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Access Alone:

The Unintentionality of the Diversification of Higher Education

by

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Abstract

Access Alone:

The Unintentionality of the Diversification of Higher Education

Katherine Szeluga

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Recently, American colleges and universities have seen an increase in hate and bias incidents. These incidents are, unfortunately, nothing new. In coming to terms with the continuity of discrimination in higher education, history matters. The process of diversification challenged higher education in seen and unforeseen ways. Namely, institutions of higher education often fail to reconcile the distinctions between their stated institutional claims and actual practices. More bluntly, university administrations have not been as intentional about inclusivity and diversity as they would like the public to believe. Many of America's universities have failed to institute apparatus that might allow diversity to thrive. In fact, the process of diversification is often more a matter of marketability than social obligation. Unlike their predecessors of the 1960s, many students have also failed to challenge (or organize against) these institutions' often lukewarm responses to hate and bias incidents. This paper addresses why institutions of higher learning have struggled to meet the challenges of diversity and inclusion and why students have struggled to organize against the glacial rate of change. In answering these questions (and others), I examine the history and purpose of higher education, how diversification challenged both, and the role 1960s student protests played in forcing institutions of higher learning to modernize. This endeavor then delineates the actual impact that these movements had in changing institutions of higher education and how universities struggled to manage students'

concerns. Ultimately, I contemplate how administrative initiatives frequently fail to meet the challenges of diversity—marketability often takes precedent over intentionality. Until recently, students have done little to challenge their positions within these institutions—often acting more like customers than orchestrators of culture and agents of change.

Introduction

In January 2020, students and faculty at the University of Richmond were shocked by the news that racist graffiti was found on the doors of three students' dorm rooms. The racial and ethnic slurs written on these doors garnered solidarity and sympathy from many students, but also exposed the level of racial hostility that exists at UR, and in higher education more broadly. The weekend following, students attended the men's basketball game dressed in all black in protest of the acts of racism. Many carried signs that said, "No room for hate" and "We will be heard." After this event, President Ronald Crutcher wrote that he was "proud of our students, who were so effective at last night's basketball game." The effectiveness of this demonstration is debatable, however, as students in the student section at the basketball game largely ignored the protestors, often cheering over their chants for justice. The event lacked unity among students and emphasized the fragmentation of the campus.

The demonstration at the basketball game was followed by weeks of forums and discussions. An open mic event in the campus Forum was held to denounce the racist actions and allow students to voice their own experiences of discrimination on campus. Days later, President Crutcher assembled a community meeting, facilitated by faculty, in which students further discussed the culture of racism fostered within the University of Richmond and shared stories and expressed their dissatisfaction with the university's efforts to promote inclusivity. These conversations that followed the racial incident exposed how students of color still face varying degrees of oppression, underrepresentation, and mistreatment on campus despite the university administrations' repeated claims of commitment to diversity and inclusivity. The administration, almost a

year after the initial incident, has still failed to do anything meaningful to address the racial and ethnic tensions on campus and students have also collectively failed to maintain the momentum to pressure the university to create positive change.

Dissatisfaction with university administration is not unique to the University of Richmond, nor is it a new phenomenon. In fact, university life today reflects the struggle of students who fought and advocated for diversity and free thought within institutions of higher education decades ago. From their founding, colleges and universities were spaces in which elite white men could organize to perpetuate a racially caste system and maintain superiority.¹ Until the 1960s, American universities were designed to uphold racial hierarchies through the dissemination of scientific racism and intellectual defenses of white supremacy.² It was not until the mid-twentieth century that college students began to question and challenge the status quo. By the 1960s, 30 percent of the college-aged population was enrolled in college, creating “multiversities” – large institutions or “knowledge factories” aimed at cultivating “national purpose” as well as a generation of white collared workers.³ As these institutions expanded as a means of growing the American workforce, however, the administrations did little to adapt to the diversifying student body.

Frustrated with the lethargy of their universities to depart from their traditional role of perpetuating social and racial elitism, students began to challenge their administrators to protect them and promote political and intellectual flourishing. Most

¹ Craig Steven Wilder, *Ebony and Ivy: Race, Slavery, and the Troubled History of America's Universities* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing USA, 2014).

² Wilder, *Ebony and Ivy*.

³ Colin Barker, “Some Reflections on Student Movements of the 1960s and Early 1970s,” *Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais*, no. 81 (June 1, 2008): 43–91, <https://doi.org/10.4000/rccs.646>.

notably, the Free Speech Movement and student revolt at UC Berkeley in 1964 paved the way for student activism and organization. The movement had grown out of demonstrations and campaigns of the Civil Rights movement, such as SNCC and the Greensboro sit-ins of 1960.⁴ Students at UC Berkeley engaged in sit-ins and other protests after Jack Weinberg was arrested for soliciting donations for the civil rights movement.⁵ These students, according to Donald Phillips, demonstrated “how the campus itself might become a front line,” where students could be political actors to engage and create change that truly mattered politically and socially.⁶ The demonstrations at Berkeley energized students for the decade to come. Nationally, students were awakened to the effectiveness of protests, rallies, and strikes to change the nature of college campuses. As the decade went on, young people across the country stood up to administrators to protest the Vietnam War or for civil rights, the sexual revolution and the women’s liberation movements.

Although protests in the 1960s and 1970s were not as widespread as commonly believed, the pockets within which they occurred made significant strides to improve college campuses through coeducation, increased diversity in admissions, and greater respect for the rights of students to engage in protest and exercise political speech – all of which had the effect of creating change on a large scale nationwide. However, the inroads made by the students in this time had significant backlash that now defines the problems that institutions of higher education face today.⁷ Despite being the seedbed of

⁴ Barker, "Some Reflections on Student Movements," .

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Donald E. Phillips, *Student Protest, 1960-1969: An Analysis of the Issues and Speeches* / Donald E. Phillips. (Washington: University Press of America, 1980).

⁷ Roderick A. Ferguson, *We Demand: The University and Student Protests* / Roderick A. Ferguson., (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2017).

revolutionary thought that was responsible for the ideological and demographical shift in higher education and the country as a whole, many colleges today have continued to be reluctant to meet the challenges of diversity that have taken place since the mid-twentieth century. As universities diversify and accept greater numbers of minority communities, they have also failed to adapt to the new demographic and make their promises of an inclusive campus community a reality. Most college students come from racially homogeneous communities; most professors and administrators were raised in them; and most university staff return to obsolescently segregated communities after work, deepening economic, political, and social divides that manifest on college campuses.

While college campuses are becoming increasingly diverse, retention rates for students of color are shockingly low compared to that of white students, signaling the disconnect between universities purported mission of inclusivity and the reality. In 2010, the share of black, Hispanic, Native American, and Asian students represented 38 percent of undergraduate students, compared to 17 percent in 1980.⁸ Although degree attainment has also increased over time for these ethnic minorities, there remains a significant gap in attainment between minority students and white students. The gap between black and white bachelors' degree attainment has more than doubled, from 6 percent in 1964 to 13 percent in 2014.⁹ The disparities between students of color and white students can be attributed to the failures of the administrations to create an inclusive campus climate, instead focusing on profits and the appearance of status and prestige.

⁸ Marta Tienda, "Diversity ≠ Inclusion: Promoting Integration in Higher Education," *Educational Researcher* (Washington, D.C.: 1972) 42, no. 9 (December 2013): 467–75, <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X13516164>.

⁹ U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development and Office of the Under Secretary, *Advancing Diversity and Inclusion in Higher Education*, Washington, D.C., 2016.

Colleges today operate within a system of higher education that is vastly different than the system that developed in the mid-twentieth century, placing more emphasis on market mechanisms than cultural mechanisms to dictate institutional decision-making. The success of universities as cultural and educational centers has been relatively washed away by market forces.¹⁰ In the 1980s, universities embraced the mission of contributing to the economy and revised their pricing and marketing, which in turn made them more competitive.¹¹ The competitive nature of entrance into universities has compounded the issues institutions of higher learning face in creating an inclusive and thriving university environment in two ways: diversity initiatives only seek to contribute to the marketability and apparent status of a university, and students have adopted a merely transactional relationship with the university.

Diversity and inclusivity have become mantras of many elite American universities, the University of Richmond included, without any substantive measures to ensure that everyone thrives under the umbrella of diversity. As institutions of higher education strive for greater prestige, they become more selective in their hiring and admissions process, making opportunities scarcer for many historically underrepresented communities and increasing competition among applicants and greater social stratification among students.¹² Many universities have come to rely on performative or symbolic measures to give the illusion of progressive diversity initiatives.¹³ For instance, universities across the country have pledged hundreds of millions dollars to increase faculty diversity. Some

¹⁰ Roger L. Geiger, *Knowledge and Money: Research Universities and the Paradox of the Marketplace* (Stanford University Press, 2004).

¹¹ Geiger, *Knowledge and Money*.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Pamela Newkirk, "Why Diversity Initiatives Fail," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, November 6, 2019, <https://www.chronicle.com/article/why-diversity-initiatives-fail/>.

universities have hired diversity consultants, commissioned campus-climate surveys, and have implemented anti-bias training. There is little evidence, however, that these measures do anything to increase diversity or decrease bias.¹⁴ Despite the failures of most diversity efforts, students who are harmed by the current campus culture have not been motivated to organize and demand more than performative measures from their administrations.

The emphasis of market forces and competition within institutions of higher education has also led students to view college as exclusively a path to economic upward mobility, rather than a place of personal and intellectual development. As the world becomes increasingly technical, a degree is essentially a necessity for steady employment, as it is estimated that nearly two-thirds of jobs will require postsecondary education in the near future.¹⁵ In 2014, workers with at least some college education made up 65 percent of the total employment, and bachelor's degree holders earned 57 percent of all wages.¹⁶ As a result, students of color and other historically underrepresented groups who stand to gain the most from higher education would often prefer to immerse themselves within the social, political, and economic forces that surround them. They cannot afford to openly challenge rules and authority that they do not agree with. Instead, they see themselves as nothing more than consumers in the market of higher education. The relationship is purely one of contingent benefits, in which students pay into the system with the understanding that their degree will secure them a job after graduation. Educational autonomy and intellectual growth have been overshadowed by economic security and upward mobility.

¹⁴ Newkirk, "Why Diversity Initiatives Fail."

¹⁵ U.S. Department of Education, *Advancing Diversity and Inclusion In Higher Education*.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

As market mechanisms become more important than cultural mechanisms in institutions of higher education and their admissions processes, university administrators will continue to be reluctant to make the types of change that will address the modern problems of diversity. Instead, the “reputation race” between institutions will continue to enable them to make superficial changes while recruiting young people who have not and will not question how colleges have evolved and what their own role is within the university. Institutions, such as the University of Richmond, have been unprepared to deal with the problems of diversity but students have also fallen short. While colleges and universities were similarly unprepared to face these challenges in the mid-twentieth century, students challenged administrators and demanded that they be responsible for their students. Unless students today begin to question the institutional design and purpose of their universities, the system will continue to fail its students of color and cultivate racially divided environments.

Chapter 1: The History of Student Movements and Higher Education

“Apathy is not simply an attitude; it is a product of social institutions, and of the structure and organization of higher education itself... The university “prepares” the student for “citizenship” through perpetual rehearsals and, usually, through emasculation of what creative spirit there is in the individual.”

– *Port Huron Statement, Students for a Democratic Society*¹⁷

Members of the leftist student movement, Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), published The Port Huron Statement in 1962 as the organization’s manifesto which stated their dissatisfaction and disillusionment with American society and called on students to be agents of change. They expressed how their generation had grown up with the perception of America as the strongest and wealthiest country in the world, but with age had become aware of the paradoxes of American society. The Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s as well as the Cold War exposed the hypocrisy of American ideals and the apathy of the majority of citizens. The Port Huron Statement acknowledged that institutions of higher education are largely responsible for the apathy of students by turning them into tools of the state and failing to cultivate their minds.¹⁸ SDS, therefore, committed itself to stimulating social movement by encouraging students and faculty to break free from the “administrative bureaucracy” and take control of the educational process and challenge the status quo. They, and other organizations like them, helped set the tone for a generation of college students.

From America’s earliest days, institutions of higher education were implicated in and participated in white supremacy: namely, they relied on and profited from racial

¹⁷ Students for a Democratic Society (U.S.), “Port Huron Statement (1962),” Chicago, Ill.: C.H. Kerr, 1990.

¹⁸ Students for a Democratic Society, “Port Huron Statement.”

hierarchy and slavery. Human enslavement was a necessary tool to the rise of higher education in colonial America.¹⁹ Access to enslaved people and free labor was critical to the success of a colonial university. Slaves or the fruits of slave labor built and maintained university property for little to no cost.²⁰ However, this reliance on slave labor transformed campuses into “intellectual and cultural playgrounds of the plantation and merchant elite,” from whom universities needed loyalty to preserve the slave system they had put in place.²¹ The children of wealthy slaveowners became immensely privileged, and universities were at the service of colonial elite.

Once the relationship between American colleges and enslaved people had been so deeply established, universities then had to cultivate the ideas among students and faculty that legitimized the enslavement of African people and systemic extermination of Native people. The fate of colleges was fused with the hostilities that wealthy landowners felt toward Natives and African people in the late 1700s. Funds were withheld from colleges that offered instruction to non-white students, which began the systemic exclusion of these young people from elite institutions of higher education.²² As relations between colonists and Native people got worse and more violent after the Revolutionary War, educated people of universities began to assert white divine privilege in an attempt to justify the injustices they had perpetrated against entire populations of people. President Ezra Stiles of Yale preached the decline of Native Americans and Africans and alluded to “superior blood” of European whites.²³ Universities were able to effectively eliminate Africans and

¹⁹ Wilder, *Ebony and Ivy*: 96.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.* 98

²² *Ibid.* 118

²³ *Ibid.* 124

Natives from the classroom and proclaim dangerous ideas of racial destiny that upheld and rationalized the strict racial hierarchy. These trends continued well into the nineteenth century.

Soon after, early work in race science gave racism even greater legitimacy in the academy and further justified the social order of slavery and white superiority in a much more lasting way. White elites no longer relied on faith and divinity to perpetuate the rigid racial hierarchy, and instead used science and academia that had a certain authority that could not be easily disputed by those without an education.²⁴ After Charles Darwin published *On the Origin of the Species*, scientists began developing their own theories of genetics to explain racial inferiority. Gregor Mendel's discoveries in genetics had deep implications in race ideologies that led to beliefs that racial interbreeding was dangerous.²⁵ While the earliest theories on race helped preserve the slave system in the nineteenth century, these later ideas in scientific racism justified acts of sterilization and segregation that were practiced in the post-Civil War years. At the University of Virginia, for example, Thomas Jefferson's vision of a pro-slavery Ivy League school was expanded through eugenics and white supremacist thought in the late-nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century.²⁶ White elites used science as a means to justify the systemic exclusion of black people from most areas of American life, especially academia and higher education on the grounds that they were inherently a less intelligent race.

²⁴ William H. Tucker, "The Ideology of Racism: Misusing Science to Justify Racial Discrimination," United Nations (United Nations), accessed December 1, 2020, <https://www.un.org/en/chronicle/article/ideology-racism-misusing-science-justify-racial-discrimination>.

²⁵ John P. Jackson Jr and Nadine M Weidman, "The Origins of Scientific Racism," *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, no. 50. (Winter 2005/2006): 15.

²⁶ Martin, Marcus L. et al., *President's Commission on Slavery and the University: Report to President Sullivan*. University of Virginia, 2018, 18

This history of racism and discrimination in higher education explains the social rigidity of universities that persisted into the twentieth century. These institutions were largely meant to uphold the gender and racial stereotypes that they helped create by limiting access to prestigious universities to mostly wealthy white men and some women who had no reason to challenge the elitism that they benefited from. Between 1910 and 1920, less than 5 percent of the American population between the ages of eighteen and twenty-two were enrolled in college.²⁷ Exclusion on the basis of gender and race were common practice, and women who attended college were often marginalized through a coordinate college system or attended exclusively women's colleges.²⁸ The men who were able to attend college during the early twentieth century were aware that it was means of socioeconomic mobility, however they were indifferent to serious academic study and intellectual growth. "Don't Let Your Studies Interfere with Your Education" was a popular banner found in student's dormitories, signifying the popular attitude that courses were secondary to the social aspect of campus life.²⁹ The elite young white men could live comfortably within a system that protected and reaffirmed their status and did not question the racist and sexist social hierarchy within which they were situated.

The era following World War II underwent significant growth in access to higher education and this growth altered the role of universities in society and campus life. In 1939, total student enrollment in colleges and universities was just under 1.5 million. College enrollment had decreased substantially during the war due to the draft, but total

²⁷ J.R. Thelin, *A History of American Higher Education*, A History of American Higher Education (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011).

²⁸ Thelin, *A History*.

²⁹ *Ibid*.

student enrollment grew to about 2.7 million by 1949. This growth continued, for enrollment was around 3.6 million in 1960 and over 7.9 million in 1970.³⁰ The expansion of higher education was encouraged by President Harry Truman and the federal government with the hope that college educated citizens would have a better understanding of society and gain the technical skills to contribute to industrial capitalism and the nation's welfare. However, there was significant concern after World War II and during the Cold War that college campuses would become disloyal to the anti-Communist agenda.³¹ This threatened the academic autonomy of faculty and students as many university presidents subjected faculty members to loyalty oaths.³² Academic freedom gave way to state compliance and the avoidance of external scrutiny, creating a dangerous precedent regarding the restriction of free expression and inquiry. Institutions of higher education became more closely connected with government interests.

The rapid expansion of higher education in the post-war period created problems for many colleges that were ill prepared to accommodate the increased enrollment of new students and returning veterans (this problem, we know, also had grave implications for twenty-first century students). This change transformed the nature of collegiate life by diminishing the enchantment of attendance by increasing accessibility. As a result, the emphasis turned to attending a prestigious college to be considered socially distinguished. Private liberal arts universities began adopting more selective admission processes,

³⁰ American Council on Education, *Fact Book on Higher Education*, American Council on Education/Macmillan Series on Higher Education (American Council on Education, 1997).

³¹ Thelin, *A History*.

³² "Ellen W. Schrecker, *No Ivory Tower: McCarthyism and the Universities* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986)"

assisting in improving institutional reputation through higher levels of rejection.³³ These liberal arts schools also gained prestige by modeling graduate research institutions and fostering a rigorous learning and teaching environment that promoted a meaningful undergraduate education.³⁴ These selective institutions provided an outlet for the wealthier young men who once exclusively made up college enrollment to escape from campuses that were growing increasingly diverse.

The economic prosperity and diversification of higher education that marked the post-war era largely distracted college and university leaders from the problems that were bound to arise from their unpreparedness for expansion at this scale and pace. In 1962, psychologist Nevitt Sanford warned college administrators to be prepared for and to listen to the discontent and concerns that would be voiced by students – a warning that went ignored by most.³⁵ Their decision to carry on without properly addressing the growing concerns of students is what led to the sort of student movements and unrest that are thought to be characteristic of the 1960s and 1970s.

As universities expanded and improved across the nation, it exposed the problems of segregation through the vast inequalities between white and black institutions. Even those who opposed eliminating the segregated school system of the South acknowledged the widespread inequality:

We recognize that many conditions affect adversely the lives of our negro citizens and that gross inequality of opportunity, economic and educational, is a fact. We are concerned that as rapidly as possible conditions should be improved, inequalities removed, and greater opportunity provided for all our people.³⁶

³³ Thelin, *A History*.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ “Nevitt Sanford, *The American College: A Psychological and Social Interpretation of the Higher Learning* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1962).”

³⁶ Jeffrey A Turner, *Sitting in and Speaking out: Student Movements in the American South 1960 - 1970* (Athens, Ga. [u.a.]: Univ. of Georgia Press, 2010).

Even after the decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), southern universities both public and private, moved slowly and resisted desegregation. Southern black students were becoming increasingly inspired and motivated by the demonstrations of the civil rights movement. In February 1960, students from historically black campuses around Greensboro, North Carolina organized a nonviolent sit-in at a lunch counter that challenged segregation, demanded attention, and laid the groundwork for the 1960s student movement.³⁷ Student sit-down demonstrations spread to seventy-eight cities and thirteen southern states by April, and that month student representatives from southern universities created the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC).³⁸ SNCC organized and energized both black and white students to push back against the structural racism ingrained in many universities and expose the contradictions and inequalities inherent in higher education.

SNCC's use of nonviolent direct action in 1960 was a catalyst to more student movements across the country, where American students grew to view themselves as political forces that could challenge their universities' ineptitude in addressing their concerns. The growth of higher education after World War II not only exposed the problems of race within the collegiate system, but also turned many universities into "knowledge factories" aimed at cultivating mental laborers for the sake of economic production and national welfare.³⁹ At the same time, the Cold War and fears of communism led to greater restrictions on political discussion.⁴⁰ These two factors led to heightened

³⁷ Turner, *Sitting in and Speaking Out*. 45

³⁸ *Ibid.* 47

³⁹ Barker, "Some Reflections."

⁴⁰ Turner, *Sitting in and Speaking out*.

student concerns over free speech and academic autonomy – concerns that many universities failed to address appropriately.

The tensions over free speech and political expression culminated on the campus of the University of California at Berkeley in 1964. One student, Jack Weinberg, was arrested while soliciting donations and supporters for the civil rights movement. Students, enraged by the university's rules prohibiting certain types of political speech, including advocacy of political causes, surrounded and trapped the police car for 36 hours to protest Weinberg's arrest. After the university punished the organizers of this sit-in, students responded by occupying an administrative building until they were carried out by police.⁴¹ At what came to be known as the Free Speech Movement (FSM), students challenged the university at different levels, demanding that they be allowed to exercise their capacities as flourishing human beings, rather than be treated as "raw material" in the factory that the university has become, as FSM leader Mario Savio declared in his speech before the occupation.⁴²

Berkeley's Free Speech Movement received national coverage and demonstrated how other students might mobilize to stand up when their university administrations fail. Not only that, but the Berkeley student revolt broadened the issues to other social and political matters beyond campus life, scrutinizing the university's impact within society and the students' role within the university.⁴³ The sexual revolution of the 1960s and 1970s exemplifies how society and universities interact with one another and how students can

⁴¹ Barker, "Some Reflections."

⁴² "American Rhetoric: Mario Savio - Sproul Hall Sit-In Address," accessed December 2, 2020, <https://americanrhetoric.com/speeches/mariosaviosproulhallsitin.htm>.

⁴³ Barker, "Some Reflections."

mobilize and operate within these structures to force their universities to keep pace with the progress of society.

Institutions of higher education held traditional assumptions that women were meant for a life of domesticity and that they needed to be protected while they were students. Many colleges that allowed women not only profited from them majoring in certain fields (e.g., mathematics and sciences), but they also had draconian rules and regulations regarding curfews and co-ed visitations.⁴⁴ However, with the invention of oral contraceptives and widespread dissemination of literature that talked freely about female sexuality, young women in society were moving further away from conservative views of sexual morality. Premarital sex became less stigmatized, cohabitation became increasingly popular, and the pill liberated middling white women from the perils of unwanted pregnancies.⁴⁵ Most colleges and universities were slow to remove the paternalistic rules that oppressed women's sexuality despite the evolving culture. In fact, women who challenged the antiquated rules were met with harsh resistance. In 1968, when Barnard student Linda LeClair got caught lying to the school administration so that she could live off campus with her boyfriend, she faced expulsion. In her hearing, she appealed not only on the basis of gender discrimination, but also free expression, tying the ideas together by stating:

The fact that the rules are discriminatory, and the Barnard community is dissatisfied with them is important. However, the most important issue here is the fact that the concept of housing regulations

⁴⁴ Turner, *Sitting in and Speaking out*. 25

⁴⁵ David Allyn, *Make Love, Not War: The Sexual Revolution, an Unfettered History* / David Allyn., 1st ed. (Boston: Little, Brown, 2000).

infringes on the rights of some students to live according to their beliefs and of all students to choose their way of living.⁴⁶

Just as the Berkeley students saw issues of speech and civil rights as interconnected, LeClair relates the issue of sexual repression as an infringement on her free expression. When the president still wanted to expel LeClair, students began mobilizing to protest in the way others before them had: civil disobedience and nonviolent direct action. Students occupied the president's office and 850 of the school's 1,800 students signed a referendum in support of LeClair. Even after LeClair had quit school, Barnard students continued to push the administration to remove all rules that unjustifiably regulated living arrangements until they were ultimately successful.⁴⁷

What made student movements in the 1960s successful was not universal instances of protest across all institutions, but rather pockets of activism in a handful of prominent schools that had widespread effects. The methods of mobilization became popularized through their use at Berkeley and the civil rights movement, establishing the blueprint for politically activated students elsewhere to mimic. Furthermore, the members of organizations like Students for a Democratic Society, SNCC, and the FSM were effective because they were able to recognize that American colleges and universities were not prepared for the types of problems that would arise from rapid expansion after World War II. Not only were they unprepared, but university administrations were apathetic and unwilling to evolve with the changing society that threatened the elite status of places of higher learning. The Port Huron Statement drafted by SDS addresses the ways in which

⁴⁶ Allyn, *Make Love, Not War*. 97

⁴⁷ *Ibid.* 98

universities thrived by creating sentiments of apathy among its student body. The students of the 1960s, however, were dedicated to intellectualism and deliberation that campuses offer that generations before them took for granted – bringing the nature and goals of the university into question.

Chapter 2

In the decades following the 1960s, higher education underwent a period of significant cultural and political change. Colleges and universities expanded administrative procedures and offices – largely as a response to the student movements and activism on college campuses. Admissions practices changed through the use of affirmative action to consider race in decisions and these institutions began to accept larger numbers of men and women. Diversification came with challenges – seen and unforeseen. The increase in accessibility threatened the existing social order and the perceived mission and meaning of higher education, appearing to strip college education of its former elite status. As a result, colleges and universities scrambled to remain competitive while mitigating student concerns of inclusivity, support, and accountability within their campuses. This led to the early diversity initiatives in higher education, such as diversity statements and committees, that were generally superficial bureaucratic methods meant to give the appearance of change and inclusivity while preserving the status quo and doing nothing to make space for previously excluded students in the once white male dominated environment. At the same time, the changing economy threatened universities' financial status which resulted in decisions that intertwined the university in the market system of the United States. As neoliberalism became the hegemonic political and economic ideology around the 1980s, students began to increasingly see themselves as consumers of the university. The decades following the 1960s were a time in which the mission and drive of the university changed but not in the way that student activists had imagined – rather the change was often superficial, public-facing, and bottom-line oriented. The process of diversification, we know

now, failed to bring about the types of purposeful inclusivity that might have allowed the changes to thrive.

The student movements on college campuses in the 1960s had situated the university as a locus for social change and students as engaged political agents, but the ever-changing nature of the academy consequently created negative outcomes that impact the newest and least-powerful people in the system: women, people of color, or other “non-traditional” students who began enrolling in universities. In the early 1970s higher education appeared to be a largely successful enterprise with enrollments reaching an all-time high of 8.65 million students across 2,573 universities.⁴⁸ The social and student movements of the decade prior challenged the inequities of higher education and often focused on integration of schools, resulting in new admissions policies that increased the number of students of color and women in colleges and universities as well as initiated early ideas of multicultural approaches to education.⁴⁹ However, as The Second Newman Report on National Policy and Higher Education (1971) concluded, “access alone is not enough.”⁵⁰ Many of the inroads made in the sixties were met with either weak and superficial administrative diversity initiatives or ideological attacks and backlash from those who wanted to preserve the status quo. As a result, oppressed groups continue to suffer blatant inequalities and discrimination while the university preserves its reputation and prestige. Initiating diversity without the political will to follow it through had grave consequences.

⁴⁸ Thelin, *A History*

⁴⁹ Stockdill and Danico, *Transforming the Ivory Tower: Challenging Racism, Sexism, and Homophobia in the Academy*

⁵⁰ Frank Newman, *The Second Newman Report; National Policy and Higher Education; Report of a special task force to the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare*. (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1971).

Perhaps the most tangible yet controversial change aimed at integration and diversification in higher education were affirmative action admission policies and practices. Following civil rights movement and the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., policymakers designed race-conscious affirmative action policies with the intention of giving disadvantaged groups (including white women) differential access to educational opportunities.⁵¹ They extended beyond the removal of explicit obstacles to participation to actively promote participation in the form of preferential treatment in hiring and admissions.⁵² In a speech at Howard University in 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson expressed the underlying justification for affirmative action policies stating, “You do not take a man who for years has been hobbled by chains, liberate him, bring him to the starting line of a race, saying, ‘you are free to compete with all the others,’ and still justly believe you have been completely fair.”⁵³ The purpose of these policies was not just equality of opportunity, but of result. Soon, numerous colleges and universities, particularly selective institutions, began taking race into account in the admissions process by accepting qualified black students even if they had lower grades or test scores than most white students.⁵⁴ By the 1970s, women and other underrepresented minorities were also designated as targets of affirmative action efforts.⁵⁵ These measures were an attempt to promote access to higher education and mitigate racial tensions.

⁵¹ Eugene Y. Lowe Jr., *Promise and Dilemma: Perspectives on Racial Diversity and Higher Education* (Philadelphia: Heldref Publications, 1999), 170

⁵² *ibid*

⁵³ Dorothy F. Garrison-Wade and Chance W. Lewis, “Affirmative Action: History and Analysis,” *The Journal of College Admission*, (Summer 2004): <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ682488.pdf>

⁵⁴ Bok and Bowen, *The Shape of the River: Long-term Consequences of Considering Race in College and University Admissions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 7

⁵⁵ Lowe, *Promise and Dilemma*, 24

In time, new groups of students arrived on college campuses for the first time in American history – they met firm resistance. Enrollment numbers of black students and other minority groups indicated that these policies had a substantial impact.⁵⁶ In 1969, elite universities such as Columbia admitted more than twice as many black students as they had the year before.⁵⁷ The percentage of black students enrolled in Ivy League colleges rose from 2.3 in 1967 to 6.3 in 1976 and from 1.7 to 4.8 in other selective “prestigious” colleges.⁵⁸ These statistics indicate that race-conscious admissions and affirmative action were successful in their initial efforts at increasing access for underrepresented students – primarily black students. Not to be outdone, the forces of restriction spent the next several years litigating against federally mandated inclusivity.

The legality of affirmative action received significant criticism from opponents who claimed that it constituted “reverse racism.” In *Bakke v. the Regents of the University of California* (1978), the Supreme Court ruled that any racial quota system is unconstitutional.⁵⁹ In his majority opinion, Justice Powell stated that even though white people were not a historically disadvantaged group, they were still entitled to invoke the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. Powell concluded that although having a diverse student body is a compelling state objective, the use of a strict quota system was not necessary to achieve this aim and that race ought to be used only as a “plus” factor in admissions.⁶⁰ This opinion recognized the notion of “diversity” as an

⁵⁶ Thelin, *A History*, 371

⁵⁷ Anemona Hartocollis, “50 Years of Affirmative Action: What Went Right and What It Got Wrong,” *New York Times*, March 30, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/30/us/affirmative-action-50-years.html>

⁵⁸ Bok and Bowen, *The Shape of the River*, 7.

⁵⁹ *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke*, 438 US 265 (1978).

⁶⁰ *Bakke* (1978).

explicitly desirable goal for the first time in contemporary social and political history – showing that it may be a constitutionally permissible reason to consider race in admissions practices.⁶¹

Culture warriors emerged almost immediately to oppose affirmative action. Opposition to affirmative action extended beyond its legality. Many conservative critics argued diversity-driven admissions practices and the new emphasis on multiculturalism threatened the integrity of liberal arts education. Much of this dialogue vilified the radical student movements and their demands by using the term “diversity” against student concerns of social justice and calling into question the mission and purpose of universities. In 1970, after the infamous disturbances and killings at Kent State and Jackson State, President Nixon’s administration released *The Report of the President’s Commission on Campus Unrest* which focused almost exclusively on violence, largely glossed over the root of student concerns, and reflected a sentiment of fear of social movements. The report began by acknowledging the concerns of students and “the shortcomings of the American university” and “the university’s relationship to war and to discriminatory racial policies.”⁶² It then quickly discussed the lack of “tolerance” by many student protestors and makes claims that this intolerance threatens the survival of the nation.⁶³ The report also recommended that universities buildup security forces to be the “ultimate internal resource for preventing and coping with campus disorder.”⁶⁴ Disorderly conduct included disruptive measures such as “obstructive sit-ins, interference with academic activities, the

⁶¹ Peter Wood, *Diversity: The Invention of a Concept* (Encounter Books, 2004), 2

⁶² U.S. Department of Health, Education & Welfare, *The Report of the President’s Commission on Campus Unrest*, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1970. 4

⁶³ U.S. Department of Health, Education & Welfare, *The Report*, 5

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 131

blockading of campus recruiters, and interference with the rights of others to speak or to hear others speak.”⁶⁵ Student activism and protest was then effectively considered an act that necessitated intervention of campus police. This shifted the public narrative of the movements away from their intended purpose of social justice and casted student activists as criminals and threats to democracy. This narrative began to shape the perception of the role and function of the university.

The presidential commission’s report not only changed the narrative about student protestors, but it shaped the methods through which institutions of higher education addressed student demands. While affirmative action remained controversial, universities expanded their administrative procedures and offices to mitigate concerns within the confines of acceptable terms of order. Diversity became a form of administrative specialization, folded into the “bureaucratic machine,” as institutions created diversity offices and hired diversity officers. This removed “diversity” of all resemblance of the radical calls for revolutionary transformation that was now deemed dangerous and frightening.⁶⁶ This process of bureaucratizing diversity had two significant implications: tokenization of minority students and faculty and multiculturalism for the sake of prestige. These efforts fulfilled the needs of the university to profit and remain competitive all while ignoring the intellectual and social needs of students and the communities around them.⁶⁷

What arose of the administrative overhaul of “diversity” were initiatives and committees designed to keep the management of progress and change under the direction of the university itself and thereby avoiding any deep institutional change in addressing its

⁶⁵ Ibid, 117

⁶⁶ Ferguson, *We Demand*, 26

⁶⁷ Ibid, 28

exclusionary history and the values of itself and its constituents. In an essay written by Chancellor Thomas H. Eliot of Washington University in 1969, Eliot described some of the administrative measures implemented in response to student demonstrations on his campus and some recommendations for mitigating “the harmful effects of student unrest.” These suggestions include the creation of joint committees, councils, and faculty bodies to handle concerns internally. He also suggested that schools should avoid promises of amnesty or light penalties to demonstrators because this would “undermine the whole basis of rational campus conduct.”⁶⁸

Eliot’s essay, while perhaps well-intentioned, expounds the detrimental impact administrative procedures have on minority students. Disruptions and student activism are necessary for changes in the social and cultural structures of academic institutions. The demonstrations come as a result of a campus environment that is tense and unbearable for non-white students in predominantly white institutions. Joint committees to “maintain administration-faculty-student communication” without change places a heavier burden on students to represent their communities.⁶⁹ The response to student unrest should not merely consist of creation of committees but positive and definite institutional change in order to create an atmosphere where these students can thrive. It answers the question of how to handle a sit-in without addressing the larger problems that made such a demonstration occur. Finally, failure to provide protections or amnesty for students is a transparent tactic to suppress students from engaging in organized disruptive efforts to hold universities accountable to their students.

⁶⁸ David C. Nichols and Olive Mills, *The Campus and the Racial Crisis* (Washington, 1970), 194

⁶⁹ *Ibid* 193

These types of special committees and councils were not unique to Washington University and were actually representative of a greater shift in what the Nixon commission's report recommended for student involvement in campus governance and what the report called the "ombudsman method." According to the report, the ombudsman "is an individual who acts as a mediator and fact-finder for students, faculty members, and administrators" who would have autonomy as well as the support of the university president.⁷⁰ The report highlighted as an example that a black administrator might serve in this role in order to have the confidence of the students as well as suggest "practical modifications of student demands" without being "automatically branded as 'sell-outs'"⁷¹ Essentially, this enables the university to use the "autonomy" and racial identity of the ombudsman to support its effort in managing campus unrest. This effort tokenized minorities by promoting a few to visible positions within the university structure to give the appearance of diversity and increased representation.

The practice of imbedding diversity efforts into the institutional structure of university administrations functioned to improve their brand and public perception to remain competitive in the expanding market of higher education. Sara Ahmed argues in *On Being Included*, "having an institutional aim to make diversity a goal can even be a sign that diversity is not an institutional goal...an appointment of a diversity officer can thus represent the absence of wider support for diversity."⁷² Ombudsmen, student affairs committees, and other councils and initiatives, therefore, often signaled universities'

⁷⁰ U.S. Department of Health, Education & Welfare, *The Report*, 205

⁷¹ Ibid 205

⁷² Sara Ahmed, *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012). 23

unwillingness to take student concerns seriously. With the expansion of access to higher education in the 1970s came a need for universities to make themselves appealing and competitive – all while addressing the demands of activists of the decade prior. The creation of these administrative initiatives was meant to improve the image of the university to attract applicants while preserving structural elitism.

The practice of bringing diversity under the university's mission raised concerns over the rationale of diversity-driven admissions practices and the fundamental educational mission of institutions of higher education. During the 1970s and 1980s, critics continued to complain of the downfall of higher education, oftentimes (subtly or explicitly) blaming progressive student activists – and the university's reaction – for its collapse. It was during this time period that the idea of liberal thought and higher education began to be challenged, as many framed the institutional changes such as the creation of ethnic studies programs as an affront to academic freedom. Diversification initially boosted liberal education because different minds and backgrounds became part of the intellectual process. According to Allan Bloom, "liberal education flourished when it prepared the way for the discussion of a unified view of nature and man's place in it...it decayed when what lay beyond it were only specialties, the premises of which do not lead to any such vision."⁷³ So, while diverse perspectives helped bolster liberal thought, the rise of undergraduate populations led to the expansion of research, academic specialties, and greater intellectual fragmentation which challenged the so-called unified view of nature and man that Bloom and other conservatives promoted as essential to liberal education.⁷⁴

⁷³ Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987), 347

⁷⁴ Derek Bok, *Our Underachieving Colleges: A Candid Look at How Much Students Learn and Why They Should Be Learning More* (Princeton University Press, 2008), 19

It was soon evident that diversity of student body did not equate to diversity of mind, especially since much of the core curriculum of liberal education reflected “white aesthetics, white philosophy, and white science.”⁷⁵ Minority activists called for changes to curriculum, asking for more diverse reading lists and the introduction of ethnic studies departments. These changes were at odds with the traditional core curriculum and breadth of knowledge expected in higher education. In *Illiberal Education*, Dinesh D’Souza describes how the urges for transformation of the curriculum by student activists “face potential opposition from a large segment of faculty who may be sympathetic to minority causes but at the same time believe that the curriculum should not be ideologically apportioned.”⁷⁶ University presidents and administrators, who were not intellectual leaders but bureaucrats and managers, were tasked with making appropriate adjustments in the name interest of campus stability. In his bestselling book *The Closing of the American Mind*, Alan Bloom criticized American universities’ decisions to broaden education claiming that it made them weaker. He condemned the attitude of tolerance and cultural relativism on college campuses and attacked college presidents for their failure to defend the principles on which their universities were founded.⁷⁷ The understanding of the purpose of higher education was in conflict. In the 1960s, colleges and universities were the center for many social and political movements. However, in the following decades students’ focuses became increasingly insular as undergraduate education became more important and radical student movements were less common. The end of the social movements in the

⁷⁵ Dinesh D’Souza, *Illiberal Education: The Politics of Race and Sex on Campus* (New York: Free Press, 1991), 244

⁷⁶ D’Souza, *Illiberal Education*, 246

⁷⁷ Bloom, *Closing of the American Mind*.

1980s meant that universities no longer needed to foster a moral consciousness in students so students became more focused on their future careers and less on intellectual pursuits.⁷⁸ Conservatives joined Bloom in criticizing higher education for yielding to the concerns of students through the creation of new programs and curriculum, such as ethnic or black studies programs, whereas people on the left found that these changes were necessary to keep up with the transforming demographics and needs of society. This debate created conflict surrounding the institutional aims of the university and the purpose and benefits of diversity.

While universities attempted to balance the tensions of these internal forces, they also needed to adapt to address the external reality of the changing economy and higher education's role and function within the American economy. This played an important role in changing the function of the university. Double-digit inflation and no economic growth in the 1970s, accompanied by changing demographics, threatened the financial health of nearly every American enterprise and institution.⁷⁹ Inflation as measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI) dramatically increased from 3.4 percent in 1972 to 12.2 percent in 1974.⁸⁰ In the years 1973-1975, there were five quarters in which GDP was negative.⁸¹ Unemployment peaked at 9 percent in May of 1975.⁸² The oil shock in 1973 played a significant role in these economic trends by raising oil prices and halted the progress of industrial technology. The Federal Reserve's easier monetary policy in response to the oil

⁷⁸ Ibid., 341

⁷⁹ Zemsky et al, *Remaking the American University: Market-Smart and Mission-Centered*, 18

⁸⁰ Alan S. Blinder, "The Anatomy of Double-Digit Inflation in the 1970s," in *Inflation: Causes and Effects*, edited by Robert E. Hall (University of Chicago Press, 1982), 264.

⁸¹ Kimberly Amadeo, "Stagflation and Its Causes: Why Stagflation (Probably) Won't Reoccur," The Balance, updated October 27, 2020, <https://www.thebalance.com/what-is-stagflation-3305964>

⁸² ibis

shock also fueled inflation and hurt workers who were not earning high enough wages to account for inflation.⁸³

Campuses became increasingly aware of their financial vulnerability as the wave of public investment in higher education was drying up. The graduation of the baby-boomers led to decreased profits for most institutions which forced them to seek new markets of prospective students. The changing economy threatened the financial future of institutions of higher education and demanded that universities become more responsive to market forces and university presidents became primarily focused on money and restoring the profits prior to the 1970s. The importance of diversity and the college curriculum became less compelling objectives and the university's successful role in the marketplace became a larger priority. The success of universities as cultural and educational centers has been relatively washed away by market forces.⁸⁴ The "administrative lattice" expanded the scale and scope of administrative personnel throughout the 1980s and 1990s.⁸⁵ Colleges and universities began to view themselves primarily in terms of competition, supply and demand, and profitability.

The market fundamentally changed higher education by transforming the relationship between themselves and the top undergraduate applicants they were seeking to recruit. Institutions began to view students as consumers and other universities as competitors. This created an admissions "arms race" in the late 20th century in which there was practically no limit to what the most selective schools were prepared to do, spend, or

⁸³ Noah Smith, "How the 1970s Changed the U.S. Economy," *Bloomberg*, September 16, 2020, <https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2020-09-16/how-1970s-oil-prices-stagflation-changed-the-u-s-economy>

⁸⁴ Geiger, *Knowledge and Money*.

⁸⁵ Zemsky et al, *Remaking the American University*, 20

offer to attract the best, most sought-after students.⁸⁶ This had the effect of reinvigorating the sort of elitism of higher education that had begun to fade with the expansion of access to higher education. In 1983, *U.S. News and World Report* published its first numerical rankings of colleges and universities, making the relative reputations of institutions known and easily accessible to potential students.⁸⁷ The rankings incorporated data on admissions, graduation rates, and resources which reinforced the idea that selectivity reflects reputation and prestige.⁸⁸ The connection between selectivity, prestige, quality and costs had the effect of generating a sort of feedback loop among selective institutions. Greater selectivity of students creates a better quality of education, which in turn attracts more high-quality students. This drives revenues up, as well as spending. These factors together contribute to the prestige of the university, which feeds back into the loop by attracting more students.⁸⁹ The arms race of university admissions, therefore, has contributed to skyrocketing price of higher education, increased competition for acceptance, and further stratification within and among institutions of higher education.

The emphasis on market forces in higher education also altered students' perspective on the purpose of earning a degree. Students began to see themselves as consumers of higher education and viewed their relationship with the university as purely transactional. The university ceased to be a place of deep learning for many students and instead an avenue to employment and upward mobility. Economic incentives and the promise of employment became more essential to students' desire for a degree. This

⁸⁶ Ibid 32

⁸⁷ Geiger, *Knowledge and Money*, 80

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid. 82

became even more apparent as the economy became more technical and a college degree became more essential to the student's place in the job market. This shift in students' perspective has two important implications.

First, the obligations and duties of universities in their goal of educating students changed in the 1980s and 1990s. The educational goals of collegiate educators have moved so far from the ideal liberal arts education that Allan Bloom had revered in *The Closing of The American Mind*. The utility of certain subjects, such as the classic Greek, are limited in the contemporary world and few students have a strong desire to pursue them.⁹⁰ From a market perspective, there is very limited incentive for colleges to invest resources in these departments and even less incentive for students to major in them. Anecdotally, this sentiment is apparent in the popular discourse among college students when discussing the value of these majors. The first question often raised when meeting a Classics major is something along the lines of "what are you going to do with a degree in that?" There exists a hierarchal ideology surrounding education, where majors and tracts with the most job-security are looked at with some superiority. Some of the most prevalent discussions within educators and universities are career-focused, centering around job-preparedness. Many of the values of liberal arts education have been quietly dismissed and replaced by an emphasis on economic training.

Second, and more importantly, academic consumerism changed the ways in which students engaged with their university administrations. Students are often hyper-focused on graduating with good grades and getting a job. While many students may still be concerned with the social, political, and economic institutions that surround them, they

⁹⁰ Hersh and Merrow, *Declining by Degrees*, 101.

have become less inclined to challenge and transform them and instead seek to join them. Students, as well as universities, have increasingly accepted the status quo.

These two factors – the lethargy of universities to meet student demands and the trend toward market forces and consumerism – had a monumental impact in the future of higher education and student activism. Universities' half-hearted commitment to improving their campuses merely extended and compounded the hostility that non-white students faced (and continue to face). At the same time, the market-driven function of higher education and value of a degree has dissuaded politically minded students from engaging in the type of disruptive activism that may be required to force their administrators' hand. The result has been complacency with the function of higher education over the last several decades. Only recently, as the compounded problems have begun to manifest in outrageous and headline-grabbing incidents, has there begun to be more mainstream and publicized engagement with the failures of universities and the student's role in combating them.

Chapter 3

America has continually struggled to reconcile and address its tortured racial history in all aspects of social and cultural life. From Jim Crow to the civil rights movement and beyond, race and diversity has been a contentious point in American politics as many fail to make sense of the American values of individual liberty, freedom, democracy, and progress while deep inequities continue and many have been excluded from the so-called American Dream for decades. Time and time again, white America has dragged its feet in rectifying historic injustice and committing itself to equality. The civil rights movement was a direct result of American apathy toward injustice. While significant progress occurred, we can see that America has once again turned its back on its promises of equal rights and protection. Racial tensions remain high as racism is baked into the foundation of every institution of our society.

American universities are a microcosm of American identity. Higher education is not immune of the social ills that plague the country more broadly, but rather a sphere where these same biases and inequalities are concentrated. This is evident in how the social movements, such as the civil rights movement, the Anti-Vietnam War movements, and women's movements found themselves played out in pockets of universities. The debate about diversity and inclusion on college campuses today is shockingly predictable and merely constitutes another chapter of America's history and struggle over race. What makes this debate difficult to resolve is that it does not constitute a fundamental disagreement about rights, as the problems of slavery and segregation did, but rather disagreement over the appropriate means of addressing student needs and recognizing the

impact of the past. Universities face the dilemma of how to pursue equity and excellence while providing necessary support to students.

While young men and women of various races, classes, and identities challenged their universities and demanded equality and representation, the administration pushed back. They responded not with the fundamental transformation that these students wanted, but with superficial and bureaucratic approaches of diversity. What resulted is the modern crisis in higher education. Racist, sexist, and homophobic ideologies remain etched in the foundations of many of these institutions, disguised by diversity and inclusion committees, tokenized students and faculty, and unfulfilled promises of change. And, the failure to address them made the process of diversification worse. Students are ostracized and attacked within their institutions and their administrations fail to adequately protect them. When the administrations fail to protect them, these students are forced to protect themselves or leave. Racial tensions in the broader American society have seemingly breathed new life into student activists. However, these students are evidently ill-prepared to coordinate and organize sustained movements to effectively create the institutional change that is necessary.

Presently, college enrollment rates have increased 195 percent since 1970, when 3.5 percent of the U.S. population were college students.⁹¹ As a percentage of the entire student population, the White or Caucasian demographic has decreased by 34.5 percent since 1976.⁹² In this same period, Black or African American demographics have increased by 39.6 percent, now accounting for 9.6 percent of students. 19.5 percent of students are

⁹¹ "College Enrollment & Student Demographic Statistics," EducationData.org, June 7, 2019, <https://educationdata.org/college-enrollment-statistics>

⁹² Ibid.

Hispanic or Latinx, a 441.7 percent increase from 1976. Considerable variation appears across institution types, however, as white students enroll in private, non-profit universities (18 percent) more than black (8 percent) and Latinx students (9 percent).⁹³ Fewer Black and Hispanic or Latinx students enroll in “selective” institutions than white and Asian students.⁹⁴ Women are now 24.7 percent more likely to enroll in higher education than men. In 1960, 41.2 percent of college students were women whereas now 55.5 percent of undergraduate and graduate students are women.⁹⁵ In 2019, international students made up around 5.5 percent of the total higher education population in the United States.⁹⁶ The highest international student populations by their national origin were China, India, South Korea, Saudi Arabia, and Canada.⁹⁷

These numbers show that college campuses are more “diverse” than they once were but do little to show the type of environment students are subjected to once they arrive. Only 56 percent of Hispanic or Latinx students and 46 percent of black or African American students complete a four-year degree within six years, compared to 72 percent of white students. Since 2010, black and African American students among the student population have decreased by 10.7 percent. Underrepresented students of color face lower odds of graduating than other students, higher chances of struggling to afford higher education, and are more likely to face significant academic obstacles.⁹⁸ There is a tension between access and excellence, and universities struggle to understand and remedy this tension.

⁹³ U.S. Department of Education, *Advancing Diversity and Inclusion in Higher Education*

⁹⁴ *Ibid* 21

⁹⁵ “College Enrollment & Student Demographic Statistics.”

⁹⁶ “Number of International Students in the United States Hits All-Time High,” *Institution of International Education*, November 18, 2019, <https://www.iie.org/Why-IIE/Announcements/2019/11/Number-of-International-Students-in-the-United-States-Hits-All-Time-High>

⁹⁷ “College Enrollment & Student Demographic Statistics.”

⁹⁸ U.S. Department of Education, *Advancing Diversity*, 35

Racially charged hate incidents are as widespread on college campuses as they are in American society. In a report conducted by the LEAD Fund in 2018 documenting Uncivil, Hate, and Bias Incidents On Campus (UHBIOC), 77 percent of respondents indicated that one UHBIOC had occurred at their institution within the last twenty four months.⁹⁹ Two-thirds of respondents reported more than one incident had occurred in that time. Most (67 percent) of these reported incidents were “bias incidents” which includes things such as racially motivated leafleting, pamphlets, social media, Nazi symbols and bias-based bullying. The Federal Bureau of Investigation reports that nearly 280 hate crimes had been reported by campus police forces in 2017 – an increase from 257 in 2016 and 194 in 2015.¹⁰⁰ This data shows that there is clearly a problem within higher education and that diversity and inclusion initiatives that have been in put in place are ineffective at promoting a safe campus climate.

The institutional administrative approaches to diversity that began in the 1970s and remain present today have failed to meaningfully remake universities into inclusive environments for non-white students and have preserved systemic inequalities. Universities and colleges have failed to be intentional about diversity and inclusion because America failed to be intentional about diversity and inclusion. For decades, institutions of higher education have focused their efforts on implicit bias training and race-conscious admissions and hiring processes, ignoring and extending the structural issues at the core of these institutions. This is indicative of an intentional effort to implement merely

⁹⁹ Christopher Jones and Richard Anthony Baker, *Report on the Uncivil, Hate and Bias Incidents on Campus Survey* (The LEAD Fund, 2018), 4. https://www.aaaed.org/images/aaaed/LEAD_Fund/LEAD-Fund-Report-UHBIOC-Report.pdf

¹⁰⁰ Jeremy Bauer-Wolf, “Hate Incidents on Campus Still Rising,” *Inside Higher Ed*, February 25, 2019. <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2019/02/25/hate-incidents-still-rise-college-campuses>

performative or symbolic measures that do little to positively impact inclusivity. In “Why Diversity Initiatives Fail,” Pamela Newkirk concludes that, “Unless and until white America — including academics and those who claim progressive values — comes to terms with the reality of persisting injustice, diversity initiatives will continually fail.”¹⁰¹ This demands that “white America” faces structural and institutional racism head-on, which from looking at history, is unlikely to be done without applied pressure. That pressure, I believe, can and must come from students. Administrators are too far removed from the lived experiences of students and too deeply ingrained in their own biases to accurately identify the shortcomings of the university. Young people, as we saw with the student movements of the 1960s, are capable of developing their own ideas about injustices and expressing what matters.

In 2015, protests emerged at institutions such as Princeton, Yale, Wesleyan, and the University of Missouri as students of color expressed their dissatisfaction and alienation they felt on their predominantly white campuses. In response, these institutions threw money at the problem, pledging millions of dollars toward faculty diversity, diversity officers, or consultants.¹⁰² At Yale, tensions rose after the Intercultural Affairs Council sent a message that urged students to reconsider wearing cultural costumes on Halloween that might offend students and Erika Christakis, a lecturer at the university, wrote a response questioning the need to exercise control over students’ choice of costume. She stated, “Is there no room anymore for a child to be a little bit obnoxious...a little bit inappropriate or

¹⁰¹ Newkirk, “Why Diversity Initiatives Fail”

¹⁰² Ibid.

provocative or, yes, offensive?"¹⁰³ Soon after, a Facebook post accused members of a Yale Fraternity, Sigma Alpha Epsilon, of turning away black and Latina women from a party saying, "White girls only."¹⁰⁴ These two unrelated, yet similar, incidents revealed the concerning realities of student life for students of color. Students were angry that Yale officials had not sufficiently dealt with the challenges that minority students face in academic and social circles and were frustrated with the slow speed with which university leaders publicly responded to the controversies. The events at Yale also highlighted how ignorant many students and faculty are to the harsh realities of life on campus for minority students until a major incident occurs. One student, Isaiah Genece, stated that "people have gone through so much in all their time here, and have just never talked about it."¹⁰⁵ Many students have been alienated upon their arrival to campus, at Yale and similar institutions across the country, largely fueled by the failure of their institutions to foster an inclusive and supportive campus environment or to address their racial history.

Many students, particularly students of color, can see and feel the effects of these administrative failures. The standard response, until recently, had been to work within the confines of administrative procedures focused on top-down reform. Students have typically trusted administrators to make the best decisions on their behalf and instances like those at Yale have left students frustrated and betrayed. This is an unfortunate consequence of the administration's half-baked diversification. Universities embraced student-participation in decision-making processes in an effort to halt disruptive activism. This

¹⁰³ Sarah Brown, "At Yale, Painful Rifts Emerge Over Diversity and Free Speech," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, November 9, 2015, <https://www.chronicle.com/article/at-yale-painful-rifts-emerge-over-diversity-and-free-speech/>

¹⁰⁴ Brown, "Yale."

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

method became the procedural status quo, restricting students' voices to the confines of the institution within which there is a significant power imbalance. Additionally, most students' transactional relationship with higher education limits their willingness to engage in particular forms of activism, especially the most effective forms of protest, for fear of the potential negative consequences it may have on their future career aspects. This is especially true for non-white students, who – on average – stand to gain the most from their degrees.

Higher levels of educational attainment are generally associated with higher salaries and earnings. In 2016, the median earnings of full-time workers with a bachelor's degree or higher degree was \$54,000, compared to \$31,800 for full time-workers with only a high school diploma.¹⁰⁶ However, the marginal benefit of a degree on salaries is connected to race due to the racial wealth gap in America. In 2016, the median household net worth for white families with a high school diploma was \$79,440, which is 1.6 times more than the median household net worth of black families with bachelor's degree.¹⁰⁷ While everyone on average benefits from a college degree, minorities who have been left behind face a greater benefit from degree attainment.

With the recent uptick in bias related incidents on campuses, there has been a moderate resurgence of student activism. In 2015, UCLA's annual CIRP Freshman Survey found that interest in political and civic engagement among first-years had reached the highest levels since the survey began. Nearly 1 in 10 students expected to participate in

¹⁰⁶ National Center for Education Statistics, *Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Groups – Indicator 30: Earnings and Employment*, last updated February 2019, https://nces.ed.gov/programs/raceindicators/indicator_RFD.asp

¹⁰⁷ Mark Huelsman, *Social Exclusion: The State of State U for Black Students*, Dēmos, December 2018, https://www.demos.org/sites/default/files/publications/SocialExclusion_StateOf.pdf

student protests while in college.¹⁰⁸ These findings about the rising interest in activism coincided with some of the successful protests of college students – namely the events at the University of Missouri. Though these examples of successful student protests and their impact on student attitudes surrounding activism are an optimistic and hopeful finding, the reality is that many university students are currently lacking the organizational and motivational tools to effectively protest and create meaningful and lasting change at their institutions.

Comprehensive change in higher education requires a deep understanding of the issues in order to clearly identify and articulate the goals and demands of a student movement. In some cases, the immediate problems and solutions may be clear. When a racially motivated incident or a sexual assault occurs, the immediate response and demand may be for the expulsion of the perpetrator, or perhaps some sort of accountability from university leadership. However, the demands for institutional change to address the problems of the campus climate are more nuanced and very rarely understood in universal terms. As a result, universities are misguided in their response, and students or victims are left frustrated at the administration's apparent tone deafness.

In many of these instances, universities prioritize the sanctity of their institution over addressing and delivering justice. In 2015, Brock Turner sexually assaulted Chanel Miller on the campus of Stanford University. In *Know My Name*, Miller recounts the horror of the event and the trial, and the ultimate light sentence that Turner received. Despite facing up to 14 years in prison, Turner served only 3 months in county jail. She discusses

¹⁰⁸ Kevin Egan et al. (2015), *The American Freshman: National Norms Fall 2015*, Los Angeles: Higher Education Research Institute, UCLA.

the inadequacy of Stanford in protected her, or any other woman, in their inability and unwillingness to address the underlying issue of sexual violence on campus. Rather, the university attempted to protect their brand and shield themselves from the negative press from Miller's victim impact statement. In a statement released by Stanford after Miller's statement went viral, the university claimed that "Stanford University, its students, its police and its staff members did everything they could" and that the "university reached out confidentially to offer her support" which according to Miller, was untrue.¹⁰⁹ At the time of her assault, the university was silent for days, apathetic to the injustice and ignorant to their role in preventing similar instances. In an open letter to the administration, Jennifer J. Freyd, a Stanford alum, condemned the university's "self-congratulatory and defensive stance" which she called "institutional betrayal."¹¹⁰ In an attempt to further save their reputation, Stanford decided to install a garden in the location where the assault had occurred but refused to install a plaque that had any indication of Turner's or the university's wrongdoings in the matter. Stanford did not want to recognize the ways in which it was complicit in cultivating a campus that was unsafe for women, rather, administrators merely cared about protecting its reputation and superficially signaling that it cared.

These problems are also amplified by incoherent understandings and conceptions of diversity held by students, administrators, and the public. Joyce M. Bell and Douglas Hartmann, in their study of the everyday discourse of diversity, highlight the inability of Americans to effectively define the nature and value of diversity and the negative

¹⁰⁹ Chanel Miller, *Know My Name: A Memoir* (New York: Viking, 2019), 297

¹¹⁰ Miller, *Know My Name*

consequences of this ambiguity. In attempts at settling on an exhaustive meaning of diversity, respondents often give underdeveloped or even contradictory answers.¹¹¹ Speaking in terms of diversity elicits different visions depending on who you are speaking to. “Diversity” has developed into a buzz word that has commercial value in marketing the university.¹¹² To some, therefore, diversity has lost its meaning by invoking the idea of difference but not commitment to action.¹¹³ Evoking the term diversity confuses the aims in pursuing it and overlooks the more fundamental issues of inequality. This inability to form a clear consensus on meaning and value of diversity, therefore, serves as a detriment to the cause of student activists attempting to transform and improve their college campuses. Student activists must rework their language surrounding their goals in order to be as explicit as possible and stop administrators from continuing to conceal systemic inequalities behind superficial claims of diversity.

At Columbia University, a very active campus during the sixties, the activist community consisted of two major groups: Student Afro-American Society and Students for a Democratic Society. Now, Columbia has dozens of activist organizations with separate and distinct interests.¹¹⁴ As a result, activism has become more frequent but less centralized and has experienced a decline in numbers. The bureaucratization of university reform that arose in the 1970s has also contributed to the dwindling size and number of protests. The presence of student governments and other groups have provided a simpler,

¹¹¹ Joyce M. Bell and Douglas Hartmann, “Diversity in Everyday Discourse: The Cultural Ambiguities and Consequences of ‘Happy Talk,’” *American Sociological Review* 72, no. 6 (Dec., 2007): 897, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25472502>

¹¹² Ahmed, *On Being Included*, 53

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Karen Xia et al, “1968 to Now: A Fracturing of student groups and a changing protest culture,” *Columbia Spectator*, April 26, 2018, <https://www.columbiaspectator.com/news/2018/04/26/1968-to-now-a-fracturing-of-student-groups-and-a-changing-protest-culture/>

less time-consuming way for students to voice their concerns. Student activists today often point to the internet and social media as a tool for mobilizing and supporting causes, which also negatively contributes to the strength of physical demonstration.¹¹⁵ These methods, while making it easier to spread information and awareness, have made superficial “activism” much more common. There is debate as to whether social media activism is actually activism or if it is effective in social and political movements. According to a 2020 Pew Research Survey, most Americans believe that social media platforms are an effective tool for raising awareness and creating sustained movements. However, 79 percent of Americans also believe that social media distracts people from issues that are truly important and 76 percent believe that social media makes people think they are making a difference when they really aren’t.¹¹⁶ One study has shown that participation in token support, meaning actions that show support to others with little associated effort or cost, has no impact on whether a person is more likely to participate in a form of more meaningful support in the future.¹¹⁷ Liking a Facebook page or sharing a link is significantly less straining and intense than attending a protest and may not compel a student to take real tangible effort towards change. These actions may have positive impacts on raising awareness but do not promote action or yield effective results on their own.

Although college leaders and administrators have historically been one of the largest hindrances to campus protest, the cycle and rhythm of college itself has shown itself

¹¹⁵ Xia, “1968 to Now.”

¹¹⁶ Brooke Auxier and Colleen McClain, “Americans think social media can help build movements, but can also be a distraction,” *Pew Research Center*, September 9, 2020, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/09/09/americans-think-social-media-can-help-build-movements-but-can-also-be-a-distraction/>

¹¹⁷ Kirk Kristofferson, Katherine White, and John Peloza, “The Nature of Slacktivism: How the Social Observability of an Initial Act of Token Support Affects Subsequent Prosocial Action,” *Journal of Consumer Research* 40, no. 6 (April 2014), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/674137>

to be a major adversary in sustainable student movements. Built-in holiday breaks, busy midterms and finals periods, and long summer breaks disrupt organization and make sustained momentum difficult. This “student energy cycle” is predictable and long breaks give university administrations ample time to undo student efforts or implement policies without possible disruption and backlash.¹¹⁸ Activist efforts to implement foundational change is also frustrated by their limited time before graduation and weak institutional memory.¹¹⁹ The radical structural transformation that student activists ought to be working towards will not happen in four years, so even if a student dedicates themselves to the cause the day they start their first year, they’re not likely to see the fruits of their labor. It then becomes essential that student activists have an organization structure in place to pass information and successes onto younger students, which is rare. Without an organizational plan to maintain a sustained and collective memory of a movement, universities are able to stall until activists graduate and the problem fades away.

A crucial factor to the apparent success of student movements of the 1960s was the ability of activists to work off the momentum of the Civil Rights Movement and antiwar protests external to the campus. The students were inspired and instructed by the leaders of these movements and benefitted from the changing social and political climate of the time. Convincingly making an off-campus issue also a campus issue was a successful formula for students in the sixties.¹²⁰ However, few student activists today have brought off-campus issues onto their campuses in the same way. Students are certainly engaging

¹¹⁸ Emma Whitford, “Patterns of Student Protest,” *Inside Higher Ed*, January 3, 2019, <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2019/01/03/student-activists-biggest-obstacle-often-rhythms-college-activism-itself>

¹¹⁹ Whitford, “Patterns of Student Protest.”

¹²⁰ Zachary Jason, “Student Activism 2.0,” *Harvard Ed. Magazine*, Fall 2019. <https://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/ed/18/08/student-activism-20>

with and protesting with Black Lives Matter (BLM) and current movements for racial justice; however, their involvement is extrinsic to their role as students and the university. Rather than channeling the energy and passion surrounding BLM to address the unique but related racial issues of campus culture, students have seemingly only organized for the benefit of BLM, which is not explicitly concerned with the matters of university students. In an opinion piece critical of BLM published in Stanford's student newspaper, Lucy Kross Wallace notes that "After George Floyd's death, my inbox was flooded with emails from faculty, student groups, organizations and entire departments endorsing critical race theory and re-articulating anti-racist dogma...But in the months since, this fervent support hasn't evolved into the kind of rigorous debate that one would expect from a university"¹²¹ In the wake of the BLM protests after the murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, individuals have become increasingly aware of the role institutional racism in almost every sector of American life, higher education included. Yet, administrations continue to focus almost exclusively on solidarity statements, diversity committees, and diversity training without facilitating efforts to embed antiracism in the university's foundational structure.¹²²

The disjointedness and decentralization of these two interrelated causes – BLM and higher education reform – is characteristic of many of the major flaws of student activist efforts today. Many of the movements that have gained national attention over the last couple of years are isolated and responsive only to specific issues as they arise on

¹²¹ Lucy Kross Wallace, "The case against BLM," *The Stanford Daily*, November 15, 2020, <https://www.stanforddaily.com/2020/11/15/the-case-against-blm/>

¹²² Thurka Sangaramoorthy and Joseph B. Richardson Jr., "Black Lives Matter' Without Black People? "Inside Higher Ed, October 16, 2020, <https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2020/10/16/many-people-deny-how-pervasive-racism-higher-ed-and-how-its-often-reproduced>

individual campuses. There is no strong central organizational structure to connect these struggles. Where the 1960s had organizational networks, like the SDS or SNCC, to strategically coordinate the student movements, today's students are lacking a similar network. While yes, it is important to look inward and pressure the institution within which you are in, activists today must also recognize that these problems are widespread, and the cause is the same. Few, if any, institutions of higher education are innocent of the structural inequities that harm black, Latinx, LGBTQ, and other underrepresented students. The pervasiveness of bias-related incidents is indicative of this.

The number of student organizations and advocacy groups on college campuses today is remarkable. The existence of these groups is typically marketed as a positive thing, where students are free to associate with each other behind a shared interest or goal, however, their existence might also create confusion or conflict that precludes the type of student activism that occurred decades ago. At the University of Richmond, for example, there are more than 150 university-recognized student organizations.¹²³ Twenty-eight of these organizations are categorized as multicultural, political/advocacy, or special interest. Some of these groups include: the Asian Americans Student Union, the Black Student Alliance, the Korean American Student Association, the Multicultural Student Solidarity Network, the Sankofa African Student Alliance, and the Solidarity Organization for Latinx Students. Few would deny the benefits of these organizations in providing a space for students to feel secure and understood. However, when these organizations are focused on their own interests on campus it can be difficult for them to come together in an organized

¹²³ "Student Organization Directory," Center for Student Involvement, University of Richmond, <https://involved.richmond.edu/student-orgs/org-directory.html>

way to understand how their interests align in order to work together effectively. As a result, these organizations end up working independently, perhaps at the detriment of others who are competing for the same attention and resources from the university.

Students today ought to learn from the history of student movements. Small victories are not indicative of complete systemic institutional change. Until these activists consciously dedicate themselves to organizing, protesting, and demanding the radical change necessary, higher education will continue to profit and make superficial changes at the expense of their most vulnerable.

Conclusion

The occurrence of racial incidents on college campuses is unsurprising, yet the gravity of the current state of college campuses is often misunderstood or overlooked by both students and administrators, particularly because they often fail to analyze the current university within its historical context. Social, political, and economic trends overtime have shaped the role and function of universities within the system of higher education today, as well as the attitudes of students and administrators within the system. The overt white supremacy that was at the core of higher American education remains embedded in the language universities use, and white ignorance to the harsh realities of racism and inequality on campus has allowed the problem to persist. While the current crisis on campuses today is largely due to the long history of complacency and unintentionality of college administrations in diversifying, the failure of students to recognize and understand the conditions that have created these problems has prevented any sort of meaningful progress toward change.

Students at universities across the country are only just beginning to learn about the racism and discrimination embedded in the creation of their universities. At the University of Richmond, in the wake of the hate incidents in January 2020, students have begun to question the institution's racial past and the profit-driven decision-making structure of the university. While this new examination of the institutional structure has been helpful for student activists hoping to make change, there is still a lack of the comprehensive knowledge necessary for these students to be definitive in their demands and targeted in their approach. As a result, these early efforts have been unproductive and met with firm, organized resistance.

In the summer of 2020, following the death of George Floyd and the proliferation of protests for racial justice across the country, the students of the University of Richmond began to look inward to identify ways to address the issues of racism and hate on campus. These initial efforts were aimed at fostering a sense of belonging and safety for students of color and women at the predominantly white institution and at holding administrators accountable to their claims of equity, diversity, and inclusion. However, concerned students directed their energy toward historically white Greek fraternities and sororities, which are rooted in racist exclusionary practices, rather than the university administration itself. The “movement” gained support through the creation of an Instagram account called @abolishrichmondgreeklife, where students could share their negative experiences with Greek life, either anonymously or publicly. Similar accounts were created at other institutions, such as Vanderbilt University and Duke University, each calling for members of these organizations to disaffiliate and for their schools to ban the organizations altogether. The Instagram page states in its first post from July 6, 2020 that historically white fraternities and sororities “help perpetuate harm in our campus community at large” and they are hopeful to reimagine a more inclusive campus community in its absence.

The sentiments and ideas behind the abolish Greek life movement reflect the desire of students, predominantly students of color and women, to foster a community that promotes inclusion and belonging. However, it is evident that these students were misguided in their understanding of the university’s administrative structure in decision-making and their motivations for implementing change. Much like university administrators throughout history, the University of Richmond’s Center for Student Involvement and Office of Student Development were reluctant to entertain the demands

for abolition, and instead aimed efforts at “reform” in the form of diversity, equity and inclusion committees and new recruitment standards. Since returning to school from summer break, submissions to @abolishrichmondgreeklife have steadily declined with less than 20 submissions from when classes started in August to May. Spring recruitment for fraternities and sororities was allowed to take place, and much of the passion for abolition has quieted down despite the continued concerns of students of color. What the once-hopeful advocates for abolition have seen is that transforming campus culture is difficult when the administration can circumvent their concerns with superficial reform, just as they did in response to student activists in the past.

Another movement regarding student welfare and racial reckoning arose at the University of Richmond in March, after the Board of Trustees stated they would not rename two campus buildings, Ryland Hall (named after enslaver Robert Ryland) and Freeman Hall (named after Douglas Southall Freeman, a segregationist and eugenicist). While many universities have begun to remove the names of historical figures who promoted white supremacy from their buildings, Richmond has decided to preserve them. In response, the UR Black Student Coalition (BSC) was formed to challenge this decision as well as use the opportunity to advocate for other material changes to better the experiences of black students on campus. In their statement called “Protect Our Web: A Statement on Black Student Welfare” the BSC states that, “It is evident that there is an institutional culture of justifying and upholding white supremacy: the most recent and egregious example of this being the refusal to remove Robert Ryland and Douglas Southall Freeman’s names from

campus buildings.”¹²⁴ The BSC also created a list of demands in addition to the building renaming, including: expanding academic accommodations in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, subsidizing off-campus mental health services for black students, abandoning the plan to name the terrace of a new building after enslaved persons, creating an endowed chair for the Africana Studies program, and expanding the Multicultural Space to its own standalone building.

The Protect Our Web statement and the demands of the Black Student Coalition are a positive step in expanding the knowledge of the racism rooted in the university’s history. The BSC called on students to disaffiliate from any university task force, student organization, or fundraiser until the demands were met. Additionally, demonstrations and teach-ins were hosted to get students involved and share more information about black student activism and institutional power and hierarchy. This knowledge-sharing is crucial as it sheds some light as to how universities truly work, and what must be done in order to enact change. Presently, the Board of Trustees has suspended its decision to keep the building names and is creating a commission to conduct a review and form a recommendation to the board.

The events of these student movements at the University of Richmond are markedly different than the movements of the 1960s, primarily because the student’s concerns are more nuanced. Where students in the 1960s were not concerned with integration, modern students are resisting commonplace encounters with racism and bigotry and desire a sense

¹²⁴ UR Black Student Coalition, “Protect Our Web: A Statement on Black Student Welfare,” March 4, 2021 <https://www.protectourweb.com/statement-on-black-student-welfare>

of belonging – a feeling that is the norm for their white peers. However, modern students should be conscious of the lessons they can learn from the past and seek to improve them.

The activism necessary to change an institution in a lasting way requires risk, and students today need to decide what they are willing to sacrifice. When the power of an institution is located at the top (the Board of Trustees and the administration) and the people at the top are profit-driven, the people at the bottom (the students) must find a way to damage profits and demand attention. While student disaffiliation from the university stops the university from benefiting from the unpaid labor of its students, the student community also loses the support structures in place to speak on their behalf and hold the university accountable. Rather, more assertive demonstrations might be necessary to achieve successful outcomes more immediately. For example, in 2015, when the University of Missouri's football team said it would boycott all football-related activities until the university's president resigned amid student protests regarding a series of racially charged incidents, president Tim Wolfe stepped down within two days.¹²⁵ However, many students, fearful of the threats to job prospects and graduate school admissions if they are to take part in more radical demonstrations, are hesitant to participate. Perhaps, however, some casualties to the system are necessary to achieve what activists of the past could not.

Students today could also learn from the past in the ability of student activists to form allies to achieve shared goals. One pitfall of the movement to abolish Greek life at Richmond was its isolating nature. It pitted students, most of whom have similar ideals for the future of the university community, against each other. The root of the problem lies in

¹²⁵ Rohan Nadkarni and Alex Nieves, "Why Missouri's football team joined a protest against school administration," *Sports Illustrated*, Nov. 9, 2015.

the administration and the institution, not merely in other students. That is not to say Greek life does not contribute to the exclusive nature of the campus, but change needs to happen at the university-level in order to make any significant strides at the student-level. The Black Student Coalition, too, falls short of making stronger allies in its omission of staff and faculty, who often share the same struggle, in its statement. These allies are necessary in building a movement to implement large-scale, long-term, bottom-up change.

The current climate on college campuses cannot be fully understood or successfully transformed without considering the separate factors that have contributed to its creation. The history matters as it has shaped every facet of our institutions of higher education. Universities have failed to be intentional about diversity and inclusivity, the result of which is a rise of hate and bias incidents that are shockingly predictable. The past shows that the solution does not lie within the administrative bureaucracy, but the hands of students and faculty who must challenge their institutions to reconcile their stated claims of inclusivity with their actual practices. Sustained pressure and radical demands are needed to put an end to higher education's idleness and to achieve the vision of institutional change that has been desired for decades.

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