many of the participants have shared that the coming out process was not easy for them but they are happy being out to live their authentic selves identifying as gay Asian Americans. A few participants shared similar experiences and what this identity means to them in terms of understanding their identities. For Riley, he understood his sexual orientation due to how his family treated one of his uncles for identifying as gay. Riley knew that he was similar to his uncle in a sense that he was different and that he was gay. Riley also discussed that it was a big thing for him to accept his identity and to have his family accept him for his identity.

> Riley discussed, Growing up, I didn't really see [my uncle] because he was in the Philippines, but when he immigrated to the United States, he was very different… he was a lot more flamboyant. The way he was being spoken to was very similar to the way I was being spoken to; as a child. And I didn't realize that there was a difference in that. My uncle shared a story of how he came home, and he was crying. I went to go talk to him and check with him. Everything he shared in the story about when he was in the Philippines, his dad, my dad, and his brothers tried to hurt him physically and basically said that they were trying to beat him for being gay. I had no idea what that meant, and when I was a child, I heard the term gay. People would make jokes about that statement “being happy,” so I was always kind of, what does it mean. Why did they beat you up for

> being happy? He didn't realize that this was also a definition that he never heard of (Riley, personal communication, February 17, 2021).

Another participant, Quinn, actually grew up homophobic due to his upbringing and did not understand and would suppress his identity of being gay.

> Quinn stated, I identify as gay. And it has been a journey, so I grew up in a pretty homophobic household, and I had a phobia for a very long-time, and I didn't really fully come out. I guess for lack of a better way to put it off until immediately after college so. Being comfortable too, to want to date and talk to guys and stuff. I already knew I guess I knew I was gay as a teenager, but I kept it hidden, I guess, and I felt I couldn't really do anything about it, so I then after college just decided well, I'm going to accept myself for who I am. I guess it's been interesting because I think I've gotten more politically oriented towards it (Quinn, personal communication, February 20, 2021).

With him identifying as gay, Quinn felt the need to be more politically engaged with the LGBT community. Avery had similar sentiments of identifying with being gay. Avery also identified being gay as taking on a role to contribute to the community and create spaces for those to be comfortable and authentic in their skin. Avery revealed, I identify as gay, and this identity means to help others who may be struggling with this coming out with the coming out process or identifying as anything other than heterosexual because obviously, I've gone through it, so I see myself as a change agent if you will (Avery, personal communication,

February 19, 2021).This identity of being gay is also more than just being attracted to men. Rory used this identity to fully embrace himself holistically.

> Rory answered, My sexual orientation is gay. It's a very salient identity because I am a very reflective individual and reflecting on how this part of my identity was so formative in years. This identity means self-love and excitement, and happiness. It means positivity. It means I enjoy living in this world. Being gay is dope (Rory, personal communication, February 13, 2021).

Both Shae and Jordan identified as lesbians.

> Shae expressed, I identify more as queer. Then I would consider myself lesbian, gay, bisexual, but if I had to narrowly pick, I would identify as lesbian. I am married to a woman, a tender woman, and have dated men throughout my life, but as I came out and became more aware of myself, I got some clarity that I was attracted to women and love women, and I'm grateful to be married to an amazing woman (Shae, personal communication, February, 17, 2021).

Shae's journey to her sexual orientation became clear when she met the right partner. Jordan, however, had a different experience understanding her sexual orientation very early on.

> Jordan said, I identify as a lesbian. I only date women. I'm currently in a relationship with a woman. I've only pretty much had female partners in the past…Minus one quote-unquote boyfriend who was, 18-years-old, but

> not very serious, so my main preferences women probably now and for forever (Jordan, personal communication, February 13, 2021).

Jordan also mentioned that she knew she was different early on, and dating that one boyfriend affirmed her female partners' attraction.

Cameron, Peyton, and Zion all identified as bisexual.

> Cameron stated, I identify as bisexual, but I usually just use queer because it's fewer syllables. I realized my sexual orientation in high school, and I think something that I continue to reflect on is my sexuality about gender identity. There can be a lot of this discourse regarding how people define whom they're attracted to, so I identify with the word bisexual, but I remain reflective on that kind of discourse (Cameron, personal communication, February 19, 2021)

Contrary to her racial identity, Cameron came to her understanding of her sexual orientation in high school. She is attracted to both males and females but only has had female partners. This identity is still evolving for her as she learns more about her sexuality and to whom she is attracted. Both Zion and Peyton are also attracted to both females and males. They both came to terms with their bisexuality in college, and both found their racial identity to be more prominent than their sexual orientation.

Disclosure

When asked about their sexual orientation and their disclosure of being out, most of the participants (*n*=10) are out in their life. There were participants

(*n*=3) who are only out in certain aspects of their lives. Most of the participants indicated that it is freeing to be their authentic self. They also noted that sexual orientation is not an identity that can be physically represented. When they walk into a room, how they are perceived is based on their outward appearance.

> Riley said, I am out, but I'm not outright out. It depends on my psychological safety or how I feel safe. I am out to my family and my friends, and certain coworkers and community members. I am also out to my students. However, I do pick and choose whom I come out to (Riley, personal communication, February 17, 2021).

With Zion's disclosure of his outness, he tries to navigate this himself and his sexual orientation of being bisexual.

> Zion answered,I would say yes, but the degree to which I'm out is selective. I am professionally out, and I am also out to like friend groups. But I am not out to family, except for my only sibling, my sister (Zion, personal communication, February 16, 2021).

Peyton was also one of the participants who are out in a certain aspect of his life. He feels that people do not need to know his identities, and it does not define his work and who he is. Based on all of the participants, they are all out to a certain degree. While most participants are comfortable sharing and disclosing their sexuality, other participants are still trying to determine what is best for them and navigating what it means to be fully out in their lives.

Student Affairs Professional Career

The field of student affairs is made up of numerous functional areas on many college campuses that emphasize students' holistic growth and development outside the classroom (Hevel, 2016; Caple 1998). Some of these experiences and interactions may come from Deans of Students, career services, mental health and wellness services, residential life, student activities, minority affairs/multicultural centers, women's affairs/centers, pre-professional affairs, student abroad placement, TRIO/HEOP offices, study skills center, and orientation programs and much more. When asked about their career trajectory and how they got to where they are today, all the participants (*n*=13) noted that this was a field that they did not learn about the field of student affairs until they were engaged in some type of undergraduate involvement such as being a resident advisor, orientation leader, working for the Dean of Students Office. When asked about their career trajectory into the field of student affairs, all of the respondents (*n*=13) mentioned that at first, they did not know what the field was until it was their leadership or student employment experience that allowed them to get a better understanding of what the field is.

Familial Support and Influences

The literature in Chapter 2 noted that many Asian American families are strongly collectivistic, concentrating on the family as a whole rather than the individuals within it. It forces the family member to prioritize the family target over

their own personal interests and desires. Because of this collectivist mentality, Asian American families have instilled the concept of success and failure in the individual and the entire family (Neilson, 2002; Teranishi, 2002). However, this was not the case amongst the participants. Each of the participants had very support family members who support their personal dreams and goals.

Unconditional Support of Family Members

When it comes to their role as student affairs professionals, the participants were asked about their family members' perceptions of what they do. Most of the participants, if not all, shared that their family members do not understand the field of student affairs. They think that they are either a faculty a member or a counselor or academic advisor, not realizing that there is more to a university or college than academic affairs.

> Quinn answered, I think they understand what I do. I'm not entirely sure. I mean, I think they know that I work with students that I advise them. Or, when I worked as an enterprise, I think they understood that's what I did. I know they've never experienced it for themselves, so I don't know, to the extent that they can think that they could ever think about their own. Times in college, I mean definitely not my parents, but even my cousins who went to college in America don't think they necessarily were involved in Multicultural Affairs work or student affairs type things. So I think they understood what I would tell them, I don't think they have a concrete understanding. I think they also didn't understand when I got decided to go

> into a Ph.D. program. Again, that's also something they somewhat understand, but I don't think they really can imagine what it is (Quinn, personal communication, February 20, 2021).

Quinn brings up a really good point of never being exposed to what student affairs are other than this concept of a university or a college. Riley shared similar experiences with Quinn.

> Riley answered, My parent's perception of my career, they have no idea what I'm facing, the barriers. The mindset that they have is that it's a faculty position or Professor. That was very, very, very apparent in my town; they wanted me to make sure that not only was I going to be okay with that, I can also help them succeed and be thinking it's indefensible too. And now that I think of it, I have gone through pretty personal revelations of life, career, and management. They're starting to feel the stability or understanding the responsibility that I have myself. And I'm maturing for that, too, so no qualms about that anymore (Riley, personal communication, February 17, 2021)

Riley's answer came from a sense where he shared that he had brothers who worked in both the medical and engineering fields. Since Riley was the youngest, it was hard for him to teach his parents what he does or goes through, considering his parents did not know much about his career when his parents had more context of what his brothers did. At the same time, many participants share the lack of their family members understanding their career, which did not

steer them away from supporting their loved ones. Many of the participants had very supportive family members. They also received a lot of unconditional support from their family members.

> Morgan stated, My parents were super supportive when I wanted to do education and to want to go into student affairs. At the end of the day, it was whatever I wanted to do. Whatever I was passionate about, and they cared more about that. So, they have been super supportive. They've come to visit me wherever I've worked at. They always get University swag for every Christmas. They are very supportive of my career (Morgan, personal communication, February 16, 2021).

Morgan also mentioned in the interview that he never felt pressure to be in a field or study a major that his parents wanted. His parents left it up to him and supported him every step of the way. Also, Avery had supportive parents.

> Avery answered, Okay, so I know they're proud, but we don't talk about it too much. I know they're probably proud because he would go tell it to colleagues, and he would get just a doctorate. My son has a doctorate. They're definitely supportive; they don't understand it, and I get that that's fine because when we talk about things that they tried to read my dissertation. They know I work with students, but they still come to me with questions. I'm like, that's not my bubble. Again, they were supportive, but, honestly, I said they it's not they're pushing me, or they ever pushed me to get my doctorate (Avery, personal communication, February 19, 2021).

In Avery's interview, he shared that his parents never really pushed him to go to college because they couldn't afford it. But that didn't stop Avery from obtaining a bachelor's degree, a master's degree, or a doctorate. Avery shared some of the same sentiments with Quinn when they both pursued their doctorates, the family member understood that this is a high-level degree. However, they do not understand what it means or how it is applied within student affairs or higher education. Similar to Morgan and Avery, Sawyer's parents support him to do what he chose to do.

> Sawyer noted, My parents did not pressure me too much in the stereotypical doctor, lawyer, engineering, and that mentality, they did instill education, but I was that average student. Let's just say that I never was a straight-A student, never on the honor roll and stuff like that. So going into college being the first-gen and then masters (Sawyer, personal communication, February 15, 2021).

Sawyer's experience of being the first in his family to go to college and how his parents immigrated to the United States was common amongst the participants. Many participants shared that their parents wanted them to obtain a college degree and get a good job. They did not necessarily push them into becoming a doctor or a lawyer but more so getting educated. Many of the participants had positive encounters with their families and their loved ones. There was a participant who experienced some negative pushback from his parents.

> Peyton discussed, "Until the bills get paid t, they wanted me to be a pharmacist, doctor, and lawyer. My mom thought I wanted to be a teacher, and her reply was, so you want to be homeless. And I think that's pretty much everybody every Asian parents' responses, if you want to be a teacher, do you want to be poor kind of thing and , when I switched to higher education, I don't know the exact words and how to explain oh I'm a counselor for college. There are no exact words for that in the dialect or if I tried to explain my job, and she just doesn't understand it (Peyton, personal communication, February 15, 2021).

Contrary to Peyton, Rory shared that his parents accepted his role due to his titles, considering he was not getting "paid a lot."

> Rory answered, So they love the work that I do, just any other student professionals they kind of don't get 100% but they know what the impact is, and they love it. I think they're into it because of the title that I have associated with it, and because I'm a director, they can have an easier time accepting the low pay for what I have for my Masters. That’s the cost-benefit analysis. But the director title is something they can brag to their friends can also say that's a good trade-off. I'm leaning towards no because I feel there's something about our lived experiences as queer Asian men looking for validation especially from our parents; that student affairs professionals are a way for us to work through that trauma of disappointing them (Rory, personal communication, February 13, 2021).

Rory noted that his parent's feedback or his family has not impacted or influenced his career trajectory. Many of the participants also felt this way when talking about taking autonomy in life and controlling what they feel is best for them.

Perceived Discriminations and Challenges

Based on the interviews, two major themes emergedfrom the participants who identified as LGB Asian American student affairs professionals were challenges and perceived discrimination. When it came to challenges, the participants were on the same page regarding lack of representation, lack of mentors, and being tokenized. For many of the participants, there was a lack of representation of LGB Asian Americans where they are located or worked at and the lack of representation of LGB professionals and Asian Americans professionals.

> Sawyer mentioned, Black faculty and staff have representation and that's something that I like but so envious to a degree, but I know there's solidarity. There is not anything like that here at my institution or anywhere I have worked were there was representation (Sawyer, personal communication, February 2021).

With Sawyer's statement, many of the participants all shared the same sentiments where they feel like they cannot identify a community of like individuals on their campuses. Zion discussed having more LGB Asian American

representation not only amongst faculty and staff, but also the student population.

> Zion noted, I feel like I am always representative for the LGB community and the Asian American community. What about adding more to the representation of Asian Americans and LGB or both in leadership at universities and institutions but add to the representation for this for students as well (Zion, personal communication, February 16, 2021).

Since there is a lack of LGB Asian American student affairs professionals, many of the participants talked about finding mentors who identify with all the same identities as them. The literature in Chapter 2 also pointed out due to the result of this “bamboo ceiling” is the lack of Asian Americans' representation in leadership roles. Both Riley and Rory, in their interview, mentioned that they both have mentors who identify as women or Asian. However, they have yet to have a mentor that identifies as LGB, Asian American, and male,which goes hand in hand with the lack of representation of the LGB Asian American at various campuses. Many of the participants also seek support from a mentorship elsewhere, such as NASPA and APIKC. With the lack of representation, those participants who are the only LGB Asian Americans or the only LGB or the only Asian Americans on their campuses often get tokenized.

> Shae commented, It has been challenging. I think institution-wide when there's not [LGB Asian American] representation at an entry-level, mid-level, or senior level. Also, if you identify as within those communities, you

> need to represent all things Asian like I don't understand. Or, instead of being the only like clear LGB person of color… Particularly there's a white identified LGB individual, but we need representation, and you are the only person we know who can represent. So, I think that's been challenging (Shae, personal communication, February, 17, 2021).

Shae touched upon what many of the participants also discussed in regards to being either the only "LGB" or the only "Asian American" or the only "LGB Asian American," and they end up getting tokenized. They also are asked to do more work or sit on more committees, but they all are not being compensated for the additional work they are putting in.

Riley shared,I hit so many of these boxes that many of my colleagues don't pick, so when those issues arise in a meeting, I'm asked to be a part of that and those 19 different meetings. How am I supposed to do these nations in different meetings? In my mind, I feel like that is a form of discrimination. It is not fair, adding more responsibilities to me without giving me the extra pay, without giving me the proper support, or taking things off my plate (Riley, personal communication, February 17, 2021)Riley also brought up a point of adding more to his plate and always being the staff member advocating on behalf of these populations. Riley enjoys the work that he does, but he feels like he is spread too thin. Riley was also discriminated against and how half of the participants have endured some type of discrimination.

The literature in Chapter 2 also pointed out how the Model Minority stereotype impacted Asian Americans. The model minority is the most common stereotype associated with Asian Americans (Kim, 2013; Chou & Feagin, 2008). Because of their educational accomplishments and high socioeconomic status, Asian Americans are recognized as the "model" minority (Kim, 2013). In essence, the characteristics that have given Asian American students the image of "model students" tend to work against their career advancement. Conformity, compliance, and quietness become disadvantages due to a lack of communication and leadership abilities. This stereotype came up a handful of time amongst the participants. One perceived discrimination amongst a couple of the participants was the Model Minority Myth and not breaking the bamboo ceiling.

> Peyton shared, My supervisor pulled me aside to have a conversation with me about how I needed to be more like the Model Minority and told me to act a certain way and talk a certain way. The lady was nice, don't get me wrong, but I don't think it was right for her to tell me how to speak or act. She also told me to sound more like those educated Asians, and I was surprised, she didn't do that to my other colleague, who was African American. I'm here like, oh. She never gave him any hassle, but then she would discriminate against me (Peyton, personal communication, February 15, 2021).

Peyton brings up a common stereotype amongst the Asian American community and how it negatively impacts individuals who do not live up to this stereotype. Similarly, Zion had similar experiences with the Model Minority stereotype. Since Zion was soft-spoken and docile, many of his colleagues did not acknowledge him for his work.

> Zion said, I do good work, but I am soft-spoken, and I brought up that I feel that my coworkers don't treat me seriously, and they responded that we don't. We don't treat you seriously because you never speak up. Things have gotten somewhat better, I don't have to say something seven times, but maybe I only have to say it twice to be heard (Zion, personal communication, February 16, 2021).

Zion also highlights being submissive and not trying to rock the boat is common amongst Asian American cultures. A few participants have talked about how Asian Americans are often taught to respect their elders and not challenge the status quote. That can be hard when student affairs is a very collaborative field.

> Rory stated, I would say I leverage [my masculinity] a lot. It's part of my leadership style, and it's manipulative to some people, and I embrace the word of manipulative because it is my understanding. It means being intentional about what I am intentional and aware of how I project myself. That's part of my tactic of getting people to do things that is the goal of a leader, It allows me to dictate the mood and the energy of things.. The moment that I remove that personality to discuss things in serious tones,

> that is also a move right. Do that, but I need to showcase the dominant masculine energy the shows that I'm able to grow into the current systems in place (Rory, personal communication, February 13, 2021).

Rory's interview went into the deeper meaning of why they feel the need to play up their masculinity. He mentioned that being Asian American, people automatically put the Model Minority stereotype on him. Identifying as gay, he added a layer of femininity to how his colleagues and coworkers perceived him. Rory also added being out as a gay man in the workplace; some people will automatically feminize him to be too dramatic or emotional. To ensure respect and being taken seriously, Rory plays up his masculinity so that people do not label him and discriminate against him based on his identities. Riley and Salem, both share very similar sentiments as Rory, and they both also added that Asians already look young as it is. They both mentioned that they are often in meetings with other colleagues who are "White conservative men" who mistake them for students. So, by being more masculine, they often are heard more when they contribute to the conversation. Rory, Riley and Salem, all identity as gay Asian American men, whereas Shae, who identifies as a lesbian, often hears she needs to be more feminine and look the part of a female executive leader. Shae had a mentor who told her to wear heels and carry a purse durin ghe interview just so they would take her more..

> Shae continued Your English is good and kind of basic things like not pronouncing my name correctly. There's like traditional holidays or

> celebrating a religious holiday that does not fit the Christian calendar. And too, I think there's been systematic things in place before marriage that was legalized, so my partner and I waited before we got married for it to be legal. Also, why can't there be an extra $30 or $40 a month insurance for same-sex partners (Shae, personal communication, February, 17, 2021)..

Shae described some of the discrimination or microaggressions she received about being a lesbian; an Asian American; and a professional. Some of her examples were having someone pronounce your name incorrectly, or take certain days off to celebrate cultural and religious holidays, and not be expected to work those days, and finally insurance rights for same-sex couples. In addition to this, Morgan contributed something important to career trajectory and being part of a diverse pool.

> Morgan explained, I was part of this interview process, and I felt like my identities were able to help me qualify as one of the top candidates; however, at the same time, it ended up hurting me and my job search. I wanted and cared about the place and the people for this prospective role, and I ended up not getting the job. I reached out to them to share their feedback. They had no feedback for me about my interview. For that to be the case, if you want to know the difference between the other candidate and me… it was our identities. The other candidate happened to be a lack female. Yeah, but I will never know that, and I said I hate that is my first

> thought because I think that that's kind of giving in to anti-lackness in a lot of ways and but also I think that was my first thought and so yeah, it was interesting to unpack that a little bit (Morgan, personal communication, February 16, 2021).

Career Trajectory

As mentioned earlier, this study had participants from various levels within student affairs, from entry-level positions to those in senior level positions. During the interviews, participants were asked what they see themselves doing in 3-5 years. With the entry-level professionals (*n*=3), they would see themselves more secure in the field of student affairs. Peyton and Cameron are currently in entry-level roles, and they both are starting their graduate process as well. In conjunction with Peyton and Cameron, Sawyer also wanted to pursue further education. Sawyer stated, "To be honest, in three to five years… I would like to have a doctorate in higher ED. (Sawyer, personal communication, February 15, 2021)."

Sawyer has been in the field and is a mid-level professional, and he is ready to take that next step and get his doctorate. As for Quinn, he is in a doctoral program. Nevertheless, he is planning to leave the field and make the switch from student affairs to academic affairs when he is done with his doctoral program. Quinn sees himself either becoming a professor or a researcher in the field of higher education. With the senior-level professionals (*n*=2), they were

fairly new to their roles, so they see themselves in their positions for a while. Shae is a senior-level administrator, and they recently accepted a position as the Associate Vice President of Student Affairs position for a university. Morgan is also on track to make that transition from a mid-level professional into a senior-level role.

> Morgan stated, I hope to eventually be a director of a space to supporting students of color queer students, whatever students fall under the umbrella of an office here that's certainly the work. I'm going to be doing that as well as creating the education piece to educate others on campus that White students straight through the staff and faculty. It matters to me (Morgan, personal communication, February 16, 2021).

Morgan is continuing his passions for serving students and serving as an advocate for his students. Like Morgan, Salem, Jordan, Zion, MacKenzie, and Rory, they are all passionate about serving students and wanted to make a difference in student life. They all also have been in their roles for one to two years, thus why many of them see themselves getting more familiar with their positions and seeing what they can do to move up within their department or the field potentially.

For Rory, when he was asked this question, he chuckled a bit. His upbringing within student affairs has definitely positively impacted becoming a student leader and within a nonprofit.

> Rory commented, I hope I'm good at what I do in this next role. I hope I'm good at creating diversity frameworks and blueprints and being able to take that to a small company and large companies. Again, I am very good at being critical, but I haven't had the opportunity to fix these issues because it has been out of my control (Rory, personal communication, February 13, 2021).

Rory also did allude to wanting to leave the field due to not being able to make transformational changes due to institutional structures, low pay, and being overworked. Similarly, Riley relates to Rory in a sense where he wants to make transformative changes at his institution, but it is very difficult, he also works long hours, and he does not believe he is being compensated at the right level. However, Riley is very similar to Quinn on wanting to educate and teach students. Riley was open about wanting to be a school teacher. As of right now, he is happy with where he is at in serving his students and his community.

Encouragement for Future LGB Asian Americans In Student Affairs

Many participants said they fell in love with the field because they love giving back to the community and seeing students thrive. They are not in the field of student affairs for the money. The study participants were also asked if they were in a position to encourage LGB Asian Americans into the field of student affairs, would they? Without hesitation, many of the participants (*n*=7) said yes. A handful of the participant (*n*=4) advised to proceed with caution, knowing that there will be challenges and struggles to overcome. Shae, Riley, Rory, and

Sawyer all responded similarly to proceeding with caution. Shae stated, "I think I would say proceed with caution; I think if you're going to do it, have a community and have a strong purpose (Shae, personal communication, February, 17, 2021).” With most things in life, Shae's perspective of this ensures that no matter the successes or pitfalls that one may go through, having unconditional support allowed her to persevere.

Riley added, I want to say yes because I think everybody needs to be able to influence. However, more, there is more difficulty with that, and [us LGB Asian Americans] are not mentored. Well, we're mentored in ways to sensor Whiteness. As an Asian, thinking back to my college experience when I thought about leadership, I was never taught about my race, never thought about how I'm being seen or any of that stuff too (Riley, personal communication, February 17, 2021)Riley's statement came from a place of reflection. Riley noted that they want to instill change and influence the incoming generations to be the change and the advocates for their respective communities. Knowing that they did not have the best time identifying a mentor, they were still able to receive guidance from their community. Riley also stated that by entering the field as an LGB Asian American, they would contribute to the population's representation.

Sawyer commented, Whoa that is a loaded question. I see this is not going to be a black and white answer. I'll say this… knowing what I know now, would I be in this field? I still would. However, I would probably have taken things a lot more different and be more intentional in my seeking out mentors and

coaches and stuff like that and building the intentional relationships and making sure that these two identities are fully supported and not just (Sawyer, personal communication, February 15, 2021).Sawyer was coming from a place of talking to his younger self. Sawyer reiterated Shae's point in terms of having the proper support and the community.

Overall, jobs and positions in student affairs often require long hours, patience, creating environments for educational growth, and developing strong relationships with various students. A position like this can often affect an individual in maintaining a good life-work balance. In addition, depending on the institution or department, certain individuals may feel like they are tokenized or the representatives of the LGB Asian American community, the LGB community, or even the Asian American community which can be taxing and taking on more projects.

On the contrary, Quinn had mentioned that as much as he would want to say yes or no, he noted that it is not his place to influence anyone to go into student affairs. Quinn pointed out the hardships of what it is like going into student affairs, such as getting a masters, potentially taking out a loan if the master's program is not covered, the lower-paid wages of student affairs professionals, and noting that this field is more glamorized. Quinn provides cautions and facts about being in the field rather than encouraging or influencing someone to go into the field.

Summary

Participants in this study all self-identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, Asian American, working in a student affairs role, and working in a U.S. college or university. Furthermore, the participants noted that their LGB did not have a direct impact on their career trajectory within the professions of student affairs. The participants talked about the ability to understand their sexual orientation, racial identity, and role in student affairs and how they can authentically be themselves. With much reflection, many of the participants still wanted to stay in the field of student affairs and obtain a higher degree, while a handful of participants are debating leaving the field of student affairs completely or moving over to academic affairs. The participants spoke about how the ability to be their authentic selves allowed them to find networks outside of their institution, such as NASPA or ACPA, for professional support.

Many of the participants did receive a lot of unconditional support from their families, considering not many of them knew what the field entailed. As much as the participants try to educate their parents and family on student affairs, a lot of them still perceived it as “counseling” or “advising” college students. Quinn stated it perfectly where many parents are not accustomed to what the field is. Many participants did not know that student affairs existed until they were in a leadership role or working as a student leader. However, the fact that many of the families did not force their loved ones into becoming a doctor or

lawyer shows that Asian American families just want to make sure that their loved ones are stable.

Many participants noted that California is diverse and progressive; however, other pockets throughout the United States are very similar to California. Furthermore, these participants contribute to the evolution of diversity and the intersectionality of the various roles that were once reserved for “White, middle-class, heterosexual men.” All of the participants felt that their identities did not impede their careers in any way. However, one participant felt that in the current political climate, such as #BlackLivesMatter, Asian Americans continue to face the perception of being the Model Minority or the Invisible Minority because they do not face similar struggles or challenges. Furthermore, a few of the participants mentioned that depending on the environment or who is sitting at the table, they choose to navigate their sexual orientation and personality. A few of the male participants felt the need to play their masculinity in order to be heard, whereas one of the female participants, Shae, mentioned receiving comments to "dress the part" or be a little more feminine.

As LGB Asian Americans student affairs professionals, these participants serve as a role model and a representative for students who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, Asian American, or both. Riley discussed in our interviews how important it is to represent the identities we hold in order to advocate for our own identities as well as other identities that may be going through similar struggles. In terms of decision-makers, it is primarily white, upper-middle-class,

heterosexual men making decisions for their campuses or universities, with a student demographic that does not reflect those making decisions for them. Individuals in this study appear to be breaking through both the lavender and bamboo ceilings, gradually assuming roles and making a difference to the best of their abilities.

CHAPTER FIVE

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Overview of Study

The aim of this study was to determine for Asian Americans who identified as LGB, if their intersectionalities of identities impacted their career trajectory in student affairs. Hearing from the participants about their experiences in student affairs and their experiences in navigating their journey, it was revealed that their LGB identity did not heavily impact them as much as their Asian American identity in regards to the career trajectory of LGB Asian American student affairs professional. As a result, many of them would like to still be in the field of student affairs and moving up while a handful of the participants would like to leave the field of student affairs.

In addition, this research established whether or not perceived barriers to the career path of LGB Asian American student affairs professionals exist. It was very evident that identifying as LGB did not really impact career trajectory as much as their racial or ethnic identity. These career paths may include advancement within student affairs, transitioning to academic affairs, leaving the field of student affairs entirely, or remaining in their current position. Another motive of this research was to identify any prejudice or microaggressions directed at LGB Asian American student affairs professionals. Discrimination and microaggressions often occur in the workplace and have a negative effect on

one's career (Ragins & Cornwell, 2001). This research also looked at how LGB Asian Americans made sense of their cultures, such as their work in student affairs and their support.

Previous research on LGB identified student affairs professionals, Asian American student affairs professionals, and LGB Asian American students in higher education, but no research on the intersectionality of LGB Asian American student affairs professionals had been found. As a result, by focusing on groups that share commonalities in sexual orientation, ethnicity, occupation, and unique experiences, this study adds to the literature on LGB Asian American student affairs professionals.

The purpose of this chapter is to summarize and analyze the findings from this study extrapolated from the interviews and participants in comparison to existing literature. The findings consider the specific research question grounded in the intersectionality of identities and the impact and perceptions of the LGB Asian American student affairs professional who participated in the interviews. Implications for practices were also suggested to better support those who identify as LGB Asian American student affairs professionals. Recommendations are presented based on information gathered from the interview and utilize the voices of the study participants. Lastly, limitations of this study and suggestions for further research.

Overview of Findings

In this study, thirteen participants discovered a career in student affairs because of their leadership experiences as undergraduate students. These student affairs professionals decided to go into the field of student affairs because they wanted to make a difference for students in order for them to achieve their goals and allow them to grow, thrive, and be successful. While supporting students and making a difference is the main factor, many of the participants also went into the field due to representation and developing a passion for social justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion work. As Jordan put it, "I really love this profession, I didn't get into this work to become a millionaire…I really feel like I'm making a difference, and I feel very passionate about helping others. I feel like I'm serving the community in different ways (Jordan, personal communication, February 13, 2021)."

Making Meaning of Identities

All of the participants discussed how their racial identity is most noticeable and dominant when it comes to their physical appearance, considering they do not disclose that they are Asian American. All the participants in this study identified as Asian American, and many of them understood this identity very early on based on their physical appearance. On the contrary, with all the participants identifying Asian American, many of the participants, also identified their ethnic identity. The participants identified as Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Filipino, Japanese, and Indian. Even though the majority of the participants

identify as Asian American, four participants also identified as biracial. The four all indicated that they have the best of both worlds by identifying with multiple races, however, they also often feel like they do not belong or they are not "Asian enough" or "White enough" or "Mexican enough." Jordan stated," Sometimes if I'm in a room full of all Asian, I feel like I'm the halfway person here and I'm not fully the Asian. And then when I'm in the room with white people, I feel like the token minority (Jordan, personal communication, February 13, 2021)." It is essential to acknowledge the various identities within each community and the support they received. Within racial identity, coexist the complexities of an individual's ethnicity and how these experiences differ.

When it comes to sexual orientation and their disclosure, most participants *(n*=10) are completely “out” while a few of the participants are out in aspects of their lives, understanding that they do not have to walk into a room and let everyone know their sexual orientation. A few participants felt in certain some aspects of their lives that not everybody needs to know who they are, but they do not shy away from living their authentic lives. If someone were to ask them about their sexual orientation, they would then disclose it; otherwise, they keep it to themselves. Riley mentioned that a big part of why they are only out in certain aspects of their lives is their psychological safety. They want to ensure that the environment that they are in feels comfortable enough to be in “their skin,” knowing that they have to either consistently work in that space or encounter particular individuals over and over. As for the breakdown of sexual orientation,

Jordan and Shae identify as lesbian and females; Zion, Peyton, and Cameron identified as bisexual, with Zion and Peyton identifying as males and Cameron identifying as female. The rest of the participants identified as gay men. Riley, Shae, and Quinn, also identified as queer. It is also important to note the complexities of sexual orientation and identify the various labels in the LGBTQ community; individuals' experiences will differ from individual to individual.

Familial Support and Influences

According to the literature discussed in Chapter 2, many Asian American families are strongly collectivistic, focusing on the family as a whole rather than the individuals within it. It forces the family member to put the family goal ahead of their own personal interests and desires. Because of this collectivist mentality, Asian American families have instilled in the individual and the entire family the concept of success and failure (Neilson, 2002; Teranishi, 2002). This, however, was not the case among the participants. Each participant had family members who were very supportive of their personal dreams and goals. Among most, if not all Asian Cultures, there is this perceived notion of collectivism. Asian American families have instilled this notion of success and failure in their children, thus wanting their children to become doctors or lawyers, so the family is thriving. However, many participants did not feel the pressure to pursue a career that their family had wanted. In addition, the participants also did not feel that their families or partners have much influence on their career trajectory. Many of the participants did indicate that their families supported them in pursuing a field in

student affairs and education. Many participants noted that their family supports them as long as they are financially stable and happy with what they were doing.

As supportive as the family members are, many of the participants' family members still do not understand the concept or field of student affairs. Riley commented that his parents do not know about the field because they were not exposed to the field like healthcare, public policy, or any other industries that could have been well known. Many student affairs professionals still have family members who assume that even though they work at a college, the only positions that come up are either being a faculty member or a counselor. Student affairs is a new concept to many of the participant's family members, and even though they do not know, they make an effort to try to understand and support their loved ones.

Perceived Discriminations and Challenges

The main challenge for many participants is identifying representation within their department or institution. Also, the participants felt they were being tokenized as the only Asian Americans. Zion, Mackenzie, and Sawyer mentioned that it is difficult for them to be one of the few prominent LGB Asian American professionals in their departments. It is hard to seek other LGB Asian Americans or even LGB or Asian American professionals who have proper institutional support. They seek support beyond their institution and turn to organizations like NASPA and ACPA for support. With Shae and Morgan, since there are not many LGB Asian Americans, they tend to be in situations where they would always find

themselves the representatives when advocating for the marginalized student populations. In addition, many campus partners turn to them to be the "expert" of the community and how to navigate specific conversations or political climates for the institution.

Another challenge that was somewhat common amongst the participants was not having a proper mentor or a mentor that identifies similarly to the participants. Zion, Mackenzie, and Sawyer talked a bit about this based on community support; however, Shae, Riley, and Rory brought up trying to identify mentors that look like them and identified with the same identities. For Shae, it was hard to identify a woman leader who happens to be LGB and Asian American; however, she could find members in her community who supported her as she was moving up into senior roles. As for both Riley and Rory, their experiences were different and off-putting. Both Rory and Riley tried to find mentors that identify as LGB, Asian American, and males, and for them, it was very few individuals who fit those indicators. Riley noted that he was able to identify a handful of mentors and reached out, however, they ended up turning him away. As for Rory, they could not identify a mentor who was either LGB or Asian American. Both Rory and Riley ended up finding mentorship elsewhere. However, they perceived those situations were based on competition, as the potential mentor found them as a threat and that they would potentially take over their role, even though the intention behind mentorship is to help mentees navigate their experiences into those roles.

One perceived discrimination amongst a couple of the participants was the Model Minority Myth and not breaking the bamboo ceiling. According to the literature review Chapter 2, the literature discussed highlighted how the Model Minority stereotype impacted Asian Americans. This is the most common stereotype of Asian Americans is that they are model minorities (Kim, 2013; Chou & Feagin, 2008). Asian Americans are regarded as the "model" minority because of their educational achievements and high socioeconomic status (Kim, 2013). In essence, the characteristics that have earned Asian American students the label of "model students" tend to work against their professional advancement. Due to a lack of communication and leadership skills, conformity, compliance, and quietness become disadvantages. This topic came up a few times during the discussion. Salem, Peyton, and Zion all distinctly brought up this notion of the Model Minority stereotype. For them, they feel like their colleagues expect them to live up to this standard of being submissive, assimilating to the culture, being docile, and not talking back. Due to this stereotype, both Peyton and Zion discussed how they had negative experiences. Peyton mentioned that his supervisor expected him to speak, think, and navigate things through this "Model Minority" lens due to the fact that he was Asian. Zion noted that this stereotype often leaves him being "invisible" and not taken seriously amongst his other colleagues. Zion described incidents where he would have to repeat himself multiple times to be heard, or if another colleague were to reiterate what he said, they would get credit for it.

On another note, Morgan talked about his career trajectory in terms of not breaking through into leadership roles. Morgan is currently looking for that next step in the senior level role, and he perceived just a little bit that they are being passed up for positions due to the Black and White dichotomy climate that certain institutions are still in. For instance, they called a potential employer with whom they had interviewed how he improved to be a better candidate, and the employer had no comments. Morgan found out that the person who took the role happens to identified as a Black woman. He was happy and excited that they identify the right candidate for the role, but a part of him also wonders if identities happened to play a role in the selection process.

Another perceived discrimination that did come up among a handful of the participants was masculinity and femininity. Salem, Rory, and Riley, whom all identify as gay men, brought up how they would have to navigate their masculinity in certain spaces in order for them to be heard or taken seriously. They all stated that as being Asian, they look youthful and were often mistaken as students attending a meeting. Secondly, being open about their sexuality often feminized them as gay men who are "dramatic" or "too emotional" to make a sound decision. Salem, Rory, and Riley make sure to be more "masculine" in how they look, their tone, and their attitude to be heard. They all know that they are great professionals who were selected to be in their roles for a reason, and they very much have a voice at the table. On the other hand, Shae, who identifies as a lesbian, has been frequently told to be more feminine in her

appearance. Shae specifically had a mentor tell her to wear heels or carry a purse to an interview to look the part of a female executive leader, and that is not how Shae portrays herself. This heteronormative culture is unfortunate for some participants considering they cannot be their authentic selves and have to act a certain way to be either taken seriously or to be seen as credible.

While many of the participants did discuss actions that could not be fully determined as discriminations, other participants did not perceive any discriminations or had any challenges throughout their careers. These participants found themselves fortunate to go through their careers without facing any hurdles or barriers due to their intersectionality of identities.

Career Trajectory

Student affairs is an ever-changing field that is always growing and transforming, especially now with departments and institutions navigating the climate with the current COVID-19 pandemic. Institutions are forced to operate virtually, and are at the same time dealing with #BlackLivesMatter Movement, and hate crimes against members of the Asian American community. With career trajectory and next steps, many of the participants mentioned or indicated that their sexual orientation did not impact their career trajectory as much as their racial identity. Many of the participants wanted to stay in student affairs while a handful of them wanted to leave the field and venture off into something different. Many of the participants (*n*=10) still love this field and want to continue helping students and individuals grow and thrive while fighting for social justice, diversity,

equity, and inclusion. With these specific participants, they have had good experiences with various aspects of students' affairs and want to continue moving up and being agents of change. Also, many of the participants wanted to be that representation for their students and peers whether it be Asian American; lesbian, gay or bisexual; or both; representation matters due to the lack of representation they previously encountered at their institution or in the field.

The handful of participants (*n*=3) who wanted to leave or are looking to leave still appreciated their experiences within student affairs, however, with various negative incidents such as the lack of mentorship and representation, and the emotional taxation of being both the only Asian American also identifying as lesbian, gay, or bisexual, they want to either leaving the field of student affairs, find another industry to work in or transition over to academic affairs. It is unfortunate because many of these individuals had positive exposure to student affairs, now feel overworked, jaded, and have not had the proper support to continue in the field of student affairs. When looking at retention rates of professional staff members in student affairs is important to have the representation, intentional mentorship, and institutional support especially for Asian Americans who identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual.

Implications for Practice

It's crucial to remember that everyone has a distinct perspective on how they managed their careers. Furthermore, student affairs and higher education

must continue to endeavor to incorporate LGB Asian American identified individuals at all levels, including recruitment for various campus roles and additional study on LGB Asian American student affairs professionals. To continue creating competent experts in the area, an inclusive, well-intended support structure for LGB Asian Americans and LGB persons of color is required. Participants in this study exercised autonomy in maintaining their real selves and identities while navigating their jobs in student affairs. Many of the participants also mentioned that they are the only person on their team who identifies as both LGB and Asian American, which sometimes leads to them being tokenized or excluded from discussions due to their identities. Many of the interviewees mentioned how professional groups for student affairs helped them interact with people in the industry who had similar experiences.

Next, colleges and universities should continue to create support for their LGB Asian Americans and Asian American identified staff. Currently, there has been a rise in hate crimes against Asian Americans. These attacks and assaults started in the early stages of the coronavirus pandemic as then President Donald Trump used the term "China virus" to refer to COVID. A few examples of these attacks include an assault that included a 91-year old Asian man in Oakland who was thrown to the ground and in New York City, a man poured acid on an Asian American woman. There was also a violent attack in San Francisco on 84-year-old Vicha Ratanapakdee, a Thai American, who later died from his injuries (Yuccas, 2021). More than 3,000 hate incidents directed at Asian Americans

nationwide have been recorded since the start of the pandemic (Stop AAPI Hate, 2021). Historically, colleges and universities were developed for individuals of privilege (White and middle class). The early years of Student Affairs had a lack of diversity with and overtime it has increasingly because more diverse (Hevel, 2016). With colleges and universities becoming more diverse, they should have a department or individuals on campus tackling diversity, equity, and inclusion to ensure the practices and protocols are fair, accessible, inclusive and equitable. It is also important to have proper training regarding discrimination, microaggressions, and how to properly support faculty and staff of color.

Furthermore, colleges and universities should continue to work with state legislatures to provide excellent comprehensive benefits packages for employees who identify as LGB Asian American. The United States House of Representatives has enacted legislation outlawing discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity in the workplace. The Equality Act would update existing civil rights legislation to prohibit LGBTQ discrimination in the workplace, education, housing, and other aspects of American society. It passed with all Democrats and three Republicans voting for it, and it now goes to the Senate for consideration. However, it's unclear how these changes would affect state rules and rules governing the recognition of same-sex marriages inside each state, as well as how couples married in other states would be recognized. With entering student populations being more sensitive to and often greater understanding of LGB rights than prior generations, it's vital to show support for

academics and staff that represent them. It is vital to do all possible to maintain LGB students on campus as school climates become more accepting. Colleges and universities must strive to build policies that demonstrate a commitment to supporting and fostering its LGB Asian American staff beyond just acceptance and tolerance.

Finally, colleges and universities of all types should continue to protect and support their students, faculty, and staff by implementing policies and procedures to make it a violation to discriminate again someone based on their sexual orientation and racial identity. Generally, it is safe to say that individuals who feel safe in their work environment tend to be more productive, which benefits their department and their entire campus community. The University of California and California State University systems have implemented such policies and protocols in place, such as the Hate Bias Report, and other campuses can do the same.

Recommendations

Regarding the recommendations, the participants gave some of their most authentic salient thoughts of how they as LGB Asian Americans student affairs professionals can succeed in the field. While the advice given from the participants was given to those who identify as LGB Asian Americans in student affairs, the advice can also apply to the greater good.

One recommendation highlighted by a couple of participants is having some type mentorship programs or mentors in Student Affairs that identify as LGB and Asian American that are available to help guide incoming professionals or mid-level professionals in the field. This was a consistent recommendation that the participants offered. They noted it would be extremely helpful see someone who identifies with the same identities and learn about how they navigate the field with the intersectionality of LGB and Asian Americans. This mentorship would build community and comradery amongst the LGB Asian American student affairs professionals.

Another recommendation is to have major associations such as NASPA and ACPA having specific affinity groups that cater to or gear towards those who identify as LGBT and Asian American. Within NASPA, there is the Asian Pacific Islander Knowledge Community, and then there is the Gender and Sexuality Knowledge Community; however, there is not a specific knowledge community for both. Similarly, ACPA has the respective coalitions within their network; the Asian Pacific American Network and the Sexuality and Gender Identities Network. Both groups are designated for either race or sexuality, and there are not networks or coalitions that intersect the two. Having a community or group within these big professional associations may help bring more awareness of this particular community so that they can serve as a resource or support system for other LGB Asian American student affairs professionals.

A third recommendation that emerged through interviewing the participants was having some environment or support at their main institution. Many of the participants talked about how there are affinity groups for faculty and staff. At their specific institution, there is not one specifically for Asian American faculty/staff. Nor is there one for LGB faculty/staff, let alone having one specifically for LGB Asian American faculty/staff. Knowing these groups would ensure the institutions are creating opportunities for their employees to feel supported and heard.

Limitations

Despite every effort to ensure complete and accurate responses, the data was self-reported and based on the participants' perceptions. The researcher is led to believe that all of the participants answered the questions honestly and genuinely, and that there was no way to check their answers. However, all of the interviewees were compared to see if there were any common themes or discoveries.

Furthermore, because the study's small sample size (n=13) may not cover all LGB Asian American student affairs professionals, the results may be limited. Initially, 45 persons answered, but after a few follow-up emails and failed attempts to schedule interview times, the total number of participants was reduced to thirteen. While qualitative findings and a small sample size may limit generalizability, techniques like in-depth interviews produced rich data that may

be compared to a larger population. Each story helped to create a new product that can be used by individuals with comparable backgrounds and experiences.

The next limitation of this study was looking at the racial identity of Asian Americans as a whole. The category of Asian Americans was too general and broad for this study and there were not enough participants to have a good sample size that was representative of the entire Asian American population. It would have been beneficial to either break it down by the various ethnic identities of Asian Americans or various sub groups with in the Asian community such as South Asia, Southeast Asia, West Asian, North Asia and East Asia. By looking at the specific sub groups or ethnicity, identifying different experience by sub groups may have been possible.

Another limitation of this study was the broad scope of those who identified as LGB. Three participants identified as lesbians, nine of the participants identified as gay, and one participant identified as bisexual. This study looked at sexual orientation as an indicator but did not consider gender identity. Even though it was not heavily focused on, a few of the participants did discuss their interactions with some of their colleagues based in a toxic heteronormative society. The field of student affairs and higher education still is,in conjunction with gender norms, also trying to look at those who identify as transgender or gender nonconforming.

Another limiting factor in this study was the broad scope of geographic locations of the study. While half of the participants are located on the West

Coast, the other half were located throughout the United States. For this study, many of the participants mentioned that even though California is perceived as progressive, there are pockets within California that are not. The participants who did not live in California also mentioned that it is very similar to California, where there are progressive and other areas that are not so progressive.

Future Research Considerations

Study findings indicated the need for further research of LGB Asian American student affairs professionals who live throughout the United States or focus on those individuals who live in the same region or states in America. The participants in this study were spread throughout in the United States. There are still many individuals who think that California is a progressive state. However, a handful of the participants noted that there were pockets of California that are progressive, and there are other pockets of California that were not so progressive. And this would also be the same for those who do not live in California. Therefore, research findings are different amongst the participants and how they navigated their career journey as student affairs professionals.

In addition, another consideration for a future study is to disaggregate Asian Americans and look at the various communities that share common experiences. Again, Asian American encapsulates 40 different Asian countries. It may be important to differentiate Asian Americans into sub categories, and looking at the respective regions, such as South Asians, South East Asians, East

Asians, and even Pacific Islanders for difference in perception. For instance, what role would be identifying as East Asian be compared to South Asian or Southeast Asian play in a student affairs professional's career trajectory? For an individual to identify as Chinese, do they face similar issues in the work environment as those who identify as Hmong, Indian, or Polynesian?

The next consideration for a future study is to investigate the intersectionality of identities. The emergent work of intersectionality can be complex and each experience can be both vastly different from one another but also share similarities at the same time. Identities can vastly differ for individuals based on race/ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic class, profession, religion and many more. Based on how an individual identifies, their upbringing and how they choose to navigate the environment that will be based on these identities.

A fourth consideration for a future study is the influence of being a first generation within their family members. This study did not focus on that identity, but it was somewhat discovered that there was a generational issue based on how many families immigrated and assimilated to the United States. Much of the influence of many of the participants came from their experiences and what they enjoyed and are passionate about. Chapter 2 discussed this idea of collectivism, many of the participants did not mentioned collectivism at all. **This** would be helpful in terms of how first-generation Asian Americans navigate their day to day and create awareness and understanding for their families and their future. **This**

would also be beneficial to study this phenomenon of first-generation Asian Americans.

Another consideration for a future study is relating gender identity and its conflation with assumptions or stereotypes of Asian Americans presentation of masculinity and femininity. This study solely focused on sexual orientation and did not investigate gender identity closely. This study did not investigate masculinity and femininity within Asian culture and the heteronormative society within higher education and student affairs. As stated in Chapter 2, higher education and student affairs was prominently developed by the White, middle class men. Two participants did bring up gender expression and their perception of how they have to navigate masculinity and femininity in their communication, actions, and dress. For instance, what role would gender identity or gender expression play in student affairs professionals' career trajectory? For an individual to identify as transgender, do they face similar issues in the work environment as those who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual?

Concluding Remarks

Again, this study was designed to explore how career trajectory is impacted in student affairs for Asian Americans who identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual. This study highlighted the perceptions of various LGB Asian American student affairs professionals with regards to making meaning of their identities, support systems, career trajectory, and discriminations. The result of this study

indicated that the LGB identity did not impact the career trajectory for most, if not all, LGB Asian American student affair professionals. Their Asian American identity was more dominant in navigating their career experiences and trajectory. As more colleges and universities work to recognize the significant contributions of LGB Asian American student affairs students, staff, and faculty, they are also working to enhance this population's campus climate. The participants in this study represent a variety of institutions and universities across the U.S. The participants' perceptions indicate possible ways to tackle the lavender and bamboo ceiling.

On a personal note, I was genuinely amazed at the honest and open conversations throughout the interviews. Initially, I felt there would be some challenges and difficulties due to the emotional subject matter and personal reflections shared regarding sexual orientation, race, and career trajectory. However, these individuals inspired me with their humor, tenacity, resiliency, and personal stories with each attempting to navigate their journeys to live their authentic lives while supporting students.

The intersectionality of race and sexual orientation are a few identities that an individual has to live through on a day-to-day basis. Some people are still working in environments where they are judged based on how they look, how they are perceived, and how they navigate their roles. Although campus climate tends to be more welcoming for LGB Asian American individuals than other

industries, there is room for improvements in ensuring that colleges and universities provide proper support for all its members based on their identities.

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

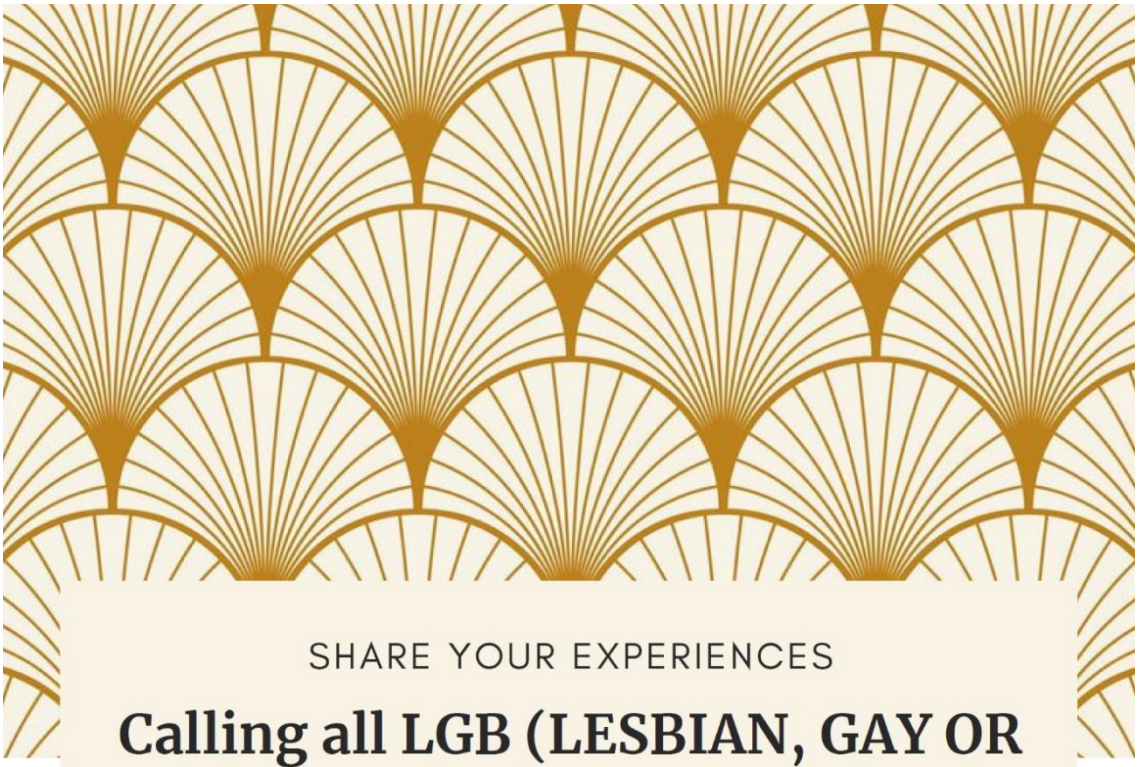
Appendix: Interview Questions

1. Tell me about your sexual orientation. What does this identity mean to you?
2. Tell me about your racial identity? What does this racial identity mean to you?
3. Tell me a time when you first understood your identity as a LBG Asian American?
4. Are you currently out? To what degree are you out?
5. How does your family perceive your career? How much does family opinion influence your decision to stay in your career?
6. Tell me a little bit about your career trajectory and how did you get to where you are today?
7. Please describe what it has been like to be a LGB Asian American working in higher education.
8. Did you face any challenges in your careerbased on identifying as LGB, Asian American or both? Please describe.
9. Have you encountered barriers for career advancement? If
10. How does your sexual orientation and racial identity affect your ability to lead and be seen as a leader?
11. How does identifying as LGB Asian American impact your interaction with your white colleagues? Black colleagues? Latinx colleagues? Other Asian colleagues?

12. How does identifying as LGB Asian American impact your interaction with your heterosexual colleagues? Lesbian colleagues? Gay colleagues? Bisexual colleagues?
13. How does the composition of your current institution influence you as a LGB Asian American student affairs administrator? How has it influenced you as an administrator at other institutions?
14. Describe your major contributions and accomplishments in your career?
15. If you were in a position to encourage more LGB Asian Americans to become student affairs professionals, would you?
16. What do you see yourself doing in 3-5 years from now?

APPENDIX B

MARKETING FLYER



SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCES

Calling all LGB (LESBIAN, GAY OR BISEXUAL) ASIAN AMERICANS STUDENT AFFAIRS PROFESSIONALS

DO YOU IDENTIFY AS:

- **LESBIAN, GAY OR BISEXUAL**
- **ASIAN AMERICAN**
- **WORKING IN STUDENT AFFAIRS**

If yes, and you would like to participate in this study, please fill out this survey here: https://tinyurl.com/lgbasian

If you have any questions feel free to contact Kevin Nguyen Chastain at 006718316@coyote.csusb.edu.

This study has been approved by the California State University, San Bernardino Institutional Review Board

APPENDIX C

EMAIL LETTER

My name is Kevin Nguyen Chastain and I am a doctoral student at the California State University of San Bernardino. I am currently looking for participants for my dissertation who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual (LGB), Asian American, student affairs professionals of varying level positions, U.S. institution and universities, and Asian ethnic backgrounds.

This study will seek to understand the lived realities of Asian Americans, who identify as LGB and the impact of their career trajectory in student affairs. This study will examine the various LGB Asian American student affairs professional's perception on their career, sexuality, Asian ethnicity, values and work place culture.

In efforts to get to know you better, I ask that you first fill out the only screening survey, which will ask you about your identities and role in student affairs. If you are selected to participate in this study, I will request your availability and schedule a single in-person interview through Zoom that can last between 30 – 90 minutes. The interview will focus on your life history, career trajectory, past and current experiences, and a reflection of how your experiences have led you to where you are today. I may contact you for follow-up questions after our interview. You will also have an opportunity to review the transcript from any interviews for accuracy.

Safety and confidentiality are my priorities and your participation is entirely voluntary. To minimize the risk of loss of confidentiality, I will be using pseudonyms for participants and protecting the identification and contact information you provide in the study in a secure file. This research study is approved by the California State University of San Bernardino Institutional Review Board Application IRB-FY2021-189.

If you have questions about the study, please contact me.

Kevin Nguyen Chastain
Doctoral Student
California State University of San Bernardino
Educational Leadership Doctoral Program
006718316@coyote.csusb.edu

APPENDIX D

VERBIAGE FOR SOCIAL MEDIA POSTINGS

Calling for Participants!

LGB Asian American Student Affairs Professionals

I am currently looking for participants for my dissertation project who identify as LGB Asian American student affairs professionals of varying positions, institutions, institutional types, Asian ethnicities, and regions of the United States. If you are interested in participating, please complete the brief online survey (link below). Selected participants of this study will be asked to complete a single 1-2 hour in-person or online interview.

For Questions, please email the Principal Investigator, Kevin Nguyen Chastain, at 006718316@coyote.csusb.edu

APPENDIX E

IRB CONSENT FORM

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY
SAN BERNARDINO

College of Education
Office of Doctoral Studies

INFORMED CONSENT

The study in which you are being asked to participate is designed to the lived realities of Asian Americans, who identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual and the impact of their career trajectory in student affairs. This study is being conducted by Kevin Nguyen Chastain under the supervision of Dr. Jay Fiene, Dean Emeritus of College of Education and Principal Investigator CSRI. This study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board, California State University, San Bernardino.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this study will seek to understand the lived realities of Asian Americans, who identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual and the impact of their career trajectory in student affairs.

DESCRIPTION: With your permission, all meetings will be audio recorded. This will be a 30–90-minute Zoom interview to learn more about your identities, your role, values and work culture.

PARTICIPATION: Your participation is completely voluntary. Participation involves in being interview by researchers of the California State University of San Bernardino. The interview will last approximately between 30 to 90 minutes. The interview will be conducted through Zoom. With your permission, the audio will be recorded and notes will be taken during the interview. If I do not want to be recorded, I will not be able to participate in the study.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Your individual privacy will be maintained in all publications or presentations resulting from this study. You will also be given an alias to keep your identity anonymous. All information you provide will be kept in a secure database on the lead researcher's password-protected laptop at their home in a locked room and in a secured Google Drive. Specifically, information obtained in connection with this study that could identify you will remain confidential and disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be further maintained by several means. First, you have the right to review audio recordings and transcripts to determine whether they should be edited or erased in whole or in part. Second, only the researchers will have access to data (audio transcripts and data analysis) stored in a shared Google Drive. The lead researcher will only record and download audio files and transcripts. Video will not be recorded. Downloaded files will be securely stored in a Google Drive. Finally, none of your identifying information will be disclosed in any reporting of results related to the study. All transcripts, recordings and data analysis files will be deleted from Google Drive and the lead researcher's laptop within thirty days of acceptance of this dissertation

909.537.5651 • fax: 909.537.7056 • http://edd.csusb.edu
5500 UNIVERSITY PARKWAY, SAN BERNARDINO, CA 92407-2393

DURATION: The extent of your participation is your allotted schedule zoom meeting (30 – 90 minutes). If follow up needs to take place, the research may schedule a follow up zoom meeting.

RISKS: Topics discussed in the research team meetings may cause discomfort. However, you have the option to not answer questions or engage in further depth answers and leave the interview. Also, you will not be identifiable by name.

BENEFITS: I do not know precisely how you will benefit from this study.

AUDIO: I understand that this research will be audio-recorded and transcribed via Zoom Initials____.

CONTACT:
If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact Kevin Nguyen Chastain at 006718316@coyote.csusb.edu or at 714-467-5951. For any questions or concerns, you can also contact Dr. Jay Fiene, Dean Emeritus of College of Education and Principal Investigator CSRI at jfiene@csusb.edu or at 909-537-7621.

RESULTS: The results of this study may be disseminated through various outlets, including conference presentations and publications. An electronic copy of the dissertation will be provided to each member of the research team.

CONFIRMATION STATEMENT: I understand that I must be 18 years of age or older to participate in your study, have read and understand the consent document, and agree to participate in this study.

SIGNATURE:

Signature: _____ Date:_____

APPENDIX F

IRB APPROVAL LETTER

Kevin Chastain <006718316@coyote.csusb.edu>

IRB-FY2021-189 - Initial: IRB Expedited Review Approval Letter

IRB@csusb.edu <IRB@csusb.edu> Mon, Feb 1, 2021 at 11:47 AM
To: JFiene@csusb.edu, kevin.chastain8316@coyote.csusb.edu

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY
SAN BERNARDINO

February 1, 2021

CSUSB INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
Expedited Review
IRB-FY2021-189
Status: Approved

Prof. Jay Fiene and Kevin Chastain
COE - Educ Leadership&Tech ELT and COE - Doctoral Studies
California State University, San Bernardino
5500 University Parkway
San Bernardino, California 92407

Dear Prof. Jay Fiene and Kevin Chastain:

Your application to use human subjects, titled "Not your queer model minority: Exploring the lived realities of LGB Asian Americans student affairs professionals" has been reviewed and reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of CSU, San Bernardino. The CSUSB IRB has not evaluated your proposal for scientific merit, except to weigh the risk and benefits of the study except to ensure the protection of human participants. Important Note: This approval notice does not replace any departmental or additional campus approvals which may be required including access to CSUSB campus facilities and affiliate campuses due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Visit the Office of Academic Research website for more information at https://www.csusb.edu/academic-research.

The study is approved as of February 1, 2021. The study will require an annual administrative check-in (annual report) on the current status of the study on February 1, 2022. Please use the renewal form to complete the annual report.

If your study is closed to enrollment, the data has been de-identified, and you're only analyzing the data - you may close the study by submitting the Closure Application Form through the Cayuse IRB system. Please note the Cayuse IRB system will notify you when your protocol is due for renewal. Ensure you file your protocol renewal and continuing review form through the Cayuse IRB system to keep your protocol current and active unless you have completed your study. Please note a lapse in your approval may result in your not being able to use the data collected during the lapse in your approval.

You are required to notify the IRB of the following as mandated by the Office of Human Research Protections (OHRP) federal regulations 45 CFR 46 and CSUSB IRB policy. The forms (modification, renewal, unanticipated/adverse event, study closure) are located in the Cayuse IRB System with instructions provided on the IRB Applications, Forms, and Submission Webpage. Failure to notify the IRB of the following requirements may result in disciplinary action.

- Ensure your CITI Human Subjects Training is kept up-to-date and current throughout the study.
- Submit a protocol modification (change) if any changes (no matter how minor) are proposed in your study for review and approval by the IRB before being implementing in your study.
- Notify the IRB within 5 days of any unanticipated or adverse events experienced by subjects during your research.
- Submit a study closure through the Cayuse IRB submission system once your study has ended.

The CSUSB IRB has not evaluated your proposal for scientific merit, except to weigh the risks and benefits to the human participants in your IRB application. If you have any questions about the IRBs decision please contact Michael Gillespie, the IRB Compliance Officer. Mr. Michael Gillespie can be reached by phone at (909) 537-7588, by fax at (909) 537-7028, or by email at mgillesp@csusb.edu. Please include your application approval number IRB-FY2021-189 in all correspondence. Any complaints you receive regarding your research from participants or others should be directed to Mr. Gillespie.

Best of luck with your research.

Sincerely,

Nicole Dabbs

Nicole Dabbs, Ph.D., IRB Chair
CSUSB Institutional Review Board

APPENDIX G

ADDENDUM

Addendum to Agreement

This Addendum is for, I, Kevin Nguyen Chastain, to continue being a leader and a change agent of social justice in higher education and student affairs.

1. **Mentorship Programs**
    a. Being able to serve as a mentor or connecting individuals to mentorship programs that will allow individuals to thrive.
    b. Creating spaces and conversations that allow individuals to talk openly and be authentic with their various identities, and not focus on the OR but focusing on the AND.
2. **Opportunities of intersectional affinity engagements**
    a. Reaching out to individuals who run various affinity groups to see if there are opportunities for engagement to focus on specific intersectionality with in the group.
    b. Continuing to advocate for these spaces at the institutional level, as well as professional levels.
3. **Educating Individuals and Communities on Diversity and Intersectionality**
    a. Finding common group with everyone and start creating an environment where everyone is able to focus on all aspects of diversity and not one identity over the other.
    b. Being able to mentor and have conversations of when it is appropriate to speak up for certain things and sit back and navigate through other means of actions.
    c. Go and present my research at conferences, seminars, webinars and any platforms that will allow others to learn about the importance of diversity and intersectionality.

I, Kevin Nguyen Chastain, agree to continuing to be a change agent of social justice for higher education and student affairs.

Signature	May 4, 2021 Date

REFERENCES

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