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Running head: FEMALE STUDENTS OF COLOR IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Female Students of Color in Higher Education

Kile Adumene

Merrimack College

2018

MERRIMACK COLLEGE

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OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

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IN

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

CAPSTONE TITLE: Female Students of Color in Higher Education

AUTHOR: Kile Adumene

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Abstract

This participatory social justice focused project used both qualitative and quantitative approaches to examine our understanding of who we are individually, groups, and as citizens; nationally and globally, and how one's identity will continue to evolve and change over a life time. We looked at self-claim identity, social imposed identity, and societal categorizing processes of identity such as one's geographical, ethnic, or national connection. Participants engaged in detailed discussion on the constructed racial designations to different groups, the inter-sectional simultaneity by which people may experience their identities, and explored to understand the language that groups prefer to use to self-name their claiming identities and other terms used to describe group identity such as : advantaged, privilege, and dominant to describe groups with access to social power, disadvantaged, marginalized, and sub-ordinated for groups who are blocked from access to social power. The overall result of the workshop contents was positive. The common themes from the qualitative analysis of participants' feedback were that they can see how developing one's identity is a positive. The result of this project supported that human's identity development is crucial to personal advancement and through the navigation of one's social responsibility in the world around them. An understanding of self and the complexity of self-identity is important for one to stay focused on personal goals without living under the shadow of others' expectations of success.

Executive Summary

This project examined the importance and the necessity of sense of self and community in today's higher education institutions for female students of color. It also explored the benefits of diversity on campuses among both faculty members and students, and the possible effects as a result of positive peers' interactions as well as interaction between students of color and faculty of color on sense of self and college adjustment. This project development and implementation was informed by the research study conducted by Castellanos and Gloria (2007) which emphasized the need for Latina students in higher education to have an opportunity to feel like they belong and that they can expand their scholarly identity beyond just their degree.

Review of literature also gave some insight into the history of higher education in regard to people of color. It is pointed out by Lewis (2004) that black students were not allowed to enroll in any institution of higher learning from 1636 until the 1830s due to governmental mandates and practices of institutionalized racism, and that "Students of color were also denied the benefits of education because they were viewed as slaves and intellectually inferior from their white counterpart" (as cited in Kartouti, 2016, p. 2). Several other studies have also discussed the issues of discrimination and lack of structural supporting systems in higher education for female students of color, as well as the historical systemic roots of institutional racism embedded in the structure of most higher education institutions today (Ash & Schreiner, 2016; Solorzano & Villalpando, 1998; Rhoads, Buenavista & Maldonado; 2004; Jones, 2014). Taking into consideration, this study mentioned the above research, the goal of this study is to understand and appreciate the significance of the power to name oneself as an important aspect of group/individual identity and resistance. And as a result, this project was developed with the intent to on creating communities of support and to provide an empowering space for female

students of color for female students of color in a two-year higher education institution to engage in fellowship, mentorship, and community building opportunities where they are given an opportunity to contextualize their self-identity socially, culturally, historically, and politically by giving the women of color a sense of self and value of self which could promote their college retention and success rate.

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Female Students of Color in Higher Education

Several studies have discussed the issues of discrimination and lack of structural supporting systems in higher education for female students of color (Ash & Schreiner, 2016; Solorzano & Villalpando, 1998; Rhoads, Buenavista & Maldonado, 2004). Solorzano and Villalpando (1998) reported that the educational success of any student does not only depend on passing a test, sitting in class or writing academic paper just to get a certificate of completion. Colleges exist to transform lives by providing knowledge and support to students. This appears to be different for female students of color due to some institutional factors that continue to persist in most higher education institutions today. The issues female students of color face in higher education, as well as the introduction to certain concepts like institutional oppression, are discussed by Karkouti (2016) as the historical plight of Black students. This includes the role of Federal policies and statutes in enhancing equity and access, the role of historically Black colleges and universities in expanding educational opportunities for socially oppressed groups, campus racial climate, and the role of student affairs practitioners in improving diversity on campus.

According to Ash and Schreiner (2016), most higher education institutions today continue to face a lack of diversity in faculty members, as a result, there is a lack of interaction between students of color and faculty of color. Thus, positive peer interactions may compensate for this insufficiency. A lack of peer support has been found to negatively affect college GPA and college adjustment (Ash & Schreiner, 2016).

In their book, *Theoretical Considerations in the Study of Minority Student Retention in Higher Education*, Rendón, Jalomo, and Nora (2000) talk about research conducted on college

students at a two-year institution and stated that retaining students of color is a key as it is a gateway into a four-year higher education for many students of color. Rendon et al. (2000) outlined that if students feel like they successfully interact as part of their two-year institution community, that there tends to be a higher chance of retention into a four-year institution.

Currently, an influx of studies reveal that more and more women of color are entering higher education. Equal opportunity to education should be a goal for higher education institutions and female students of color. A research study conducted by Castellanos and Gloria (2007) emphasized the need for Latina students in higher education to have an opportunity to feel like they belong and that they can expand their scholarly identity beyond just their degree. Allen (1992) also talked about several environmental factors, which may affect academic achievement of students of color in a predominantly white college such as having to develop new relationships with diverse people, learning new values and social interactions, and different ways of communicating are some factors which create an unstable environment experience. The new and challenging environment can create stressful situations and lead to the lack of success as the student adjusts to their environment. As a result, students of color may seek out familiar "faces" (i.e., persons of the same race/ethnicity/gender, churches with similar religious beliefs, etc.) in order to bring some stability back into their life.

Rhoads, Buenavista and Maldonado (2004) added that most students of color are usually actively engaged in their learning process and support to others; so, creating diverse, equitable, and multicultural learning environments is considered as one of the most prominent issues on campus today. According to Rhoads et al. (2004) diversity on college campuses represents numerous opportunities for qualified educational professionals who embrace, manage, and respond to diversity issues, and that among these opportunities, a diverse student body creates

positive learning environments, promotes cross-racial interactions, and is positively associated with students' educational outcomes. Despite Rhoades et al. (2004) addressing students broadly, this need for community and diversity is especially needed for students of color to buy in to the institution and feel like they are represented in the institution.

This project will focus on building a curriculum and workshop for female students of color in a two-year higher education institution with the intent to on creating communities of support. This workshop and program will provide an empowering space for female students of color to engage in fellowship, mentorship, and community building opportunities where they are given an opportunity to contextualize their self-identity socially, culturally, historically, and politically by giving the women of color a sense of self and value of self which could promote their college retention and success rate.

Literature Review

The history of racial discrimination in the US as discussed by Kartouti (2016) in his article, shared a Harper, Patton, and Wooden (2009) statement which explained that “social mobility has been hampered for racial and ethnic minorities who have historically been disadvantaged and underrepresented in higher education” (p. 2). Additionally, Anderson (2002) has indicated that “African Americans were virtually excluded from the American higher education system until after the Civil War. According to Anderson (2002), Black students were not allowed to enroll in any institution of higher learning from 1636 until the 1830s due to governmental mandates and practices of institutionalized racism. Lewis (2004) added that “Students of color were also denied the benefits of education because they were viewed as slaves and intellectually inferior from their white counterpart” (as cited in Kartouti, 2016, p. 2). Several

other studies have also discussed the issues of discrimination and lack of structural supporting systems in higher education for female students of color, as well as the historical systemic roots of institutional racism embedded in the structure of most higher education institutions today (Ash & Schreiner, 2016; Solorzano & Villalpando, 1998; Rhoads, Buenavista & Maldonado; 2004; Jones, 2014).

Dr. Jones (2014) in her TED Talk discussed three kinds of racism as she explained the historical root and the perpetual effect of racial categories in this present time. The three kinds of historical racial effect on people of color and the whole society are institutionalized racism, personally-mediated racism, and internalized racism in relation of the environment in which one is given to thrive. According to Dr. Jones, institutionalized racism is a system that differentiates access to the goods, services, and opportunities of the society by “race”. Personally-mediated racism is when a person has differential assumptions about the abilities, motives, and intents of others by “race” (differential actions are based on those assumptions leading to a manifestation of prejudice and discrimination). Lastly, internalized racism is defined as an acceptance by the stigmatized “races” of negative messages about their abilities and intrinsic worth and accepting limitations to their full humanity. Jones explained that people of color continue to experience institutionalized racism today which is the kind of racism that differential access to the goods, services, and opportunities of the society by “race” in education, information, resources, voice, and other inherited advantages of the society. This kind of racism is instituted in the societal laws and norms. There are still contemporary present historical factors that are perpetuating the initial historical racial construct which explain the association between social class and “race” in the country and it is manifested as an “act of doing” or “act of not doing.”

In addition to the Jones definition of institutional racism, in their book titled *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice*, Adams, Bell, Goodman, and Joshi (2016) defined institutionalized racism as “racism at the institutional level that is reflected in the policies, laws, rules, norms, and customs enacted by organizations and social institutions that advantage whites as a group and disadvantage groups of color.” They added that such institutions include religion, government, education, law, the media, the health care systems, and businesses / employment.

Kartouti (2016) also discussed that there should be several educational outcomes for students of color as a result of the role of Federal policies and statutes in enhancing equity and access in education and shared that according to Milem et al. (2005) the U.S. Supreme Court noted that creating diverse campus racial climates enhances the broad educational mission of higher education institutions by exposing students to new perspectives can improve their skills and prepare them to better serve their community as qualified workers and leaders (as cited in Kartouti, 2016, p.5). According to Coleman and Palmer (2004), under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, universities and colleges that consider race as a factor in their admissions or financial aid policies are subject to strict scrutiny, meaning that the given program should serve a compelling interest and be narrowly tailored to attain that interest. The two most prominent compelling interests used to justify the use of race and ethnicity in admissions and financial aid decisions are remedying the effects of past discriminatory practices of an institution and accomplishing an institutional mission in attaining the benefits of a diverse student body (as cited in Kartouti, 2016, p. 6).

Current day issues facing African American/Black, Latinos, and other minority students on college campuses includes lack of diverse faculty and peers. According to Rhoads et al. (2004) diversity on college campuses represents “numerous opportunities for qualified

educational professionals who embrace, manage, and respond to diversity issues, and that among these opportunities, a diverse student body creates positive learning environments, promotes cross-racial interactions, and is positively associated with students' educational outcomes” (p. 14). Despite Rhoades et al. (2004) addressing students broadly, this need for a supportive community and diversity is especially needed for students of color to feel like they are represented in the institution.

Ash and Schreiner (2016) added that, most higher education institutions today continue to face a lack of diversity in faculty members, as a result student of color and faculty of color interaction is lacking, thus positive peer interactions may compensate for this insufficiency. A lack of peer support has been found to negatively affect college GPA and college adjustment (Ash & Schreiner, 2016). And because there is a lack of diversity among faculty which means students of color need to find diversity among their peers. Regarding the historical plight of black students, Pope and Mueller (2011) explains "creating diverse, equitable, and multicultural learning environments has been a major goal for higher education institutions for roughly 50 years and is considered as one of the most prominent issues on campus today” (as cited in Kartouti, 2016, p. 3). Kartouti continues to point out, as stated by Pope and Mueller (2011) that “diversity on college campuses represents numerous opportunities for qualified educational professionals who embrace, manage, and respond to diversity issues (Kartouti, 2016, p. 3)

A review of student groups on campus shows lack of student groups of color; particularly, groups for female of color. Some students’ experiences show how female student of color continue to struggle when navigating the higher education system. For example, Balogun (2017) blogged about her experience on campus as a female student of color as she tried to find

her sense of belonging, and described her day to day campus experience that as a college student saying:

“I think about this fact every day. After all, college campuses are some of the most diverse places in the world. As centers of intellectual exchange, they attract students and professors from every corner of this earth. It’s a wonderful thing really, living with and learning from so many people, from so many different backgrounds”. It’s almost magical. Balogun added that “But there is still something so unnerving about the diversity we experience in our day to day lives. And this feeling is magnified ten times over on a college campus. When I walk out of my dorm every morning, I see people of all ages, genders, and ethnicities living in harmony; sharing, talking, and learning together. But as beautiful as this sight is, I am always haunted by the same thought; the thought that we were all chosen to be here” (Balogun, 2017).

Balogun continues by saying “They must ignore the little voice that in their head that says, you’re only here because you’re Asian/Black/Latinx...” and they must work tirelessly to prove themselves to their colleagues. It’s a truly disturbing reality (Balogun, 2017).

Bradbury (2013) in her blog shared about her experience as the only student of color in her postgraduate program and stated “and sadly there very few Ph.D. students from Afro-Caribbean backgrounds like mine in the arts and humanities right now. Few funding opportunities, an overwhelming lack of role models, and alternative opportunities to work in cultural and creative industries or on a freelance basis means that doctoral study is not always the most attractive option” (Bradbury, 2013). Bradbury continues to advocate for support to specific groups of staff and students and added that “Student support services can play a huge role in

retention. Services need to understand and respond to the needs of students with different protected characteristics” (Bradbury, 2013).

Brown (2017) also shared her experience in her blog post saying:

“To be a Black woman in a Penn classroom is to live a contradiction. I am one of the few Black people in the room, and it feels as though everyone is always watching. I assume my classmates notice what I wear to class and what time I arrive. I’m sure that they take note of what I say and pay particular attention to how I say it. Though, while I consistently feel like I am the object of everyone’s attention, I also feel invisible. Professors often overlook my hand for a lighter one in the back of the room. McKellop teaches a class that largely deals with Black women and their narratives. Considering my own personal experience, and the experience of other black women in academia, perhaps it may be a good idea to prioritize our comments, at least just this once” (Brown, 2017).

A blog post on the Association of Black Women in Higher Education by drval128 (2017) shared her experience a student of color that, “campus, to me, is like a small town where you speak to others you pass. I speak to every face I see if I make eye contact. Sometimes they respond. Sometimes they smile. Sometimes they look right through me. I seek familiar, friendly faces. I seek faces that without saying the words, say “I see you and I feel you.” Then a face appears and sometimes, it looks like me and other times, it looks nothing like what I thought it would look like. I am a fish. I am a fish swimming in shark infested waters. Sometimes there are schools of likeminded fish. Sometimes, there are sharks. Sometimes what looks like a fish can act like a shark. Sometimes what looks like a shark is just a big fish!” (ABWHE, 2017).

Although the post author’s experience can be an experience for any college student, her expression shows how this feeling can be intensify for students of color.

Neil Painter (Reiss, n.d.) from a faculty perspective, pointed out that “The second thing is to deal with students more thoughtfully. Part of what wears out faculty of color is salving the wounds of students. How many times have I heard students wince when faculty say something ignorant or bigoted! How many times have students complained to me that they were expected to teach the segment of a course on African Americans or Asian Americans or Latinas, when white instructors simply abdicated their responsibility on the ground that since they weren't one, they couldn't teach anything about people of color.”

Research also shows how women of color have utilized the used of arts and creativity to express self as a tool of empowerment. In her book, *There are More Beautiful Things than Beyoncé*, Parker (2017) shared collection poetry in her word choices such as “sex,” “sassy,” “low-income,” “mean,” “exotic,” etc. which is used to emphasize the way that black women are dehumanized and objectified through language. The poem represents an example of Parker’s vision of how a woman’s identity can be shaped by the labels forced upon her. (Parker, 2017). Though this project does not focus on using art to explore the issue women of color face in community college settings, it does support the important of providing a space where female students of color can learn and understand ways to express self-identity in an empowering manner.

Jean-Marie and Lloyd-Jones (2011) provided a comprehensive and rich analysis of the progress made, such as an increase in female faculty of color in higher education institutions as an effort to fulfill the mission of diversity in American higher education, but that problems associated with the participation of women - especially women of color – for both students and faculty within these institutions give a full sense of community that is limited.

Some of the benefits of student groups for females of color are pointed out by Rendón, Jalomo, and Nora (2000) where they, talk about the result of their research conducted on college students at a two-year institution and stated that retaining students of color is a key and a gateway into a four-year higher education for many students of color. They also outlined that if students feel like they are part of their two-year institution, that there tends to be a higher chance of retention into a four-year institution (Rendon et al., 2000).

In addition, Solorzano and Villalpando (1998) reported that the educational success of any student does not only depend on passing a test, sitting in class or writing academic paper just to get a paper certificate of completion, but on opportunities for reflection and self-assessment through peer connections plays a crucial role in their sense of community and adaptation on campus. Rhoads, et al. (2004) added that most students of color come from communities with a strong sense and value of community interaction and providing an opportunity for students to interact with peers and mentors allows them to stay actively engaged in their learning process and supporting one another. This literature noted that creating diverse, equitable, and multicultural learning environments is considered as one of the most prominent issues on campus today.

As reported by Allen (1992), a “comparative study on the success rate of African-Americans in higher education, pointed out that those who attended historically black universities achieved higher academic performance than their counterparts in predominantly white universities” (p.26). While not all students of color will attend a historical black higher education institution, it important that attention is given to the measures or elements that contribute to female students of color academic success in all higher education institution across the nation. A research study conducted by Castellanos and Gloria (2007) emphasized the need

for Latina students in higher education to have an opportunity to feel like they belong and can expand their scholar's identity beyond just the degree. Providing a support group for female students of color in higher education settings can be a valuable part of the self-care process. This is done by providing a safe and confidential place for students to share thoughts and feelings with others who have experienced similar issues.

Jones (2014) also talked about how internalized racism can affect women of color sense of identity on a college campus and that over time one can be affected by the acceptance by the stigmatized "race" of negative messages about one's own abilities and intrinsic worth. This results in self-devaluation, resignation, helplessness, and hopelessness. Jones continues to emphasize how people of color, especially women of color, are at risk of "accepting limitations to one's full humanity to the box in which she has been placed" unless they are given the space where women of color are able to engage in active dialogue around culturally relevant topics and issues (Jones, 2014).

Colleges exist to transform lives by providing knowledge and all supports to students. Bailey, Jaggars, and Jenkins (2015), in their book, *Redesigning America's Community Colleges*, shared that community colleges are important in achieving the aspirations of their students, many of whom are from disadvantaged backgrounds. They also added that "a well-functioning community colleges system is instrumental in improving educational equity and in efficiently developing skills and talents essential for a thriving economy and society" (Bailey, et al 2015, p.1). Also, it is pointed out by Kartouti, that Price and Wohlford (2005) have stated that "access to higher education has always been viewed as a means for social mobility and the gateway towards expanding the socio-economic benefits of an advanced pluralistic community" (as cited in Kartouti, 2016, p. 3).

Bailey, et al (2015) pointed out that higher education institution, especially community colleges, exist largely to serve low income students. And that the role community colleges play in providing postsecondary access to underrepresented students is obvious when one examines the demographics of their enrollment: they serve a disproportionate number of low-income, immigrant, first-generation, and ethnic minority students such as Hispanic, Native American, and African American students” (Bailey, et al 2015, p.2).

Karkouti (2016) also cited (Allen, 1988) that “higher education's commitment to students of color has gradually eroded because of the many problems including the country's changing climate regarding racial issues and the persistent downturns in the U.S. economy.” Karkouti (2016) added that “the enrollment of Black students at four-year predominantly White institutions (PWIs) continues to fall short of anticipated goals and is constantly declining due in part to the fact that Black students at PWIs view the campus racial climate as hostile, alienating, and culturally insensitive.”

Although Karkouti’s (2016) review was focused on examining the effect of predominantly white institutions on black students’ education experience, he provided an overview of some key and similar issues for female students of color. Ash and Schreiner (2016) in their study to explore the predictors of success among students of color in a Council for Christian Colleges & Universities (CCCU) institutions, and factors that directly contributed to students' intent to graduate from their institutions looking at institutional fit, thriving in their role as students, and students' perceptions of the institutions' commitment to their welfare. Student success was measured by examining students' intent to graduate along with the degree to which they were thriving intellectually, socially, and psychologically. The study measures students' psychosocial well-being, along with scales that assessed students' psychological sense of

community, perceptions of institutional integrity and commitment to student welfare, spirituality, and satisfaction with student–faculty interaction.

According to Ash and Schreiner (2016) “the model revealed significant indirect contributors such as peer to peer, sense of connection to campus community, and faculty of color mentorship opportunities to the success of students of color”. They gave recommendations based on their findings that it is important for the institution to provide “campus environments, policies, and practices that consider the unique needs of all students, equipping faculty for inclusive pedagogy, and the delivering on the implicit institutional promises made to students of color during the admissions process” (p. 2, 19).

The authors explained that most higher institutions make implicit institutional promises by designing benefits with a focus on access with success that will explicitly help minorities recover from the discrimination they have and continue to face such as support groups that promote social interaction with peers as well as various equitable academic support groups, even if it sometimes places minimal burden on the majority group who for so long have been the beneficiaries of a constitution that was not implemented in a truly color-blind fashion. Also, “that promises are made to recognize that for most of the US history, individuals in the majority have been given preferential treatment based on the color of their skin and those preferences have produced income, housing, health, and education disparities, all of which have led to the affordability crisis for minorities, so minority-targeted aid is often used to ameliorate” (Ash & Schreiner, 2016, p. 19).

According to Bailey, Jaggars, and Jenkins (2015), in order to support Hispanic, Native American, and African American students’ academic, professional, and personal success,

community colleges remain an important starting point for creating female students of color groups where students are given voices and strong campus' community sense.

In general, most students in a two years college come from a wide range of different socioeconomic groups and academic backgrounds which has direct impact on their perceptions of barriers and anticipation of success. There are also students from non-academic backgrounds, lower socioeconomic, female students from varies ethnic groups among which there are non-traditional female of color students. So, the question is how do we ensure that all student is given what they need to success in the higher education institution across the nation, especially female students of color who continues to face institutional oppression?

Therefore, it is vital to create support groups, workshops and programs that will provide an empowering space for female students of color. These can also serve as a space for fellowship, mentorship, and community building opportunities where they are given an opportunity to contextualize their self-identity socially, culturally, historically, and politically by giving the women of color a sense of self and value of self which promotes their college retention and success.

Project Plan

This was an hour-long workshop designed to explore identity and related themes including, but not limited to, determinants of identity, cultural influences, identity development, and authenticity. Participants were asked to consider the factors that contributed to the construction of their identity and the ways in which they can explore it. The objectives of this workshop included identifying the importance of personal identity, cultural factors that influence the sense of self, and ways in which people can develop their self-identity.

The initial plan for this project was the development and implementation of a cohort of female students of color group. However, due to several unanticipated circumstances, the project was changed to a unique workshop called “Who Am I” which is one of the sessions of the curriculum that was developed for the female of color group. This workshop was opened to all students, staff, and faculty on campus unlike the female of color group which was specifically intended for female students of color. This project idea came about based on several conclusions regarding a lack of internal support system for females of color and students’ sense of belonging on community college campus but was modified to fit all campus-wide community members with the intent to provide a space for all to meet and have a focused and facilitated discussion about self and the complexity of human identity. This identity workshop is important to help us reflect to understand who we are individually, groups, and as citizens, nationally and globally, and how one’s identity will continue to evolve and change over a life time. Also, to look at self-claimed identity, socially imposed identity, and societal categorizing processes of identity such as one’s geographical, ethnic, or national connection with a goal to understand and appreciate the significance of the power to name oneself is an important aspect of group/individual identity and resistance.

Situation Statement

The goal of the project is to develop curriculum and facilitate workshops and programs that will provide an empowering space for female students of color that will also serves as a space for fellowship, mentorship, and community building opportunities where they are given an opportunity to contextualize their self-identity socially, culturally, historically, and politically by giving the women of color a sense of self and value of self, which promotes their college retention and success. Female students of color will benefit from a female of color group on

campus where they can meet and discuss priority social issues affecting them as female student of color. This is also a great benefit to the higher education institutions and the communities as it creates diverse campus racial climates which enhances college satisfaction and retention. It also enhances the broad educational mission of higher education institutions especially NECC by providing student an opportunity that improve their skills and prepare them to better serve their community as qualified workers and leaders.

Define Your Goals

The overall goal of this project is to help students' capacity to build safe and supportive campus communities together, and to provide students opportunities for networking and engagement with other fellow female of color. And providing a space for student to meet and discuss priority social issues affecting them as female student of color by providing workshops and programs for learning and reflection. Also, creating a safe, emotional, and social environment for female students of color to interact in healthy relationship with one another while supporting college success.

Target Audience and Stakeholders

The intended audience are female students of color across both NECC campuses, female faculty of color, and staff working on social justice. Overall, the target audiences are the NECC college community and NECC staff such as:

- Dean of Student Life: approving the project and funding
- Director of Student Life: vital for project overview, budget approval; and staffs and faculties of color recruitment.
- Faculty of color: serving as mentors or guest speakers
- Student Life Staff: helping with flyers, posters, and logistics

- Students: engagement and project promotion

Crafting a Clear Message

According to Coleman and Palmer (2004) “Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, universities and colleges that consider race as a factor in their admissions or financial aid policies are subject to strict scrutiny, meaning that the given program should serve a compelling interest and be narrowly tailored to attain that interest.” They continued to explain that “the two most prominent compelling interests used to justify the use of race and ethnicity in admissions and financial aid decisions are remedying the effects of past discriminatory practices of an institution and accomplishing an institutional mission in attaining the benefits of a diverse student body” (as cited in Kartouti, 2016, p. 6). This project intent to provide a space for female students of color to network on college campuses. And there is a direct benefit of helping female students of color find safe and supportive communities on campus with a secondary potential effect on higher retention, which could enhance the ability of the college to more effectively recruit and sustain their admission enrollment of female students of color.

Incentives for Engagement

Stakeholder: Female students of color

Incentive: connect female students of color to support one another in a safe environment and diverse student body that creates a positive learning environment, promotes cross-racial interactions, and is positively associated with students’ educational outcomes.

Stakeholder: Overall NECC college community

Incentive: female students of color recruitment, retention, and college success.

Identify Outreach Methods

The methodological approach for reaching audience are:

- I plan to send an email to all NECC students, staff and faculty to bring awareness of the new project.
- To have a focus group that will include selected students' bodies that will take advantage of students' clubs such as the African club or others to let the word out first.
- Then, plan information/outreach section during student spring semester orientations, distribution of flyers to students and faculties, use word of mouth to female students of color in the students' leadership groups, work study students, send email to interested students, staff and faculty, target classrooms through special appearances and announcements, use of posters/flyers, and set up an information station/table at various campus events.

Responsibilities Chart

NAME	ORGANIZATION OR AFFILIATION	RESPONSIBILITIES	CONTACT INFORMATION
Kile	Student Life	Coordination/facilitation	kadumene@gmail.com
Danny	Student Life	Media/advertisement/publicity	dmalave@necc.mass.edu
Student Gov't	Student Life	Student Recruitment/flyer distribution	
Janel	Civic engagement	Faculty recruitment/meeting space identification	jdagatalynch@necc.mass.edu

Tools/Measure to Assess Progress

I intend to measure or assess progress using post evaluation process of all participants of their personal knowledge gained by asking thought provoking and reflective questions using a four-point scale. I will also assess participant's conceptual knowledge gained after the session.

Implementation Timeline

December 2017	Planning focus group meeting Flyers/marketing / outreach Meeting space identification
January 2018	Planning focus group meeting Flyers/marketing / outreach Meeting space identification Facilitators meeting
February 2018	Planning focus group meeting Flyers/marketing / outreach Facilitators meeting Session one
March 2018	Session two
April 2018	Analyze session data

Logical Framework

I will develop a curriculum for women of color through a cohort style program and provide workshops aimed at the inclusive student development of women of color on the NECC campus. With the historical understanding of the origin of higher education students will be able to understand the importance of a support system in higher education for students of color and inclusion and equity as a social issue. And since institutional oppression continues to hinder female of color in higher education, it is necessary to create or fostering an environment that allows students of color to remain actively engaged in their learning process and supporting other.

The overall goal of this project is to build capacity for students to meet and discuss priority social issues affecting them as female students of color by providing workshops and programs for learning and reflection.

So That:

Female students of color can be provided with a diverse student body that creates a positive learning environment, promotes cross-racial interactions, and is positively associated with students' educational outcomes

So That:

Female student of color will develop concrete leadership skills, self-identity, self-awareness, and a deep understanding of an equity framework on social issues between higher education institutions.

So That:

Student from communities of color gained good understanding of Links between Society, institutions and academia success.

So That:

Student will gain an increase in their understanding of the importance of issues of educational equity for racial, ethnic and language minority populations.

So That:

Students gain knowledge and be able to help any individual to effectively analyze the system in which they are interacting can add to the students' sense of self-worth and beliefs that they belong and are capable of academic success at the institution and beyond as students are provided an opportunity that improve their skills and prepare them to better serve their community as qualified workers and leaders.

Educational Approach, Including Specific Lessons

The frameworks for understanding female students of color experiences include the role of critical race theory, as related to female student of color in higher education, in understanding race and self-awareness; multiple identities; and intersectionality.

Methodology

The workshop for the project was called “Who Am I” and it was created to provide students a space to engage in self-dialogue and reflection of who they self-identify to be and to explore any possible aspect of their identity that is constructed outside of self. This workshop provided students an opportunity to discussion with other students how the society shapes our thinking about who we are and the impact of the larger cultural context on our claimed identity formation. The main focus was the importance of personal identity/awareness development with the intent that the workshop will help us understand who we are individually, within groups, and as national and global citizens; and how one’s identity will continue to evolve and change over a life time.

Participants

The targeted participants for this workshop were staff, faculty, and students at NECC. The workshop was opened to all students and all genders. All NECC staff and faculty who have been teaching or working at NECC during the 2017-2018 academic school year were invited.

Materials

The materials used for this workshop were outreach flyers, an attendance sheet, session agenda, name tags, extra pens for participants, printed icebreaker sheets, printed activity sheets

for the two activities (iceberg and data collection standards for race, ethnicity, primary language, sex, and disability status sheet), a time keeping device, food, and evaluation forms.

A sign-in sheet will be used to track attendees as well as gather emails. The session agenda that contained all of the relevant topics to be discussed during the meeting (see Appendix A). An icebreaker activity was used to start the discussion (see Appendix C). The icebreaker activity will focus on questions about who you are, what is home, one saying that defines you, a food that reflect who you are, and the important of someone in your life and why. This was followed up with a debriefing session after the icebreaker activity allowing each participant to share with the group what they have written down and why they chose what have written. An Iceberg activity sheet was the first activity (see Appendix D). This activity was used as a stimulator of our inner assumption of any individual's identity including one own identity. A constructed image profile was used. A Data Collection Standards for Race, Ethnicity, Primary Language, Sex, and Disability Status sheet (see Appendix E) was also used for the second activity, this activity intent was to allow us to look at self-claim identity, and social imposed identity, and to look at the societal categorizing processes of identity such as one's geographical, ethnic, or national connection, and the impart on identity formation. A PowerPoint slide presentation was used as a visual aid to topics of discussions and activities along with the printed session activity sheets that will be handed out to each participant for individual activity exercise. At the end of the workshop, the presentation handouts will be given to each participant.

In addition, at the end of the workshop session, the facilitator handed out to each participant an evaluation sheet with set of survey questions to be fill out at the end before leaving (see Appendix F). The evaluation sheet was collected from each participant before exiting the

workshop. This evaluation survey allows or enable the facilitator to measure the participants' knowledge gained through each post evaluation survey questions.

Procedure

Prior to the event, a request for money for food was made to Student Activity Coordinator and approval was obtained. Workshop flyers were also developed (see Appendix B) and placed around NECC. For recruitment, a combination of multiple purposeful approaches was used to recruit participants such as word of mouth from the facilitator to outreach about the upcoming workshop to potential participants at every networking encounter with targeted participants, flyers, emails, and one-on-one requests. Interested participants' contact information, both email addresses and phone number, were collected during each encounter and was used to compile list through which an email notification about the workshop date and time was sent. Development and creation of the flyer was done by the facilitator and was sent to the Student Life office for inspection and approval for printing. After that, flyers were sent out to the college printing office to be printed and was distributed around three NECC campuses with the help of Student's Life work-study students and facilitator.

NECC campus-wide email and event notification system was used to broadcast information about the upcoming workshop two weeks before the scheduled date to gain a wide-range of interest among the community that asked them to ask interested parties to RSVP via email directly to workshop facilitator. This was followed by another targeted outreach to specific faculty who were able to inform their students about workshop.

For follow-up outreach, word of mouth from already recruited students was encouraged and requested that they refer other potential participants such as friends, classmate, and relatives. A follow-up campus-wide email notification was sent out as a reminder two day before and the

day of each of the workshop for both Haverhill and Lawrence campuses. All workshop materials were developed, printed, and ready. The Workshop room reserved and inspected by facilitator to ensure it was appropriate for the workshop. The tables were arranged in row in a way that participant can face each other.

On the day of workshop, food was ordered to be delivered to 30 minutes after the workshop started. I arrived 30 minutes earlier to set up the room, check all equipment's to ensure they were working properly, and set up the PowerPoint presentation. A sign-in sheet for names and email address was handed out to each participant as they walked in. A reflective icebreaker activity was scheduled for the beginning of the workshop and handed out to participants.

Due to time limitation, the icebreaker activity was used as the participants' brief introduction of themselves and their interest in the workshop and they are hoping to get out of it (see Appendix C). This was done to encourage conversation, creating space for open and honest discussion about self-identity. After the icebreaker, the facilitator provided a brief PowerPoint presentation on humans' identity development/formation and objectives for the workshop. This was followed by the iceberg activity (see Appendix D). In this activity, a sample profile of a constructed person called "Joe" with incomplete identity was given, and participants were asked to take a second and analyze who they think Joe is, what they think they know about Joe, what other pieces of important information of Joe's identity was missing if they think something was missing. This was followed with a debriefing session with three reflective questions as following: What assumptions did you have about the person? How did you keep those assumptions from having an impact on how you related to that person? What did you base your assumptions on? To what extent did your belief system have an impact on your assumptions? How did those assumptions have an impact on your behavior?

For the second activity, participants were given time to self-identified using the formal Data Collection Standards for Race, Ethnicity, Primary Language, Sex, and Disability Status sheet with two reflective questions: Can you identify the constructed racial designations to different groups that you identified with? Identify the intersectional simultaneity by which people may experience their identities? (See Appendix E).

At the conclusion of the workshop, a reflective evaluation was handed to participants to fill out and turn in before leaving (see Appendix F). Lastly, a follow-up “thank you” email was sent out to all participants.

Results

A total of 19 students attended this workshop. Of the 19 students 44% identified as white and 56% identified as Hispanic. The total attendance on Haverhill campus was 14, and of the 14, two people identified as male, 1 white and 1 Hispanic, and 12 identified as female, 3 identified as white, 8 identified as Hispanic, and 1 identified as Dominican Republic. Total attendance on the Lawrence campus was 5, and of the 5 people, 4 identified as male, 2 of the 4 males identified as white, the other 2 as Hispanic and 1 as female who identified as Hispanic.

Of the 19 participants, 6 participants indicated that they heard about the workshop through a friend, 4 indicated that they heard about in their class and was required to attend the workshop as class requirement, 2 through NECC link, 3 through campus bulletin board, and 2 through email from the facilitator.

On the post evaluation survey, a total of 19 participants indicated “yes” to the question asking if they will recommend this workshop in the future.

The total average of participants' response to this statement "I can identify cultural factors that influence my sense of self and other's identity" post workshop was 3.53 out of 4.00. Of this total average, 3.36 is total Haverhill average, 4.00 from Lawrence, 3.63 average for self-identified Hispanic students, and 3.83 average for self-identified White students.

The total average of participants' response to this statement "I can begin to see the importance developing my personal identity" post workshop was 3.84 out of 4.00. Of this total average, 3.84 is total Haverhill average, 3.80 from Lawrence, 3.75 average for self-identified Hispanic students, and 4.00 average for self-identified White students.

The total average of participants' response to this statement "I have learned something new about myself" post workshop was 3.21 out of 4.00. Of this total average, 3.00 is total Haverhill average, 3.80 from Lawrence, 3.50 average for self-identified Hispanic students, and 3.00 average for self-identified White students.

The total average of participants' response to this statement "I can see/understand the benefit of meeting with others like me" post workshop was 3.68 out of 4.00. Of this total average, 3.64 is total Haverhill average, 3.80 from Lawrence, 3.88 average for self-identified Hispanic students, and 3.67 average for self-identified White students.

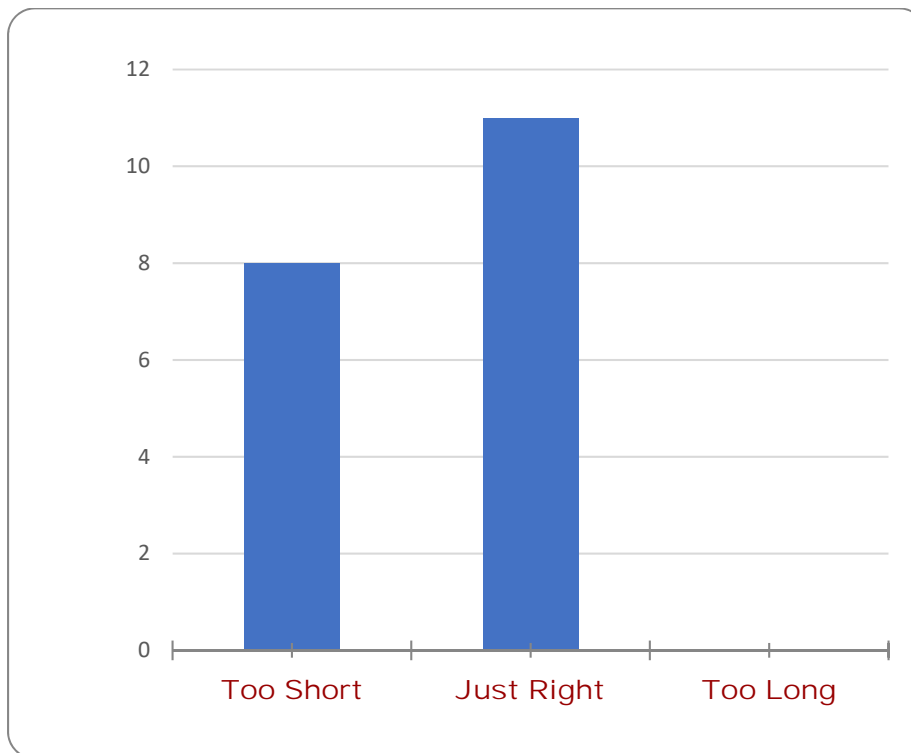
The total average of participants' response to this statement "I can see/understand the benefit of a mentor" post workshop was 3.68 out of 4.00. Of this total average, 3.64 is total Haverhill average, 3.80 from Lawrence, 3.75 average for self-identified Hispanic students, and 3.50 average for self-identified White students.

Participants also rated the workshop content on a 4 scale, 4 being strongly agree and 1 as strongly disagree. The average from the 19 students who rated the workshop content as interesting & engaging was 3.74, with a breakdown rating of 3.71 for Haverhill and 3.80 for

Lawrence. The average from the 19 students who rated the workshop content as informative was 3.64, with a breakdown rating of 3.57 for Haverhill and 4.00 for Lawrence. The average from the 19 students who rated the workshop content as practical/useful was 3.79, with a breakdown rating of 3.71 for Haverhill and 4.00 for Lawrence.

The sense of an ideal length of workshop time differs among students, three students viewed two hours as too short, six students indicated that an hour workshop is just right, five students indicated that a 1.5 hours workshop is too short, but four students indicated that 1.5 hours workshop was too short.

Figure 1: Participants Preference of Workshop Length of Time



Participants' responded to the open-ended question "Of all the things you learned in today's workshop, which do you think will be most useful to you?" and the most common responses from students included: "Being able to recognize when I make assumptions about people," "Knowing how society affects the way I see myself," "Describing my identity to other

with no hesitation,” “The importance of understanding who you are and the confidence that can be gained through it,” and “Are you just becoming what you've been told to become? Are you constantly choosing roles to reveal of yourself for different situations?”

Discussion

Human’s identity development is crucial to personal advancement and through the navigation of one’s social responsibility in the world around them. An understanding of self and the complexity of self-identity is important for one to stay focused on personal goals without living under the shadow of others’ expectations of success. The overall result of the workshop contents was positive. The common themes from the qualitative analysis of participants’ feedback were that they can see how developing one’s identity is a positive thing. As stated by one of the students “The importance of understanding who you are and the confidence that can be gained through it.” Self-confidence can lead to persistence which becomes the source of strength and encouragement to the student. Many of the students indicated that they now understand how their identity is constructed socially, historically, and politically. All participants indicated via end of session evaluation that they would recommend this workshop to other in the future and want to continue this conversation to learn more on this topic. They also noted that having someone in the lives as college students is vital to their personal identity development and college success. Out of the 19 participants, only one person mentioned that they currently have a staff and faculty mentor on campus. Many of the students stated they received some support from family members and friends outside the college campus environment. When students were asked on the end of session evaluation about how they heard about the workshop, about six out the 19 students indicated they come because of a friend and four stated they came

because of a classmate and class faculty member. This can help inform on the better way to reach student and pointed out or imply that peer interaction among student's effect students' choices. One other key feedback given by one of the participants was that they do not see themselves fitting in any of the ethnicity group listed on the evaluation sheet requesting a selection of their ethnicity group. Although, this question was optional, participant discussed that she finds stated demographic information such as: white, black, Hispanic, Asian, American Indian, and other, limited and upsetting as she would prefer to describe her differently.

Limitations

This study was not to its full extent because age was not captured to be able to point out the average age of interested participants. It would have been interesting to capture ages to determine how it impacts one's identity over time. Another limitation was limited time due to student class schedules, as a result, in-depth discussion on topics were cut short.

Faculty and staff engagement, support, and workshop participation was lacking giving the lack of diversity and lack of available free time at the institution. Recruitment for a workshop of this nature is challenging for community college students especially students of color since many have multiple responsibilities. Due to the facilitator's time constraint on campus, promotion and marketing of the workshops was minimalized. Also, giving the facilitator's role on campus, there was not much opportunities for relationship building with students, staff, and faculty members.

Implications

An implication for further studies, it will be more beneficial for future workshops to have a longer workshop time, giving participant enough time for engaged discussions. Participants were very engaged and ready to keep the conversation going to explore more on the key categories (advantaged, privilege, and dominant to describe groups with access to social power,

disadvantaged, marginalized, and sub-ordinated for groups who are blocked from access to social power) used to describe human identity socially, politically, and historically. Thus, it is important to allow such discussion to enhance or promote an understanding on the constructed racial designations to different groups, the inter-sectional simultaneity by which people may experience their identities, and explore the language that groups prefer to use to self-name their claiming identities and other terms used to describe group identity.

More workshops should be held to continue the conversation on the importance of understanding self and the complexity of self-identity.

Perhaps a campus-wide mentorship programing or a learning community including faculty members, staff, and students with multiple sessions would be effective more in meeting the need of the students. More students shared that they tend to go to a workshop or training because a friend told them to, and that they also preferred picking same classes as their friend because they feel they can trust in the relationship and support of the friend.

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Appendix A: Workshop Agenda

Sample Learning Session Agenda

Time (1.5 hours)

Race and Self-Awareness

Learning Objectives:

- At the end of today’s sessions participants will be able to:
- Understand race as a paradigm, political concept, or a social theory
- Begin to see the importance of personal identity development

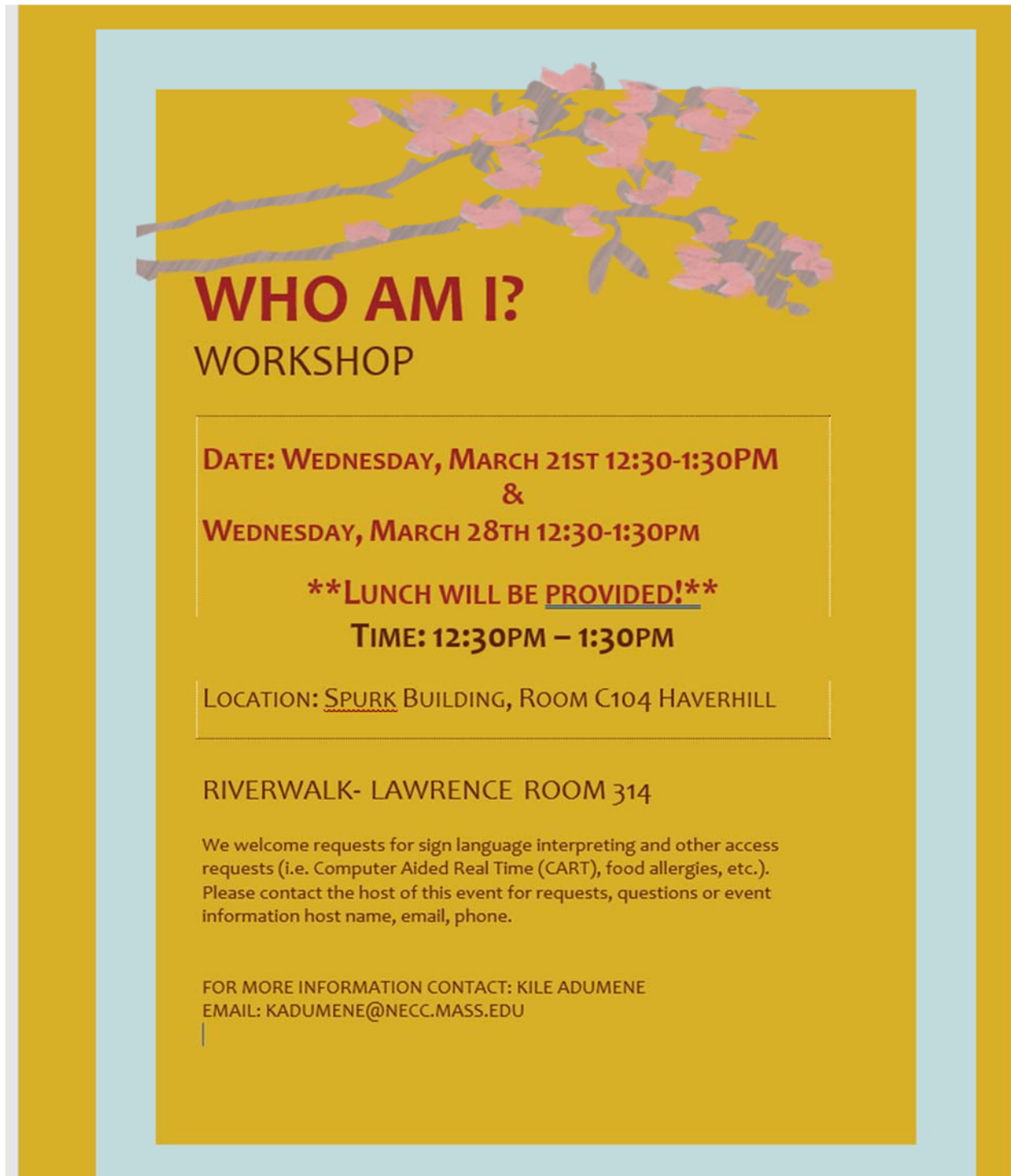
Time	Activity	Who	Comments / Materials Needed
30 minutes	Welcome & setting context for the project/Ice breaker and trust building activity	Facilitator	
30 minutes	Identify Development. How does society shape our thinking about who we are? Identity development and the impact of the larger cultural context on our formation (person of color, fitting into mainstream) Microaggressions, being an authentic version of yourself “Representing” being asked to speak on behalf of... (when you’re the only person of color in the room, developing the knowledge/skills to handle) Question: Are you an individual or part of a collective?	Facilitator/ Participants	Iceberg Activity
30 minutes	Wrap up & End of Day Reflection/Evaluation How are you feeling? What did you hear that you disagree with? Or that’s not consistent with your experience? What did you hear that you did agree with? Or that is consistent with your experience?	Discussion	

Detailed description of intended process for implementation

It involves,

- 1) Have participant be centered in the experience and the discussion at workshop starting February 1st, 2018.
- 2) Promote interaction and allow awareness and understanding to develop during each workshop.
- 3) Facilitate room for expansion of awareness and deepening of meaning to allow for new discoveries during their time on college and through mentorship opportunities both on campus and outside campus.
- 4) Encourage self-dialogue, and reflection, where the experience fully unfolds

Appendix B: Event Flyer



WHO AM I?
WORKSHOP

DATE: WEDNESDAY, MARCH 21ST 12:30-1:30PM
&
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 28TH 12:30-1:30PM

****LUNCH WILL BE PROVIDED!****

TIME: 12:30PM – 1:30PM

LOCATION: SPURK BUILDING, ROOM C104 HAVERHILL

RIVERWALK- LAWRENCE ROOM 314

We welcome requests for sign language interpreting and other access requests (i.e. Computer Aided Real Time (CART), food allergies, etc.). Please contact the host of this event for requests, questions or event information host name, email, phone.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: KILE ADUMENE
EMAIL: KADUMENE@NECC.MASS.EDU

Appendix C: Icebreaker

NECC “WHO AM I” Workshop

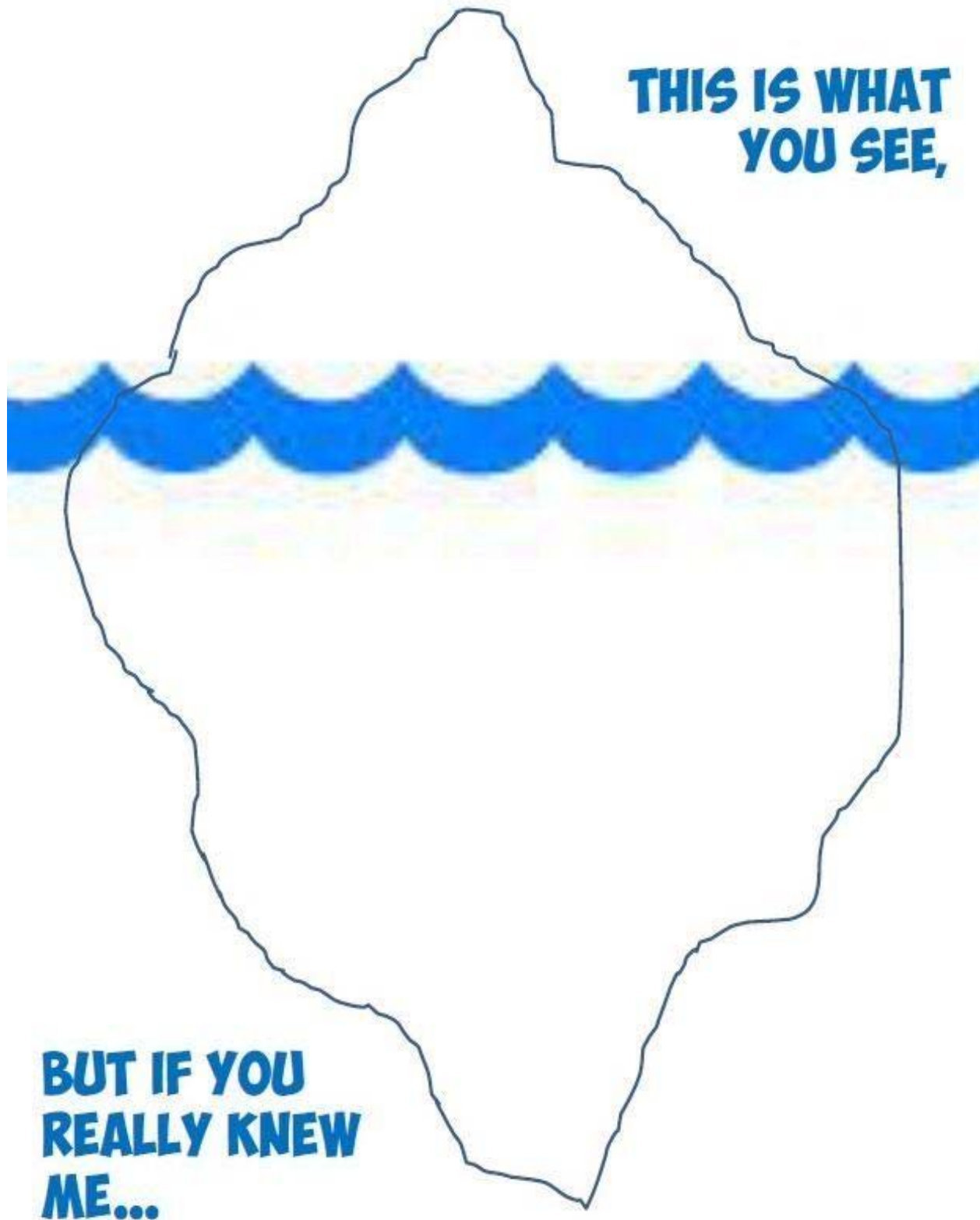
Date 3/21/18

Start Time: 12:30 pm– End Time: 1:30 pm

I am from.....

- The place you call "home"
- One “Saying” you grew up hearing that defines you
- One food that reflects who you are and where you are "from"
- Think about your academic career, was/is there anyone important to you and why?

Appendix D: Iceberg Activity



Appendix E: Data Collection Activity

Data Collection Standards for Race, Ethnicity, Primary Language, Sex, and Disability Status

The Affordable Care Act invests in the implementation of a new health data collection and analysis strategy. Section 4302 of the Affordable Care Act contains provisions to strengthen federal data collection efforts by requiring that all national federal data collection efforts collect information on race, ethnicity, sex, primary language and disability status. The law also provides the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) the opportunity to collect additional demographic data to further improve our understanding of healthcare disparities.

The law requires that data collection standards for these measures be used, to the extent that it is practical, in all national population health surveys. It applies to self-reported information only. The law also requires any data standards published by HHS to comply with standards created by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

The standards apply to population health surveys sponsored by HHS, where respondents either self-report information or a knowledgeable person responds for all members of a household. HHS is implementing these data standards in all new surveys and at the time of major revisions to current surveys.

A. Race and Ethnicity

Ethnicity is always asked before Race

Ethnicity Data Standard	Categories
<p>Are you Hispanic, Latino/a, or Spanish origin (One or more categories may be selected)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. <input type="checkbox"/> No, not of Hispanic, Latino/a, or Spanish origin b. <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, Mexican, Mexican American, Chicano/a c. <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, Puerto Rican d. <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, Cuban e. <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, another Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin 	<p>} These categories roll-up to the Hispanic or Latino category of the OMB standard</p>

Race Data Standard	Categories
<p>What is your race? (One or more categories may be selected)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. <input type="checkbox"/> White b. <input type="checkbox"/> Black or African American c. <input type="checkbox"/> American Indian or Alaska Native d. <input type="checkbox"/> Asian Indian e. <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese f. <input type="checkbox"/> Filipino g. <input type="checkbox"/> Japanese h. <input type="checkbox"/> Korean i. <input type="checkbox"/> Vietnamese j. <input type="checkbox"/> Other Asian k. <input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian l. <input type="checkbox"/> Guamanian or Chamorro m. <input type="checkbox"/> Samoan n. <input type="checkbox"/> Other Pacific Islander 	<p>} These categories are part of the current OMB standard</p> <p>} These categories roll-up to the Asian category of the OMB standard</p> <p>} These categories roll-up to the Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander category of the OMB standard</p>

B. Sex**Sex Data Standard**

What is your sex?

- a. Male
- b. Female

C. Primary Language**Data Standard for Primary Language**

How well do you speak English? (5 years old or older)

- a. Very well
- b. Well
- c. Not well
- d. Not at all

Data Collection for Language Spoken (Optional)

1. *Do you speak a language other than English at home? (5 years old or older)*

- a. Yes
- b. No

For persons speaking a language other than English (answering yes to the question above):

2. *What is this language? (5 years old or older)*

- a. Spanish
- b. Other Language (Identify)

D. Disability Status**Data Standard for Disability Status**

1. *Are you deaf or do you have serious difficulty hearing?*

- a. Yes
- b. No

2. *Are you blind or do you have serious difficulty seeing, even when wearing glasses?*

- a. Yes
- b. No

3. *Because of a physical, mental, or emotional condition, do you have serious difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions? (5 years old or older)*

- a. Yes
- b. No

4. *Do you have serious difficulty walking or climbing stairs? (5 years old or older)*

- a. Yes
- b. No

5. *Do you have difficulty dressing or bathing? (5 years old or older)*

- a. Yes
- b. No

6. *Because of a physical, mental, or emotional condition, do you have difficulty doing errands alone such as visiting a doctor's office or shopping? (15 years old or older)*

- a. Yes
- b. No

Appendix F: Workshop Evaluation Form

Northern Essex Community College
College & Career Workshop Series Workshop Evaluation

Workshop Topic: NECC “WHO AM I” Workshop

Date: 03/28/18

Please circle one for each statement:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The presentation was well organized	4	3	2	1
The presentation was clear	4	3	2	1
The presentation allowed time for questions & comments	4	3	2	1

Please rate the workshop content in the following areas:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Interesting & Engaging	4	3	2	1
Informative	4	3	2	1
Practical/Useful	4	3	2	1

Please circle one for each statement:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I can identify cultural factors that influence my sense of self and other’s identity	4	3	2	1
I can begin to see the importance of developing my personal identity	4	3	2	1
I have learned something new about myself	4	3	2	1
I can see/understand the benefit of meeting with others like me	4	3	2	1
I can see/understand the benefit of a mentor	4	3	2	1

7. Please rate the length of the workshop (check one):

Too long _____ Too short _____ Just Right _____

8. What would be the optimal length of time for this workshop (check one)?

½ hour _____ 1 hour _____ 1 ½ hour _____ 2 hours _____

9. Of all the things you learned in today's workshop, which do you think will be most useful to you?
10. How did you hear about this workshop (please circle)?
SLDP NECClink Workshop website Professor or class assignment Friends
Other (please explain)
11. Would you recommend this workshop to others (check one)? Yes _____ No _____
12. Other comments, suggestions, or recommendations for future workshops:
13. ***Optional Demographic Information*** – Please select your ethnicity group from the following list:
White _____ Black _____ Hispanic _____ Asian _____ American Indian _____
Other _____

Thank you for your feedback!