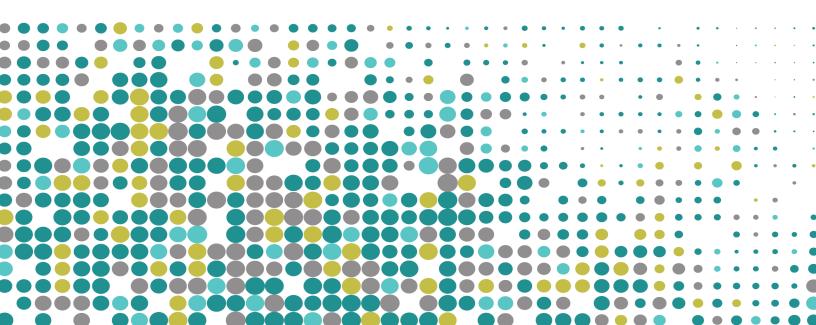# A BOLD VISION FORWARD:
A FRAMEWORK FOR THE STRATEGIC IMPERATIVE FOR RACIAL JUSTICE AND DECOLONIZATION

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LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We wrote this document in Detroit, Michigan, USA. We acknowledge that the land we met on has long served as a site of meeting and exchange amongst Indigenous peoples. Prior to the Indian Land Cession 66, the land now known as Detroit, Michigan was traditional territory to the Anishinaabek (Odawa, Potawatomi and Ojibwe), the Miami, the Peoria and Haudenosauneega Confederacy. We honor and respect the diverse Indigenous peoples connected to this territory on which we gathered.

BEGINNING...

The work is not about resolving the challenges; the work is living in the midst of the challenge. -D-L

Slash.
/
Occupying multiple sides
Living in the tension
Breathing...
In and out
Inhale / Exhale
Seeking resolution
Screaming for clarity
Like a calm wind on a spring day
And also feeling with the frostbitten hands
That ache.
Like open wounds
And seek fixing
Even knowing
That fixing sometimes / now
Means bigger fixing / later

The whole time I just kept thinking, well, damn, I feel like I'm a settler colonizer. -Stephen

Whew.
I know.
It's a lot.
We are asking a lot.
Resist that voice
That squeaky, mouse-like voice
Telling you, you are different
That you didn't oppress
Assert your dominance
Because
You did.

But I'm a Black queer woman, so, surely you don't mean me? But, also me. -Dre

It's you.
Not me.
Surely, it's someone else.
Not me.
I'm one of the good ones.
Not me.
I do social justice work.
Not me.
Do you not know I'm oppressed?
Not me.

You have experiences and you become aware, then you reflect, and you think about who am I and what I am doing, and how am I hurting people and what do I do differently? It doesn't stop. All those questions are gonna come up. -Flo

All
Those
Damn questions.
Too many of them.
So. Many.
This all feels so hopeless
Like trying to grasp air
So futile.
Fleeting.
/
Freeing.

Freedom to openly practice ceremony on campus. Not having to be fearful of getting in trouble for smudging in residence halls or university buildings. Learning from the land, whose land are we on? No more apologies, stop apologizing. -Melissa

I'm sorry.
Are my sorries empty?
Like a speckle of dust
Thoughtless?
Why do some apologize more?
Darlin', you know why.

What does it mean to be human? Who defines human-hood? How does one prove humanhood to the oppressor? I don't believe in all this diversity work in the way that we think about it in our field because if we don't see each other as human, why would I even care to do that diversity work? I think the humanization piece is the core of what we should be focusing on. What makes you actually see someone as human? -Dian

My child, do not talk to strangers.
Okay, momma.
My child, do not take candy from strangers.
Okay, momma.
My child, do not open the door for strangers.
Okay, momma.
My child, be careful who you talk to.
Okay, teacher.
My child, you gotta do this work yourself.
Okay, teacher.
My child, did you not notice that you hurt that person?
They're a stranger.

In a world where racial justice and decolonization are
present is that there is no hindrance
to a genuine relationship with someone else.
Structures and systems prevent these relationships and
make them possible in only certain settings. -Alex

We cannot force genuine relationships
Force is, after all, what propelled colonization
Allowed it to fester
Allowed it to bubble up
Allowed it to become a reality

Boggs helped us see that [possibilities for racial justice
and decolonization] without giving us a 1, 2, 3, here's
how you do it. So, if we can accomplish the same thing,
I think we will satisfy and give people enough, who are
looking for that tangibleness, enough to maybe go
off on, while at the same time, holding what we have
named here-that there is not an answer. -Rachel

Won't you tell me how to do it?
I can't.
But, please?
I can't.
What about a small answer?
I can't.
What about some steps?
I can't.
But, I'm afraid.
I know.
And I'm confused.
I know.
And I need help.
I know.
And I'm unsure.
I know.
Okay, then, how about possibilities?
I can.

WHY NOW?

The question is how to create windows and doors for people who believe in justice to enter.
- Angela Davis (2016)

The realities of inequity and injustice, particularly targeting Indigenous and racially minoritized peoples in the U.S. and globally, continue to confront us. Systems of racism, White supremacy, and settler colonialism intersect with structures of classism, ableism, genderism, heterosexism, and nationalism to create situations of increasing jeopardy for Indigenous and racially minoritized peoples. Gentrification, mass incarceration, underdevelopment, and disinvestment make these communities vulnerable while normalizing and increasing the power and advantages afforded to whiteness, wealth, and coloniality.

Our college and university campuses are not insulated from these conditions. In fact, policies and practices within postsecondary education contribute to, exacerbate, and profit from these intersectional systems of exclusion and dehumanization. As a result, colleges and universities become homes for circumstances that reproduce outcomes of push-out and exclusion, as well as tokenism and exceptionalism. The institutional promotion of grit, resilience, and belongingness subject Indigenous and racially minoritized students to rhetorics of disadvantage that presume they are in need of fixing, instead of our institutions. We must put the focus on institutions, institutional systems, and the people who reproduce and profit from the societal disadvantaging of Indigenous and racially minoritized communities.

As former ACPA President Donna A. Lee shared in 2016:

> Our work as student affairs educators is transformative, thoughtful, leading, and catalytic; our commitment to equity, inclusion, and justice is even more present. This is a time for us to boldly move forward as a profession and as an Association. In order to move in this boldness, it is important that we intentionally and strategically direct our energies, time, and resources. (Strategic Imperative for Racial Justice and Decolonization, History, para. 2)

Given our societal context, it is imperative we clearly enunciate our intentions and direct our action toward the possibilities of being and becoming what activist and scholar Grace Lee Boggs (2011) envisioned, "the leaders we've been looking for" (p. 159).

SETTLER COLONIALISM

These realities of inequities and oppression necessitate paying attention to both racial justice and decolonization. Before student affairs educators can discuss what racial justice and decolonization mean, they should also be clear about the historical past of the country known as the United States of America and how it links to the field of student affairs. Indeed, the injustices that we write about in this document extend back to the settler colonial past and present and its linkage to colleges and universities; simply put, student affairs is an articulation of settler colonialism (Dunbar-Ortiz, 2014, Squire, Williams, & Tuitt, 2018; Wilder, 2013). Within an educational setting, dehumanization occurs when one is not able to bring their full selves to the postsecondary environment or has had their full self stolen. This dehumanization process occurs by way of oppressive forces, such as Indigenous erasure, anti-Black racism, whiteness's technologies, sexism, and ableism. These dominating forces, supplemented by imperialist capitalism (or what we will call neoliberalism), lend themselves to the eradication of humanity, something on which we intend to push back in this document.

Settler colonialism is the process by which land and bodies become property, something to be owned and used. Land and bodies then become open for consumption, exploitation, production, and destruction. As a result of such transformation of bodies and land to property, there is a reification of hegemonic whiteness (e.g., whiteness as property; Harris, 1993), Native/Indigenous erasure, and anti-Black racism. Settler colonialism is an ever-present and changing technology of domination. One may think of settler colonialism as something that has happened; instead, we urge the reader to understand it as something that is happening and therefore, always morphing, changing articulations, and impacting people differently across space and time (Kanuanui, 2016; la paperson, 2017; Tuck & Yang, 2012; Steinman, 2016; TallBear, 2015; Tengan, 2008; Wolfe, 2006). These technologies of domination are articulated in law, policy, and ways of being. They manifest in various forms of privilege that are exposed and exploited on campuses. This privilege is also articulated in the ways that campuses desire land, use land, and take land.

Because settler colonialism props whiteness up as the most desirable articulation of society, it also creates racial hierarchies. In this way, society arrives at anti-Black racism. Racism, particularly anti-Black racism, is a necessary outcome for the continuation of whiteness. In understanding whiteness as property, one can understand that not only did white people steal land from Native people and make Black people into property, they also ensured that only white people could own land, and almost all slaves were not white (Harris, 1993). Whiteness as

property thereby created a racial hierarchy and encoded in U.S. law what it meant to be white and the rights given to white people by the nature of their whiteness. This re-encoding of racial privilege/property rights linked to law continues to permeate U.S. socio-cultural environments today. One sees this in the challenge to affirmative action and the clashing understandings of who deserves the right to "tangibly and economically valuable benefits" (Harris, 1993, p. 1726), including access to higher education (Poon et al, 2019).

Lastly, in understanding Native/Indigenous erasure, something we revisit in a later section, one must understand that land is of primary importance. No being can exist without land. Therefore, settler colonialism works to make land ownable and, as a result, makes those who are on these Native lands erasable. To be clear, universities sit on, expand on, and profit from stolen lands (e.g., Land Grant Universities; Historically Black Colleges and Universities; la paperson, 2017; Wilder, 2013). Every time one decides to build new residence halls, we, as institutional agents, expand onto stolen Native land without consideration of past histories. Every time students take service trips to build homes on colonized lands for non-Native peoples, the student affairs profession engages in settler colonization. As a result of such taking of land, Indigenous lifeways and knowledge systems are destroyed or co-opted. Before there was biology, agronomy, astronomy, physics, and architecture, Native peoples were living and thriving in systems that utilized these concepts in their every day (Dubar-Ortiz, 2014). As settlers came, they took those knowledges and renamed them; or they attempted (and sometimes succeeded in) eradicating them all together. As our field continues to ignore the values, lifeways, and knowledge systems that existed before the creation of the field, it engages in settler colonialism. We encourage readers to continue to read works that explicate more fully hegemonic whiteness, anti-Black racism, and Indigenous erasure. One can look at the resources on the ACPA website as well as the references list of this document.

Admittedly, settler colonialism can be difficult to comprehend because it is an ever-changing and often less-visible and less-discussed articulation of how our society operates. One term that one often recognized in higher education literature is neoliberalism. Neoliberalism is a newer concept, created to understand the political actions that emerged out of understanding shifts in governmental leadership and decision-making in the 1970-80's. One can use neoliberalism to help explain the behaviors of how universities operate, but neoliberalism does not inherently include examinations of settler colonialism.

Neoliberalism is a societal mindset, political theory, and set of practices that aim to deregulate capitalism in order to maximize private gain and minimize social welfare including personal human dignity (Squire, 2016). Globalization and imperialism (features of settler colonialism) are key to neoliberalism's success. Neoliberalism requires the free flowing exchange of goods, ideas, and ways of being that "transcend national borders" (Ordorika & Lloyd, 2015, p. 137). Neoliberalism articulates itself through the eradication of a country's or a community's cultural, political, and social idiosyncrasies in the name of private gain. It might also show up in the gentrification of neighborhoods that pushout communities of color in order to build private residence halls, the commodification of bodies of color in admissions booklets to lure in more students of color or to raise rankings on diversity indices, and fiscal austerity measures that reduce funding to higher education and rely solely on quantitative metrics of success rather than the positive moral, ethical, and social impacts of education (Hamer & Lang, 2015). A neoliberal actor might evoke ideas of freedom, liberty, or free choice to forward their aims thereby utilizing imperialistic principles for economic and social domination when the communities they claim to support are injured in the end (Altbach, 2016).

One can clearly notice the intertwinings of settler colonialism and neoliberalism. However, settler colonialism describes an entirety of the past and present functioning of the country that does not forget how this country, as it is currently known, was created. Neoliberalism as a newer theory, born out of understanding political actions in and around the 1970-80s, can, but does not always, include explicit analyses of how racism, Indigenous erasure, or whiteness function and may only focus on economics.

RACIAL JUSTICE AND DECOLONIZATION DEFINED

Given the discussion of settler colonialism, including whiteness, Indigenous erasure, and anti-Black racism above, we now turn to defining racial justice and decolonization. Race is a social construct that was developed to justify white supremacy and to sustain the industries of Indigenous erasure and the African enslavement that resulted from it (Kendi, 2016). Racism - the coordination of legislative and economic policies, social norms, and cultural practices to minoritize and oppress non-white peoples - cooperates with other systems and structures, such as nativism and xenophobia to mark who the "Other" is both in the United States and globally. We acknowledge that colorism and (religio)ethnocentrism predate the formal articulation and practices of racism which have been exported from the United States throughout the world. Further, colorism, (religio)ethnocentrism, and racism are interrelated and currently linked.

There is an intersection of the rise of anti-immigrant sentiment and policies throughout Europe and the United States with the creation of racialized Others based on colorism and (religio)ethnocentrism.

Therefore, racial justice seeks the critique, dismantling, and transformation of the systems and structures of white supremacy, racism, and its coordinates with nativism, colorism, and (religio)ethnocentrism. Several philosophies have emerged historically and are currently practiced that seek to rebuke racism, including non-racist and anti-racist philosophies (Kendi, 2016). Non-racist philosophies rhetorically oppose racism and seek equality of opportunities and outcomes between white people and Black, Indigenous, Asian, Latinx, and other racialized groups. However, as Kendi (2016) explained, non-racist philosophies and activism do not seek the dismantling of the racist logics that underpin racism (e.g., that there is an achievement gap between white students and other racialized groups). Anti-racist philosophies and activism, however, seek to supplant and transform racial logics, and thus, work toward dismantling racism and transforming society. Adopting a stance for racial justice in student affairs and higher education is an active, not passive, position. Moreover, a racially just stance takes a deliberate anti-racist posture that rejects logics of racial comparison, the assumption of whiteness as a cultural and social norm, and approaches which seek to target racially minoritized students, staff, and faculty for reform efforts.

Similar to racial justice, decolonization seeks to unsettle, albeit in distinct and unique ways, oppressive structures of power and privilege. Specifically, decolonization has a decided focus on "the repatriation of Indigenous land and life" (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 1) and can (largely) be defined in this way. The need for repatriation is a direct result of both external and internal colonialism whereby the expropriation of natural resources and the biopolitical and geopolitical management of people and land have and continue to be perpetuated through settler colonial relations. A clear focus on repatriation means that "decolonization is not a metaphor" (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 3).

The ask of decolonization is different from that of indigenization, complementary as they might be. The work of indigenization is often focused on centering or integrating Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and meaning making throughout communities. The work of decolonization asks for something different by way of repatriation. Both worthy and important goals, we must acknowledge that decolonization "is a distinct project from other civil and human-rights based social justice projects" (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 2). It is asking for something different, "and cannot easily be grafted onto pre-existing discourses/frames, even if they are critical, even if they are anti-racist, even if they are justice frameworks" (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 2-3).

We recognize that Indigenous people may or may not see themselves as holding a racial identity. Moreover, we are aware that Indigenous identities are politicized and defined in unique ways by governmental entities and that these regulations along with urbanization have significant implications for tribal membership, marriage and relationship decision making, and tribal sustainability. Yet, racial justice and decolonization are not oppositional or unrelated. Rather, they work together to call out the settler colonialism and its material effects that have shaped the histories and presents of both Indigenous peoples of sovereign nations and the racializing totalities of white supremacy. Both racial justice and decolonization seek to unsettle past and current injustices and their realization seeks to upend and realize new possibilities.

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE IMPERATIVE

There are moments in life when our purpose and perspective are reevaluated. ACPA came to this moment after repeated campus uprisings fueled by continued race-based oppression, a continued history of inequality, and the re-emergence of nationalistic movements in the USA. These events visibly impacted the job of student affairs educators around the world. On November 17-21, 2016, the Governing Board, Assembly Leadership, and International Office gathered in Alexandria, VA, USA to discuss issues related to mission, values, and the future of ACPA. As Past President Donna A. Lee wrote to the ACPA membership a week later: "We departed from that retreat inspired and energized, emboldened by our capacity to effect change in a world that has been impacted by ubiquitous change, turmoil, and pain" (Strategic Imperative for Racial Justice and Decolonization, history, para. 2). In this spirit, the Strategic Imperative for Racial Justice was created.

During the 2017 Convention in Columbus, OH, USA, the Association held three Collective Imagining Sessions. During these sessions, almost 200 ACPA members provided feedback about the Strategic Imperative. Shortly after convention, ACPA leadership integrated decolonization into the Imperative in order to direct our attention toward the settler colonial history and on-going violence pointed toward Native, Indigenous, Aboriginal, and First Nations people around the globe. Hence, the Strategic Imperative for Racial Justice and Decolonization was born.

The late addition of decolonization hinted to the shortcomings of some of our knowledge systems. We have all been strengthened by the acknowledgement of the shortcoming and the continued work around understanding decolonization as a concept and action. Clearly clarifying how to respond to what we have long ignored,

hooks (1994) proclaimed, "I never wish to see a critique of this blind spot overshadow anyone's...capacity to learn from the insights" (p. 49). Decolonization made sense to include because it complicated our understanding of the birth of racial injustice (namely anti-Black racism and white supremacy) and continues to impact undergraduate and graduate students, student affairs educators, university administrators and staff, and faculty. Additionally, Native, Indigenous, Aboriginal, and First Nations people exist in the USA dissimilarly from other communities of color as they are the only group referenced in the USA Constitution, and therefore, have political, racial, ethnic, and tribal identities that are controlled by the USA government. In the midst of today's social upheaval, we are reminded that "oftentimes a particular conjunctural set of conditions will arise, a particular conjuncture, and it reveals the opportunity to accomplish something" (Davis, 2016, p. 29). ACPA's conjunctural moment continues to unfold, yet clearly, the opportunity to effect change in the student affairs field is now.

WHY US? WHY THIS DOCUMENT?

We need to have a clear sense of what is dying, what is growing, and what has yet to be born in this phase of transition. We must move toward the future lacking a clear-cut blueprint of what is to be done and shedding a dogmatic sense of the eternal truth but carrying with us a shared sense of the awareness, values, methods, and relationships necessary to navigate these uncharted waters. (Boggs, 2011, p. 21)

When the ACPA Governing Board decided to center racial justice and decolonization, ACPA committed to moving "toward the future lacking a clear-cut blueprint" (Boggs, 2011, p. 21) for how to do so. Knowing this important work could not only reside among Governing Board members and Assembly leadership, Stephen John Quaye (the 2018-2019 ACPA Past President) invited a group of student affairs educators and faculty holding different social identities, longevity in the profession, and expertise to embrace Boggs's call for "the leaders we've been waiting for." People in this collective have also been involved in ongoing conversations with each other and ACPA constituents across the Association and within the field, thereby, allowing us to bring a broader set of knowledge to the table.

When we gathered in Detroit, Michigan, USA to engage in dialogue about this guiding document and began to draft it, we questioned if we wanted to mention explicitly the salient identities we hold and discuss how those identities inform our perspectives as authors. Several people immediately pushed back at doing so for the exhaustion of continually making known our minoritized identities and how the listing of identities can seem trivial at times.

For example, knowing that some of us identify as queer, Black, trans, white, or Indigenous offers readers the mix of identities of the authors of this document, but what does knowing this mean for how readers make sense of our ideas? Are readers more or less suspicious of ideas from authors holding more dominant identities? Does holding more minoritized identities give us more credibility? To us, what is most important is knowing the meaning we make of our identities and what we value as writers and humans.

One alternative to simply listing our identities is to endorse Patel's (2016) suggestions for how researchers approach their work. Patel advocates that researchers respond to three questions: why me, why this particular study, and why now? Having already conveyed the urgency of now, in this section, we respond to the question: Why us?

When Stephen brought this group of educators together, he wanted people who embraced a particular set of values and worked to live those values out loud. Three values matter and help clarify "why us": (1) the belief in stories and human dignity, (2) an openness to feedback with love and compassion, and (3) the importance of a both/and stance. Although these values are connected, we discuss each below separately for ease of understanding and then bring them together in an example.

First, we value a willingness to honor the dignity of each person's story and believe in their humanity. Racism and colonization have taught many of us to fend for ourselves, believe that we do not matter, and engage people with suspicion, since both systems of oppression are inherently rooted in power over others. As authors, we value stories and believe in each person's worth and dignity. This meant taking time to share who we are with each other, but more importantly, practicing active listening skills that prioritized the voices and experiences each of us brings to this process. For example, on the second day of our writing retreat, we began with individual processing and dreaming about what a racially just and decolonized world would look like. As each of us shared our dream, we validated each person's vision and sharing. Resisting the urge to interrupt and respond immediately, we prioritized silence to ensure we heard all of the speaker's ideas. We embraced dreaming and hoping as vulnerable acts, since we are socialized to critique immediately ideas offered in other environments.

Second, we value an openness to feedback rooted in compassion and love. Giving and receiving feedback is hard. At times, what makes doing so hard is that we often believe we hold a truth that we must share with the person and that our honest sharing can ruin the person's

day or impact them. This mindset is rooted in the assumption that we hold the one truth out there, and our job is to give it to the person whose job, then, is to receive it without becoming defensive. The belief in the rightness of our feedback, and that the receiver's job is to accept our feedback, is embedded in our underlying assumptions (Kegan & Lahey, 2001). Asking ourselves the following questions can help us figure out those tacit assumptions: "What really is my operating assumption here? What do I think about it? What are some of the costs I might pay for holding it? In what kind of situation? What are some of the benefits" (Kegan & Lahey, 2001, p. 130)? In our conversations and writing, we worked to resist this version of feedback, and instead, embraced the mindset that each person has one perspective to offer, and each person offers their one perspective with compassion, knowing they might be inaccurate or wrong and that there are many other views to consider. In the same vein, we share this document with readers with an openness to feedback.

We also value both/and thinking. Let us return to the way we began this section—thinking about the listing of our salient identities. In our conversations at the retreat and after, we wondered whether our choice not to list our salient identities let us off the hook. There was a time when researchers and authors were not explicit about their identities; now, listing of identities via positionality statements has almost become so ubiquitous, much like land acknowledgements and sharing one's pronouns (Manion, 2018), that they have lost their original meaning. Does that mean just because something has become commonplace we should not do it? Absolutely not. It means we can critique the loss of meaning over actions that have redundancy and still embrace the importance of doing so while seeking continued avenues for making our actions meaningful (Pillow, 2003).

We respond to the question of "why this document?" by weaving our three values together in an example. When the Governing Board announced the adoption of the Strategic Imperative for Racial Justice and Decolonization, many members acknowledged they were on board with the Imperative but needed guidance on what the Imperative meant for their work as educators. This guiding document is a response to this need. For months, many of us pushed back against crafting such a document believing we did not need to provide a top-ten list or best practices for racial justice and decolonization (and we do not believe we have done so here). We wanted to scream, Just Do Something! We wanted members to embrace complexity and lack of answers and just do something within their spheres of influence. Ultimately, we can push back against the need for an "answers document" and still offer ideas for readers to consider. We can embrace the messiness of racial justice and decolonization

and still take action steps in our circles. We can know we do not hold all the knowledge about this topic and still put some ideas in writing to move student affairs educators, students, faculty, staff and university administrators forward.

In some ways, our exhaustion with the question of "what should we do" is rooted in our own minoritized identities and the labor in which we so often engage in these identities, as well as the difficulty, at times, of having compassion for those needing guidance. Members' (who hold many dominant identities) feedback was clear: we need some help. Centering love and compassion with feedback does not mean we do not hold people accountable for doing their own learning. It means sometimes giving difficult feedback that we are too drained to center someone else's needs. As educators who believe people can learn, grow, and develop, we offer guidance, modeling, and feedback that provide possibilities for enriched learning.

The crux of why all of this matters is because of our first value -- that we believe in the power of stories and our dignity as human beings. Clamoring for answers, we know, is so often rooted in fear of messing up and causing pain. Knowing that hurt and pain can challenge the dignity of the same people we are invested in loving, we sometimes crave certainty prior to doing anything. In these instances, fear holds us back in myriad ways. As educators and authors, we know this fear, and prioritize acting even in the midst of it because lives literally are at stake.

This document provides guideposts for thinking about what the Imperative looks like in practice with these three values that brought us together woven throughout our writing. We share examples throughout to help crystallize our ideas and also ask readers to do the hard work of translating these guides into their own circles of influence as well as pushing beyond them. We ask that readers move beyond fear, embrace that they are "the leaders we've been waiting for," and let go of "what is dying" (Boggs, 2011, p. 21) so that they can embrace "what is growing and what has yet to be born" (Boggs, 2011, p. 21).

BUILDING SELF-AWARENESS

To become "the leaders we've been waiting for" requires student affairs educators to first engage in self-awareness. In short, we must develop and nurture a mindset and way of being that prepares us to enact new possibility frameworks for our practice. Such preparation takes time, emotional energy, and an active dismantlement of the resistance within ourselves as the type of work we are suggesting within this framework does not come easily. Without a firm foundation of self-awareness, student affairs educators risk teaching from abstraction, thus fur-

ther widening the gaps between espoused and enacted change. In doing so, our efforts become nullified and our impact stunted.

To counter such abstractions requires a deep understanding of ourselves. Indeed, we should heed this insight intended for educators:

> When I do not know myself, I cannot know who my students are. I will see them through a glass darkly, in the shadows of my unexamined life— and when I cannot see them clearly I cannot teach them well. (Palmer, 1997, pp. 1-2)

To see the possibility for enacting racial justice and decolonization requires educators to develop a mindset that is rooted in personal agency, humility, curiosity, intellectual transformation, and the joy of considering what can be.

When we approach the work of racial justice and decolonization with a sense of personal agency, we defeat the excuse that this work is reserved for someone else—someone with greater expertise, more advanced skill sets, or qualifications. With agency, we become the leaders we've been waiting for by embracing the realization that change most often arises from ordinary people (Boggs, 2011). Agency allows us to engage in ordinary acts aimed at extraordinary change.

To accomplish change requires student affairs educators to realize our agency in tandem with our growing self-awareness. Indeed, working toward a greater self-awareness is part of the work of racial justice and decolonization. When we act toward change with a sense of cultural humility, for example, we open ourselves freely to the possibility of being "wrong." We practice self-evaluation, openness, humility, and supportive interaction as a means of exploring new ways of learning and new ways of being (Foronda, Reinholdt, & Ousman, 2016). We recognize that in the process of learning, we may lose something we once found (Kegan, 1983). This process is both beautiful and terrifying (Patel, 2015), and we would argue, necessary to accomplish this work. To be sure, the terrifyingly beautiful realization that a new world is possible if only we are willing to act toward its realization is the mindset with which we ask readers to approach this possibility framework.

A BOLD VISION: THE POSSIBILITY FRAMEWORK

In approaching our work boldly and forwarding possibilities to actualize the Strategic Imperative (See Figure 1), we share the following framework, which consists of four distinct and interrelated parts. First, on the most peripheral layer of the framework, history is represented as the grey stream in the framework that flows around racial justice and decolonization work. Recognition of historical dynamics helps us think and act in more critical ways to attend to the current moment and our future thinking. Remembering history can position and reposition student affairs educators as an enormous influence across time and pushes the vanes (principles) forward for action. Next, we explore the core of the framework—love. Third, we outline the vanes of the framework, which are the necessary principles of racial justice and decolonization work and contribute to the movement toward justice. Fourth, zooming out further, the enclosed green circle represents the outcomes of the implementation of the underlying principles and the foundation of love: humanization, radical democracy and critical consciousness.

It is critical to note that the figure's conceptualization as a circle is no accident. As the illustration has evolved, we intentionally visualized the framework as a collective to honor the circle practices of many Indigenous tribes and cultures, particularly drawing from the medicine wheel. At the same time, just as the framework we propose presents possibilities to actualize the Strategic Imperative, so too does this visualization serve as one of many possibilities. While graphic technologies are incredible, there are still limits to how a two-dimensional figure can illustrate a dynamic, multi-dimensional process. Like Jones and Abes (2013), we would encourage all educators to develop their own mental models of the framework as a means of both personalizing and translating the framework to one's contexts and work.
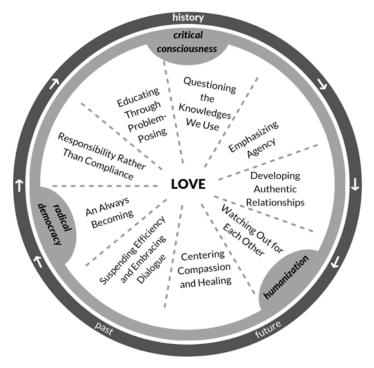

Figure 1. Racial Justice and Decolonization Framework

ATTENDING TO HISTORY AND RECONCILING WITH THE PAST

Our responsibility, at this watershed in our history, is to face the past honestly and do the things necessary to heal ourselves and our planet. (Boggs, 2011, p. 164)

As we gathered in Michigan, USA, to develop this document, we acknowledge that prior to the Treaty of Detroit in 1807, the land now known as Detroit was traditional territory of the Anishinaabek (Odawa, Potawatomi and Ojibwe), the Miami, the Peoria and Haudenosauneega Confederacy. We acknowledge the painful history of genocide and forced removal from this territory, and we honor and respect the many diverse Indigenous peoples still connected to this land.

We include a land acknowledgement at the beginning of this document as doing so is an historically accurate practice of recognizing the traditional Indigenous peoples of a place. Acknowledging place and land is a decolonizing act and an historical process (Fanon, 1963). Reconciliation with the past is important for healing, and we must recognize the history and legacy of colonialism in order to begin creating change within a settler colonialist society. As we look to the past, we must bring forth counternarratives to the carefully crafted falsity of our nation's history.

The act of aligning ourselves with history and the past can often be a difficult and uncomfortable experience, especially for those whose ancestors contributed to the pain and oppression of historically marginalized populations. Yet, it is a critical part of the decolonizing process. Understanding oneself as a part of the colonial past and present is extremely difficult for many people, but it is necessary to pause and sit in this discomfort (Patel, 2016). Beyond individual positioning within history, an immediate need exists for student affairs educators to begin engaging in conversations around forced removal and land occupation. The university system itself is a project of the settler colonial system and while Indigenous land is the literal foundation of the university, it is often the least discussed or examined element within university leadership (Yang, 2017). Conversations centered in decolonization must consistently be informed by history and involve the recognition of land and its relationship to Indigenous lifeways (Tuck & Yang, 2012).

THE CORE: LOVE IS THE FOUNDATION

To truly love we must learn to mix various ingredients– care, affection, recognition, respect, commitment, and trust, as well as honest and open communication. (hooks, 2011, p. 5)

From the first Student Personnel Point of View (American Council on Education, 1937) to Learning Reconsidered 2 (Keeling, 2006), the lineage of authors of the student affairs foundational documents articulated going beyond providing services for students. The thought leaders of the profession wanted to impart an ethic of care (Gilligan, 1977) onto students within a postsecondary community. As our understanding of students' needs continues to expand, it is not uncommon for students with whom we work (and at times educators) to come to us telling their stories and experiences of vulnerability, exclusion, and danger. When students share these stories, these experiences with us, our response is not: "Wait. Let me write a learning outcome related to your experience." Most often our response is grounded in care, affection, and problem-solving that extends the work of student learning in those moments.

As we envision the processes of racial justice and decolonization, it is clear that love is at the core of all we do. Many people reduce love to its amorous and romantic forms, one that is contained and operates between romantic and familial relationships (Tippett, 2016). Love also can exist between and among friends, extended family, kinship networks, and other forms of relationships. Love ultimately "requires discipline, concentration, patience, faith and the overcoming of narcissism. It isn't a feeling, it is a practice" (Fromm, 1956, p.116). Love is a way of being, it is the "sincere wish that another person [has] what they need to be whole and develop themselves to their best capacity for joy or whatever fulfillment they're seeking" (Spade, 2006, para. 12). We must not only resent and be angered at injustice; we must simultaneously be in love with justice, and we must love each other. If our desires for racial justice and decolonization are rooted solely in anger, we will exhaust ourselves before we reach a vision for a better world. While anger is a valid emotion, if our moves toward justice are solely rooted in it, we lose the potential to deal with the hurt, fear, rejection, humiliation, loss, disappointment, and other emotions that undergird it, thereby missing an opportunity for generative healing.

To be clear, love is not antithetical to anger. Love simultaneously can be gentle and fierce, where we are concerned for each other and yet accountable for our actions. Practicing love means investing in others, whether that investment shows up as support (e.g., helping a student or another person find ways to mediate their food insecurity) or challenge (e.g., addressing the ways white supremacy manifests interpersonally in hiring practices, budget allocations, and daily interactions). Choosing to act through an ethos of love is an act of bravery and boldness "because love is an act of courage, not of fear, love is [a] commitment to others" (Freire, 2008, p. 89).

GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF THE RACIAL JUSTICE AND DECOLONIZATION FRAMEWORK

In this section, we describe the guiding principles, or vanes, of the possibility framework, and where appropriate, provide examples. We do not intend for these examples to be prescriptive or a checklist. Rather, we hope they inspire possibilities of what readers can do through the actualization of this framework. Once a student affairs educator builds self-awareness; understands how love is foundational to justice; and foregrounds the recognition of history and how history informs our present, then they can begin to integrate and/or strengthen their dedication to the spirit these principles bring to their daily practice. Taken together, this framework provides a light toward what is possible in student affairs, remembering other routes are possible.

Responsibility rather than compliance. This means to respond. Responsibility, in this framework, is to recognize our capacity to respond actively to injustice and inequity. Responsibility is about being and action and is an entirely different stance toward equity and justice than compliance. As student affairs educators responding to the right-now of settler colonialism and white supremacy and its manifestations in postsecondary education, we are called to responsibility rather than compliance.

Responsibility as being. To be responsible is to see ourselves as implicated in systems and structures of oppression, and therefore, as educators with the capacity to intervene, disrupt, and transform those systems. Being responsible puts the onus on us instead of on institutional leaders. We recognize that we can respond within our spheres of influence to transform the settings, policies, procedures and practices that we maintain and oversee. We recognize that as agents of change, we must use whatever platforms to which we are privy for the enactment of racial justice and decolonization. Further, to be responsible is supporting others who are being responsible. An affirmative stance toward those we supervise and advise compels us to remove the barriers that otherwise prevent them from seeing themselves as implicated actors, but also as actors who are capable of being transformed and of initiating transformation. Being responsible demonstrates an awareness that a situation or condition calls upon and calls out our ethical and moral responsibility. As the inspiring Reverend Doctor Martin Luther King, Jr. (1963) once said, "We have a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws" imploring us to see responsibility as action.

Responsibility as action. Although it may not be an unjust law that we are confronted with as student affairs educators, we regularly face unjust policies, procedures and practices, as well as more subtle ways that students'

humanity and life chances are undermined and disregarded. The policy that some student organizations, typically those that center students of color, must have extra security for their large-scale events -- and to pay for it out of their meager budgets -- is but one example motivated by implicit racial bias. Directors, deans, vice presidents and chancellors are located to take action to challenge, disrupt, and eradicate such dehumanizing college and university policies. We must do more than just recognize that we are responsible for the maintenance of these systems. We must also use our platforms to take direct action against them. In concert with Angela Davis' hope and action, "You have to act as if it were possible to radically transform the world. And you have to do it all the time" (Anderson, 2014). Responsibility is a stance of always being ready and already in the way.

Seen in this way—as being and as action—responsibility is a higher moral and ethical imperative than compliance. Often informed by legality and motivated by insulating ourselves and/or the institution from a lawsuit, compliance produces policy and practices that do little to affect transformative change toward equity and justice. Compliance mandates instantiate normative ways of doing student affairs work and leaves in place and uninterrogated the pervasive enactments of power and privilege across our campuses that target racially minoritized students. By focusing our efforts on legal compliance, we miss the multitude of ways the law fails to address equity and justice. Compliance is the least of what we can do. Responsibility is what we are called to do.

Educating through problem-posing. Education systems within the US historically served as a deliberate tool to sustain and reinforce colonial white supremacy and racism (Wilder, 2013). Specifically, white settler logic viewed Indigenous peoples and people of color as intellectually inferior, savage, and uncivilized (John, 1999). While some white slave owners prohibited educational pursuits such as reading or writing, others created schools as a means of civilizing people of color and Indigenous peoples. One byproduct of this legacy of colonization and racism is what is referred to as "banking" employed as an educational model (Freire, 2008).

Banking is a pervasive and transactional approach to education, critiqued by Freire (2008), that assumes learners enter environments with little knowledge, experience or culture, positions educators as information experts, and assumes the best learning occurs when students accept and regurgitate the educator's disseminated information. Students in these environments have little opportunity to question or challenge educators' information or make contributions to knowledge. To educate through problem-posing aims to center liberation as a goal in edu-

cation where students are encouraged to apply critical thinking and question information. Problem-posing requires educators to develop intentional pedagogical shifts, such as decentering power in the space, viewing students as contributors and co-creators of knowledge, fostering multiple perspectives on subject areas, and encouraging students to question or challenge information. Humanizing students by acknowledging their perspective, voice, and agency to shape their learning experience requires dialogue over dictation.

While banking is often discussed through the context of the classroom, student affairs practices, specifically related to diversity education, also align with this model. One popular approach to diversity education on college and university campuses is simulation exercises (e.g., Tunnel of Oppression, Privilege Walks, Archie Bunker's Neighborhood, and so on). The goal of these activities is to recreate the conditions of social group dynamics to help college students gain an awareness of how oppression impacts the lived experiences of people with racially minoritized identities. These exercises center the learning on students who hold dominant social identities, trigger minoritized students, and most importantly, assume that students, regardless of their positionality, have little to no understanding of oppression dynamics prior to these activities. Mostly these exercises stem from a student affairs educators' positionality rather than what students want to learn about issues facing them in their everyday lives.

Educators centering problem-posing rather than banking might ask: what can pedagogy look like that uplifts rather than taxes students of color and Indigenous students? Program-posing requires all students to engage at the same levels and asks students what issues they want to address related to real world problems. How can educators' efforts better support student agency and contribute to the learning space? What aspects of an educator's approach may need to change to center problem-posing? Rather than simulation exercises, educators can create a space where judgment is discouraged and allows students to share their experiences or understanding of racism and colonization as a starting point.

Questioning the knowledges we use. In addition to thoughtful consideration of language in our written and spoken word, as student affairs educators, in and out of the classroom, we must critically consider the knowledges we use in practice and research and the paradigms on which our assumptions for both activities are based. One example of questioning the knowledges we use is based in the historical context of colonialism. Directly tied to cultural appropriation, (i.e., a person with a dominant identity who mimics or represents a minoritized group in a way that "reinforces psychological elements of the racist

ideology inherent in the colonialist project responsible for the oppression" (Leeuwen, 2015, para 12), it can cause irreparable damage to people with minoritized identities. Cultural appropriation mimics, mocks, stereotypes, and demeans Indigenous peoples and people of color, which makes them seem "less than" white people. College students engage in cultural appropriation when they imitate Native American headdress or wear Mexican sombreros, dress in Black face, or apply a bindi to their forehead. When white people engage in cultural appropriation, they often deny their racist behavior and its effect on the oppressed people they mock. Challenging cultural appropriation in all its forms is essential for racial justice and decolonization.

Another way to question the knowledges we use is through citational audits and review of research practices found in the literature. For those engaged in research, this means reviewing who we cite when presenting our research and being attentive to the diversity of resources in our citational practices. One way to draw attention to this detail is to recognize and cite appropriate original sources; when citing original sources, we must ensure that the knowledge drawn upon is not colonized knowledge. Indeed, Indigenous scholars have traced the creation of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs to the elders of Blackfoot people (Blackstock, 2011).

White scholars have left many racially minoritized scholars out of the literature, deem them as not rigorous scholars, or view racially minoritized scholars as not making valuable contributions in their field (Hill Collins, 2002). Like the theft of cultural appropriation, it is a form of intellectual theft not to acknowledge and use the literature of student affairs scholars color. If we can acknowledge a history of erasure, then we must recognize a future of inclusion that redistributes power among all scholars within the field. Engaging in these citational practices acknowledges an "intellectual genealogy of feminism and antiracism . . . [in order to] acknowledge our debt to those who came before; those who helped us find our way" (Ahmed, 2017, pp. 15-16).

Finally, in addition to the research of many racially minoritized faculty not appearing in the literature until recently, student affairs educators should include critical paradigms in their work. This means paying attention to critical race theory (Delgado & Stefancic, 2013), postcolonialism (Hickling-Hudson, 1998), Chicana feminism (Anzaldúa, 1999), Black feminism (Collins, 2009), and Indigenous research (Minthorn & Shotton, 2018) to name a few.

Emphasizing agency. White supremacy, racism, and colonization are three systems of oppression that promote fear, silence, and notions of powerlessness within racially

minoritized and Indigenous peoples' lives (Young, 2000). In conjunction with pejorative beliefs and norms, social institutions, such as colleges and universities, historically created policies and procedures to deny access and facilitate stratified participation on campuses. Throughout history, minoritized and Indigenous peoples have pushed back against oppression before pushing back became a function of a larger, organized movement (Kendi, 2016). To emphasize agency means resisting oppression, naming the fears that preclude us from acting, and actualizing our power to foster change within our spheres of influence. To reiterate, emphasizing our agency is our responsibility, knowing that systems of oppression impinge upon our agency.

Student affairs educators often create policies intended to serve as a guidepost for how students should behave. These policies, while seemingly neutral, most often reinforce one-dimensional ways of being. For example, many campus administrators implement fire safety policies that prohibit open-flames and, by consequence, smudging in residence halls. This particular policy denies Indigenous students agency in making decisions about their own deeply spiritual practices. Student affairs educators create policies, in general, as a way to meet the needs of the greatest number of students and set limits on appropriate behavior in order to situate their administrative control. Therein lies the problem with policies—because they are based on serving the greatest number of students, policies are often not nuanced and responsive to the needs of minoritized and Indigenous students.

In the particular example above, one might believe the "correct" response, then, is to create a policy that allows Indigenous students to practice their spirituality in ways they deem best in residence halls. Our argument, however, is that the solution to problematic policies is not to create "better" policies. Rather, educators must question the basic nature of policies in the first place. What purpose do policies serve? Why was this particular policy created? Who is left out of this policy? Who benefits and who doesn't? How can we create policies that address the needs of all students, not just the majority? Asking these questions enables student affairs educators to understand the rationale behind policies, and in turn, question the premise upon which a policy is based.

One example where agency among students and faculty of color has shifted campus policy and practices is Davidson College's Student Initiative for Academic Diversity (SIAD). Identifying discrimination in faculty of color tenure practices and lack of social diversity in the curriculum, students of color used agency to voice these problematic conditions. Students also ultimately created a group and process to hold the institution accountable

for hiring processes to make sure the College fulfills commitment to racial justice through faculty and staff search processes. Through the identification of a problem (problem-posing), students utilized their agency effectively to shift a discriminatory policy. Out of love (i.e., the core of the possibility framework) and responsibility for each other, students made dynamic changes in the futures of many people of color from whom they, and generations of students to come, will learn.

Developing authentic relationships. When considering engaging in all components of the framework, we must engage in the development of authentic relationships that lead toward meaningful dialogue and actionable change. An inauthentic world is "unable to transform reality" (Freire, 2000, p. 87), although the necessary conditions for building authentic relationships—humility, faith, mutuality, trust, and critical thinking—are crucial. Holding these conditions is not so easy as systems of oppression influence us. Our past trauma, leading to a suspicion of intention, may keep us from developing authentic relationships. However, relationships over time, based in personal experience and identity, can lead to significant change.

One of the best ways to create authentic relationships is through humility and consciousness that "naming of the world, through which people constantly re-create that world, cannot be an act of arrogance" (Freire, 2008, p. 90). In this humility, educators must practice self-reflection about their own ignorance and stop projecting ignorance on others in the academy. While in dialogue on difficult topics, student affairs educators must be willing to listen to the contributions of others if they expect their voice to be heard. Engagement, especially among different levels in a student affairs organizational hierarchy, must be humble as no one is infallible and profoundly wise or full of ignorance and errant.

Faith, perhaps differently understood in student affairs, yet important in developing authentic relationships, is a "faith in humankind, faith in their power to make and remake, to create and re-create, faith in their vocation to be more fully human" (Freire, 2008, p. 90). True faith in the other is not a faith of no critique, but it is a faith that means "taking seriously what someone says" (hooks, 1994, p. 150) regardless of their position in life. Without faith that dialogue can move us all toward justice, the work outlined in this document is pointless. We must have faith the world can change, and we can change it together.

The togetherness of change leads to the concepts of mutuality and trust - relational components developed over time based in the actualization of humility and faith

and the acknowledgment of humanness. Mutuality and trust are based in laying bare our "concrete intentions" (Freire, 2008, p. 91). Put simply, our words must match our actions, as "loose and easy language about equality… [leads to a] credibility gap" (King, Jr., 1968, p. 11). Through cyclical dialogue and action, whereby conversations occur, action is taken, and then conversation is repeatedly used to improve, trust builds, and we can put into reality a changed world. Without these concretized intentions, in the form of democratic engagement, there is no trust. We must be able to imagine a world together as equal partners (Davis, 2016). In the scope of this document, to speak the words without living the essence of its message is to produce a farce and invalidates our purpose.

As student affairs educators, we might ask ourselves: What prevents us from developing authentic relationships on campus? What is needed to deepen connections? One example of engaging in building authentic relationships harkens to an outcome of this framework: humanization. When student affairs educators first enter campus, they are thrown into a whirlwind of new programs, policies, procedures and people. Often, the job overcomes the educator and there is potential to see ourselves only as a title rather than as human, where social identities like race and tribal affiliation are subversively minimized or ignored?. Engaging as title first treats us as a worker with no history, culture, or emotion (this is particularly problematic as racist and colonialist incidents and rhetoric proliferate the U.S. sociopolitical landscape). It also allows history to negatively affect future relationships, as politics and relationships that previously impacted the relationship continue. A first step to building an authentic relationship is to enter a space humbly open to the possibilities of mutuality, trust, and faith. By learning about the educator outside the context of the position, the chance to know them as a human appears. What family, experiences, knowledges, and opportunities can two people share in order to find linkages between position and purpose in order to move forward in racially just and decolonized ways?

Watching out for each other. To enact practices that advance racial justice and decolonization requires student affairs educators to move beyond fear and toward community. So often within justice-oriented work, fear stands as a barrier between ourselves and action. Acting as a powerful force, fear can convince us that we are alone in our endeavors or now is not the time to act. While at times, fear and danger to ourselves or others are true risks for consideration within our circumstances, many times the fear we are working against is internal. Fear of ignorance, fear of accountability, fear of disagreement, fear of conflict, and fear of the unknown, among others, dictate our (in)action.

To move past fear often requires relationships. When we know that we are not alone, when we know that someone else will "catch us" if we fall, working against fear becomes possible. Previously, we discussed building authentic relationships. Such relationships, when grounded in mutuality and trust, allow us to hold fear at bay and move forward knowing we are not alone. Next, we expound upon mutuality and trust in authentic relationships.

To create relationships of mutuality, we must be willing to watch out for each other. We can accomplish this by encountering each other in ways that are grounded in love, humility, and faith while dialogue, "becomes a horizontal relationship of which mutual trust between the dialoguers" (Freire, 2008, p. 91). This type of trust, which centers connection and humility, is central to an ethic of care within several Indigenous cultures (see: Tongan concepts of fakafekau'aki (connecting) and fakatokilalo (humility) (Mafile-o, 2004) and allows for the creation of authentic, mutually-bound communities.

When we encounter each other with trust and care, we can extend ourselves in new ways to build relationships that advance racial justice and decolonization. Within higher education, student affairs educators can build these types of communities through simple actions. We have seen colleagues do this by hosting dinners and study sessions for graduate students of color in their homes, extending invitations to host a lecture on campus about racial battle fatigue, or by simply checking in with a colleague after a particularly difficult meeting or act of violence in society. Put simply, these actions can take time and delay relational opportunities for wide systemic institutional change. Yet, such actions ultimately demonstrate care, provide opportunities for joint-learning, and remind us that change is possible through such mutuality requiring that "we speak and listen" (North, 2006, p. 526). When we speak, listen, and feel heard, we can also act.

Centering compassion and healing. Doing racial justice and decolonization work necessitates that we work to heal from trauma. Given the history of slavery, racism, and colonization, trauma is ingrained in people with racially and Indigenous minoritized identities. We cannot sufficiently do the work of racial justice and decolonization if we do not recognize this violence and trauma, as past hurts and trauma often find a way of entering into the present. For example, at the 2018 ACPA convention in Houston, ACPA leaders passed a resolution acknowledging past hurt, erasure, and pain toward Native and Indigenous peoples. Erasure and silencing of Native and Indigenous peoples in the organization continued to stymie any forward movement; this resolution was a way to begin healing. We share this example not to celebrate

this apology or pat ACPA on the back for doing it, but instead, to acknowledge how healing is impossible without naming the oppression and trauma and resisting the urge to become defensive.

A common phrase we hear and likely use ourselves is, "You're doing the best you can." Centering compassion in racial justice and decolonization work means treating ourselves with love, kindness, and extending ourselves grace. It also means embodying these principles when working in community with others. Questions that arise as we do this work include: Are we truly doing the best we can? How do we know we are? Are those we are in community with also really doing the best they can? How do we know someone is doing their best? Sometimes adopting this phrase, "you're doing the best you can," for ourselves or others is a way out of accepting responsibility for harm and trauma without actually doing the best we can do.

Acting with compassion means also holding people accountable for their missteps. As student affairs educators, we can be direct in our feedback, have high expectations for others, and still practice compassion. Compassion is not synonymous with nice. Instead, it means seeing someone's pain, trauma, and oppression and having a desire to alleviate it. At times, the way to alleviate this pain or trauma is to be honest with someone about how their actions are causing others' pain and trauma and loving them enough to believe they are capable of becoming more self-aware and changing so that they can, in fact, be doing the best they can. Sometimes, when we are treated poorly, it can be hard to act with compassion. However, when we act with compassion, we recognize that the reason someone hurt us often extends from another place of hurt that requires healing. We do not need to do the healing ourselves, but we can begin to understand the position someone comes from and help them with a way forward.

Bringing healing and compassion more closely together reveals helpful pathways. Healing is possible when we exude compassion for ourselves and others, yet extending compassion is tied to our energy. When student affairs educators of color and Indigenous student affairs educators are constantly navigating racist and colonized spaces, they may not have the energy, in their minoritized bodies, to practice compassion. As such, being in community is integral, as people with dominant identities (e.g., white student affairs educators) can shoulder some of the responsibility for being compassionate with their peers with similar identities.

Suspending efficiency and embracing dialogue. Some foundational conditions must exist in order to engage in meaningful and actionable change, starting with embracing dialogue. To be clear, dialogue without action lacks power, and efficient action, or any action, without dialogue has the potential to reinforce negative systems. The influence of advanced technology on communities "has made it possible for people to perform miracles, but it has impoverished us spiritually" (Boggs, 2012, p. 88). In what ways do student affairs educators, in their potential to develop students fully, actually place them in spiritual poverty? Dialogue, which provides the opportunity to understand others, is a way forward. Indeed, the creation of the Strategic Imperative for Racial Justice and Decolonization developed from dialogue and continues to unfold through dialogue.

Action and reflection happen simultaneously in dialogue. Dialogue is not an excuse not to change, but rather it is an intertwined component of change or rather makes it the "essence of revolutionary action" (Freire, 2008, p. 135). Therefore, we should not say, "Let's stop talking and begin doing" or even the opposite, "Let's stop doing and start talking." Helpful dialogue for change within a student affairs organization will be continuous and most effective among those who sit both horizontally and vertically within the organization. Dialogue that only occurs on a horizontal axis makes the legitimacy and validity of such dialogue suspect and the possibility for just change doubt-filled. Dialogue based in the conditions of authentic relationships (see above) leads to possibility.

Through dialogue, critical consciousness is developed and can produce a healthy democracy. Unfortunately, systems outside and inside higher education have commingled to create "governance, ideologies and pedagogies dedicated to constraining and stunting any possibility for developing among students those critical, creative, and collaborative forms of thought and action necessary for participating in a substantive democracy" (Giroux, 2013, para. 8).

In this context, we must incorporate dialogue as a powerful form of "intellectual fellowship" (hooks, 1994, p. 205) in order to combat the dehumanizing and efficient systems threatening to remove the necessary conditions for a democratic society and a healthy campus. An anti-dialogical system loves the dehumanization of people, kills creativity, erases culture and knowledge, and removes the agency of people to self-determine. The cost for this time-consuming feature is efficiency. Instead, we argue for dialogue that increases the creation of a critical consciousness; engages joint learning among those in dialogue; and views students and our colleagues in relation to the world, their culture, and histories.

All of these conditions are important and, we believe, necessary for a supportive environment for racial justice and decolonization in student affairs.

An always becoming. Within the proposed possibility framework, we emphasize that it is not meant to indicate an end point but a document open to dialogue and even change. Rather than educators pointing to this document and indicating that our work has come to a place of arrival, we emphasize as a tenet of this framework that racial justice and decolonization work represents a kind of becoming. In other words, rather than embracing this framework as a fixed solution to addressing colonization and racial injustice, we, as educators, must be open to a posture that embraces the impossibility of linearity, permanence, and end points. As white supremacy continues to evolve and shift systems, structures, and rhetoric to maintain colonial and racist structures in higher education and student affairs, so, too, must we continue to evolve (Alexander, 2010). Rather than remaining as static selves, which often precludes growth, 'becoming' emphasizes an always-developing form of resistance to complacency and normative structures.

White supremacy and racism will evolve to suit its needs and goals (Alexander, 2010). The moment we rely on any particular set ways of understanding racial injustice or colonization, other ways become obscured from analysis and criticism. Socialization in our study of history makes embracing always becoming challenging. Many of us are taught history is about immediate cause and effect, with a climax point demarcating one from the other. Rather, educators must embrace a view of history that is more fluid, rife with understandings of individual and collective agency, as well as forms of pushback from interconnected systems of oppression.

By taking up an ethos of always becoming, we, as student affairs educators, acknowledge we embrace multiplicities of practices, strategies, and ways of knowing that do not imply linear or permanent methods to addressing racial injustice and colonization. As the visualization of our possibility framework emphasizes, the work of decolonization and racial justice is not about getting from Point A to Point B. Instead, this difficult work concerns our ability to hold on to a restless, impatient, and enduring hopefulness of our contributions to a more just form of postsecondary, higher, and tertiary education (Stevenson, 2014).

ARTICULATING POSSIBLE AND DESIRED OUTCOMES
The final section of this document is articulating possible and desired outcomes from our possibility framework. We contend that embracing the principles of the framework can yield outcomes of critical consciousness, radical democracy, and humanization.

Critical Consciousness
Ideally, practicing the framework's guiding principles results in a more developed critical consciousness among student affairs educators. Critical consciousness is the process of developing an awareness of one's social identities and the societal conditions that create and sustain oppressive dynamics between social identity groups (hooks, 2010; Zúñiga, Nagda, Chesler, & Cytron-Walker, 2007). There are two simultaneous and interconnected sub-processes that occur in consciousness-raising: (1) coming to an understanding of one's social identities and their role in perpetuating oppression and (2) acquiring knowledge of historical and contemporary manifestations of systemic oppression.

One cycle of socialization describes how people are assigned specific social identity groups and taught how to perform these identities (Harro, 2013). These assignments are determined without any agency from that person and collude with longstanding socially constructed categories. From an early age and throughout life, messaging about social identities provides implicit and explicit rules of how these identities should perform in society, originating from interpersonal interactions, social institutions, media, laws, and cultural norms. When a person performs social identity roles as expected, they are "rewarded;" however, failure to perform will likely result in "punishment." For example, if a student of color is expected to accept an inferior racial status challenges authority or injustice, white people (and sometimes other people of color, too) might meet their resistance with discrimination or violence. Conversely, those who hold dominant social identities, particularly white people, and accept the privilege associated with these identities are rewarded through access to power, capital, and general safety, as examples. Indeed, socialization is a pervasive, consistent, self-sustaining cycle that often takes place unconsciously. Gratefully, it is possible to interrupt this cycle and move toward an empowering cycle of liberation by making a continual commitment to unlearning oppressive messaging and social action (Harro, 2013).

All people have learned to perform roles to sustain racism and colonization regardless of their positionality to power and privilege. Therefore, white people and settlers along with Indigenous and racial minoritized peoples must engage in and maintain critical consciousness in order to create a racially just and decolonized world. It is not enough to develop a critical consciousness; we, as educators, must move toward consciousness and liberation (Love, 2013): A liberatory consciousness enables humans to be aware of how oppression manifests in their world.

This critical call to consciousness and action is imperative for student affairs educators who are often tasked with preparing college students for leadership and civic participation. Educators must not only come into awareness of their role in reproducing racism and colonization but also take concrete steps to identify and take action to shift how institutions create and exacerbate racism and colonization. Questions educators should consider are: who am I and how have my identities shaped my leadership in higher education? What is the history of my campus and how has it benefited from racism and colonization? What do I need to learn to begin to promote racial justice and decolonization in my work? How can I facilitate opportunities for students and colleagues to develop critical consciousness on race and colonization?

Radical Democracy

The guiding principles enunciated above lead to greater manifestations of postsecondary, higher, and tertiary institutions as radical democracies that provide "deep education, not cheap schooling" (West, 1994). In fact, education can enliven "the practice of freedom" (hooks, 1994). A radical democratic vision of higher education considers West's (2004) call to confront White supremacy and settler colonialism as major forces that subvert democracy. A radical democratic vision of higher education challenges conventional wisdom and stretches societal limits. In radically democratic colleges and universities, educators refute neoliberal and corporate perspectives on the purpose of higher education; thwart institutional self-interests for ever-greater expansion and gentrification of low-income communities of color and indigeneity; and support anti-authoritarian institutional policies and practices toward students.

Such a radically democratic practice of higher education makes three commitments: questioning, justice, and hope. The first, a commitment to questioning, requires us as student affairs educators to commit to the consistent and reflexive practice of self-examination. The institutions within which we do our work must also engage in critical processes of self-examination. Basically, a commitment to questioning engages us in the practice of critiquing institutional authority when it is engaged in plutocratic practices that serve the self-interest of elites, most often white people. Institutions can also critique the larger institutional systems of authority within which they operate. Some of our colleagues around the world are engaged in such critiques in defense of expanding access, sustainability, and a commitment to reciprocal community engagement.

The second commitment is to justice. When we seek justice, we go beyond equality and inclusion to rectify systematic and structural harm both committed in the past and that which is ongoing. Justice calls us to make ourselves responsible for being and acting in the moral interest of removing barriers that prevent minoritized members of our educational communities from exercising their own voices in defense of their agency.

The third commitment is to a hope that recognizes and affirms despair, but which believes fervently that another world is possible, making possible another way of practicing higher education. Drawing again on West (1994), it is a hope that speaks against nihilism to claim the possibility of a deep education producing outcomes of compassion, empathy, and fortitude. It is a hope that believes in the possibility that our institutional systems and structures can be transformed. It is a hope that this transformation will position us to take for granted the profound humanity of all members of the educational community.

Humanization

The ability to understand another person fully requires us to know them as human. Unfortunately, there are historical threads of ontological inhumanness connecting historical settler colonialism and anti-Black racism to today's world and our college campuses (Duncan, 2017). To be clear, settler colonialism and racism require and thrive on seeing an entire group of people as non-human. As a result, each educator reading this document can evaluate what they believe is the reason for not engaging in just behaviors, using the principles outlined in this document as a guide. Ultimately, engaging in all aspects of the Strategic Imperative for Racial Justice and Decolonization leads to humanization.

> While the problem of humanization has always, from an axiological [i.e., ethical/value] point of view, been humankind's central problem, it now takes on the character of an inescapable concern...While both humanization and dehumanization are real alternatives, only the first is the people's vocation. (Freire, 2008, p. 43)

Dehumanization occurs within our history, but it is not the only thing we can draw from our history and it is not our destiny. What we can draw from and what we can work toward is its antithesis, humanization--that is the imperative.

Higher education and student affairs settings are good places where humanization can occur. It is a place for dialogue, for challenge, for love, for living. The process of humanization may be opaque at times; however, that does not mean that engaging the process is a futile activity. We must all "view the contradictions that emerge in the course of every struggle as a challenge to take Humanity to a higher plateau by creating a new ideal, a

new, more concrete universal vision of Freedom" (Boggs, 2012, p. 63). The process may be long, arduous, confusing, and nonlinear, but the process of humanization "means that we must be willing to see with our hearts and not only with our eyes" (Boggs, 2012, p. 97). We must each find a way to know each other, in our hearts, as full beings with value, importance, needs, and agency. A possible pathway begins with fully engaging the principles outlined in this document.

To be clear, student affairs it not inherently a humanizing field. In fact, many may argue that it is inherently dehumanizing. From some of the foundational theories that guide our field, to the way that money and efficiency override care, compassion, and dialogue, students, faculty, and staff in our field are treated as inhuman beings able to be stolen from; treated badly and paid less than their worth; and forced to enact violence upon themselves and their students through poorly conceptualized practices and pedagogy (Freire, 2008). Upon the laurels of social justice and inclusion student affairs as a profession rests (ACPA/NASPA, 2015). Upon the engaged process of humanization our society waits. What possibilities lie ahead if we know each other as human? What future can we imagine together? How much more do we all gain by engaging our interconnected pursuit of racial justice and decolonization?

CLOSING

Student affairs educators who read this document may see it as going too far while others may say it is not enough. Although we do not see the Strategic Imperative for Racial Justice and Decolonization as "the answer" on how to make change in student affairs and higher education, we believe if these steps are taken to implement this framework, student affairs educators and our institutions of higher education will have a solid beginning to move forward with a bold vision for the future. This framework document should not be seen as the document. Rather, it should be seen as the first of many works that take up the Strategic Imperative. Our sincerest hope is that you will go on this path with us.

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