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American Indian Students: An Exploration of Their Experiences in Doctoral Programs

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Abstract

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This qualitative study explores the experiences of American Indian students in doctoral programs of study at a Research Extensive University. Ten doctoral students who identified as American Indian were interviewed about their experiences in their doctoral programs. The students were in social sciences, biomedical sciences, and natural sciences doctoral programs. American Indian doctoral students are a population in higher education about which a small body of research exists. More knowledge is needed to understand the nature of students' experiences and factors that enhance their educational experiences. A need exists for American Indians with advanced education in various fields to meet the growing needs of Native communities.

The literature included a historical perspective on the education of American Indians, their current status in higher education, and the theoretical and methodological approaches used in examining American Indian students' experiences in doctoral programs.

A major finding of the study was that faculty mentors were the most influential individuals with American Indian students. Faculty encouraged them to consider graduate school and shared their knowledge about the expectations of graduate school. Second, students perceived graduate education to be a path to a more meaningful life and as a functional advantage for upward mobility. Third, students' cultural identities were evidenced in their desire to make a contribution in their fields to Native people, in their approaches to teaching and their research and scholarship. Students with tribally based research looked to elders as sources of knowledge rather than solely to academia. Fourth, a major challenge was students' experiences of racial micro-aggressions in the classroom environment. Recommendations are given for institutional leaders on policies and practices and for future research on American Indians in graduate education.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables	iii
Chapter 1 Introduction	
Statement of the Problem.....	1
Status of American Indians.....	3
National Initiatives.....	7
University of Washington.....	9
Purpose of the Study.....	10
Research Questions.....	11
Significance of the Study.....	12
Chapter 2 Review of the Literature.....	15
Definition of Terms.....	15
Historical Perspective: The Education of American Indians.....	17
The Mission Period.....	20
Treaty Making Period.....	22
Allotment Period.....	23
Meriam Report and New Deal Period.....	26
Termination Period.....	28
The 1960s.....	29
The 1970s.....	30
Tribally Controlled Colleges.....	31
Summary and Conclusion.....	35
Chapter 3 Research Methodology.....	39
Proposed Study.....	39
Research Questions.....	40
Methodology.....	41
Description of the Research Site.....	42
Participants in the Study.....	43
Ethical Considerations.....	47
Data Analysis.....	51
Summary.....	52
Chapter 4 Findings of the Study.....	53
Research Question 1.....	55
Research Question 2 (two parts).....	62
Question 1.....	64
Question 2.....	65
Research Question 3.....	68
Research Question 4.....	73
Summary.....	79

Chapter 5 Discussion and Conclusions.....	81
Summary of Major Findings.....	81
Limitations of the Study.....	86
Implications for Future Research.....	87
Conclusions.....	91
Bibliography	95
Appendix A: Research Study Protocol	100
Appendix B: Resume	101

LIST OF TABLES

Table Number

1. Demographic Data for American Indian Doctoral Students.....46

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

The American Indian student experience in graduate education is an area of higher education about which national research studies seldom have been conducted. Studies on graduate education by national higher education organizations such as the American Council on Education (Ryu, 2009) and the Council of Graduate Schools (Bell, 2010) provide significant data on the enrollment in master's and doctoral degrees for traditionally under-represented racial and ethnic minority student populations. Reports of the American Council on Education on diversity, equity and gender include degrees earned by race and ethnicity, but the Council on Graduate Schools' reports on graduate enrollment do not provide such a breakdown by race and ethnicity. While these studies provide informative quantitative data on the representation of American Indian men and women in various fields of study compared to Whites and other underrepresented minority students, the studies do not provide a descriptive and comparative sense of the students' experiences in graduate school. A few other national studies conducted in recent years provide similar quantitative data on American Indian undergraduate and graduate student populations (Pavel, Skinner, Feris, Cahalan, Tippeconnic & Stein 1998; DeVoe & Darling-Churchill, 2008). Although it is more narrowly focused, Garrod and Larimore (1997) provide a qualitative study on the experiences of Native American graduates of Dartmouth College. Tierney's study (1993) presents personal narratives of American Indian undergraduate students' college experiences. In his analysis of the Native students' experiences, Tierney (1993) poses the questions, "What do we know about Native American participation in academe? Where do Indian students go to college, and what happens to them when they enter?" These

questions are relevant to this study on American Indian doctoral students. Tierney's questions are framed by the historical context of the American Indian education, the overall small representation in higher education, the lack of significant research on American Indian students' experiences in academia. He argues for a redefined approach to higher education that is inclusive of "alternative discourses" (1993, p. 321), that recognizes the cultural dynamics Native students experience in academia, and to re-conceptualize institutional policies and practices conducive to the educational success of Native students.

With heightened efforts of colleges and universities nationally to increase the diversity of undergraduate and graduate student populations, studies on the American Indian undergraduate student experience provide data from which to draw some understanding about the experiences of the American Indian graduate students. In particular, factors that foster their academic progress, and challenges and conflicts with cultural issues students may experience are areas worthy of deeper examination. The value of examining students' experiences of challenges and cultural conflicts help identify the nature of those challenges and conflicts, to understand how students negotiate them, and the impact on their programs of study and progress toward degree completion.

Tierney's question of, "What happens to them when they enter?" ties well with the research questions in this study. More knowledge about American Indian students' experiences in graduate school is needed to understand the factors that support or hinder students' educational experiences. Through exploring American Indian doctoral students' experiences at a public research university, this study seeks to identify the factors or conditions that influenced students' decisions to pursue doctoral education, to understand how students navigate through their programs of study, how they negotiate through the various challenges they encounter, and

importantly, how American Indian doctoral students maintain their cultural integrity in their intellectual development as researchers and scholars. While graduate education is a transformative educational experience in broadening the breadth and depth of students' intellectual knowledge in their chosen fields, the socialization process is another element that students experience in doctoral education. Some scholars consider the socialization process to be an important component of doctoral education that enables students' assimilation within their discipline. Through the socialization process, it is assumed that students will learn the academic and social practices, or the culture, of their respective disciplines. The socialization process is considered "a major purpose of American doctoral education" (Gildersleeve, Croom & Vasquez, 2011, p. 94) and presents various challenges to Native and non-Native doctoral students. How cultural identity enables students to negotiate the socialization process, and strive to maintain cultural integrity in their doctoral education experiences, is explored in this study. Equally critical in the exploration of students' experiences is to understand how the institutional structure of policies, practices, and climate foster or impede students' progress toward degree completion.

Status of American Indians

In the twenty-first century American Indians still remain the most under-represented ethnic group nationally in undergraduate education at both public and private colleges and universities. The exceptions are the 37 tribal colleges and universities located on or near American Indian reservations where American Indians are the dominant population, and at public institutions in states with large American Indian populations such as Arizona, New Mexico, California and Oklahoma.

The historic disproportionate academic failures of American Indians are a byproduct of the contemporary political, social and economic status of American Indians which is rooted in U.S. history and federal Indian policy. Federal Indian Law defined the special relationship of American Indians with the U.S. government and it is from this body of law which American Indian education policy evolved (Deloria, 1983). The 1928 Meriam Report (Szasz, 1999) and the report, *Indian Education: A National Tragedy – A National Challenge* (Special Subcommittee on Indian Education, 1969) documented the failure of the federal government to provide quality educational opportunities that enabled American Indians to achieve full academic potential. Education was a cornerstone of federal Indian policy in the U.S. government's assimilationist ideology. Reservation boarding schools was as mechanism implemented to assimilate American Indians into the dominant society. The forced separation of children from their families and tribal communities and placement in boarding schools was the initial step in this process. The curriculum of the boarding schools prepared students for menial labor rather than providing educational experiences that prepared them for more meaningful employment or for higher education (Wright, 1992; Lomawaima, 1994; & Adams, 1995), and thus to be productive and self-sufficient in the changing world in which they were to live. The current status of the education of American Indians reflects the long-term effect of the federal Indian education policy.

The National Center for Education Statistics data on the American Indian population indicates that poverty and unemployment rates are higher, and the median annual incomes are lower than for Whites, Blacks, and Hispanics (DeVoe & Darling-Churchill, 2008). Lower social and economic status affects the level of students' academic achievement. DeVoe and Darling-Churchill (2008) found that the poverty level of American Indians and Alaska Natives nationally

represents a larger percentage than that of Whites. They argue that the level of poverty has significant impact on “children’s access to quality learning opportunities and their potential to succeed in school.” (2008, p. 22). American Indian students remain the first-generation in their families to pursue undergraduate or graduate and professional education. The education level of parents and their knowledge about preparation for higher education affect the nature and quality of students’ academic preparation for college or graduate school. Additionally, financial capability and institutional factors such as the availability of financial aid determine whether American Indian students who aspire to pursue higher education gain access and achieve academic success (Astin & Oseguera 2005; Freeman & Fox2005).

Astin, Oseguera (2005) and Tienda (2001) refer to the “educational pipeline” metaphor in analyses of their studies on minority educational attainment. A breakdown or “major leak” in the pipeline is described as a primary factor attributed to the low baccalaureate degree attainment of American Indians and other racial and ethnic minority student populations (Astin & Oseguera, 2005). Similarly, Tienda (2001) identifies two “constrictions” in the pipeline at which different educational paths occur for Hispanic and Black student groups compared to Asian and White student populations. Tienda (2001) defines the first constriction as the point where students dropout or complete high school; the second construction reflects whether or not students transition to college. Although Tienda did not include the American Indian population in her examination of the educational pipeline to college, the data are useful in considering the points of constriction for Native students. American Indians share some similar social and economic demographics with Hispanic and Black populations, such as the level of academic preparation for higher education, that affect points in the educational pipeline where constrictions may occur and impact American Indian representation in higher education. Data on American Indians

(Astin & Oseguer, 2005) and related studies help substantiate factors that contribute to the continued lower rate of undergraduate and graduate degree attainment for American Indians compared to the general U.S. population (Fries, 1987; O'Brien, 1992; Pavel, Skinner, Farris, Cahalan, Tippeconnic, & Stein, 1998; Freeman & Fox, 2005).

The level of participation in undergraduate education and the low attainment of baccalaureate degrees have direct effect on the numbers of students that pursue graduate or professional education. A two-year study on American Indian students revealed that for every one hundred students matriculating to the ninth grade, sixty will attain a high school diploma, twenty will attend a four-year institution, and approximately three students will complete a bachelor's degree program (Tierney, 1992). More glaring is the under-representation of American Indians in graduate school, including in states with high concentrations of American Indians. In autumn 2009, American Indians represented the lowest graduate enrollment (0.8%) compared to the enrollment of Asian/Pacific Islanders (6.6%), Black/African Americans (13.4%), Hispanic/Latinos (8.4%), and Whites (70.8%), (Bell, 2010). The consequence is reflected in the paucity of master's, doctoral or professional degrees attained by American Indians (NCES 2008). The 2009 national data on doctoral recipients indicated that American Indians represented the smallest percentage (0.45) of earned doctorates compared to Asians (8.3), Blacks (6.89), Hispanics (5.79), and Whites (74.63), (National Science Foundation, 2010). The 0.45 percent of earned doctorates is not representative of the 1.7 percent of the 2010 American Indians and Alaska Native population in the United States (United States Census Bureau, 2010).

National Initiatives

On a national basis, public colleges and universities, and some private institutions, have enhanced their institution-wide initiatives aimed at diversifying their student bodies by increasing minority student populations that have historically been underrepresented in higher education. They revamped components of student support services programs to increase access, and developed strategies to recruit, retain and increase the graduation rates of underrepresented minority students. American Indian students are included in these initiatives.

Efforts have been made by national American Indian educational organizations and higher education institutions to improve educational opportunities for American Indians. College Horizons (<http://www.collegehorizons.org/>), a non-profit organization was created to address the education needs of American Indians. It offers a summer pre-college program which provides students information on how to prepare to pursue a college education. It also offers the Graduate Horizons (<http://www.graduatehorizons.org/>) program that targets American Indian students who have completed bachelor's and master's degree programs. This program informs students about opportunities in graduate and professional programs, the nature and expectations of graduate school, and assists with their applications to master's or doctoral programs. Inherent in the purposes of College Horizons and Graduate Horizons is the idea of generating in American Indian students an interest and awareness about the possibilities of going to college or to graduate school. Public and private colleges and universities around the country are partners in the higher education initiatives.

The American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES) supports and provides educational programs to increase American Indian representation in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields. AISES initiatives are geared to high school,

undergraduate and graduate students, as well as professionals in STEM fields (<http://www.aises.org/>). The Society for the Advancement of Latinos/Chicanos and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS) is another national organization of scientists from colleges, universities and industry that promotes and supports initiatives to increase the representation of Hispanics and American Indians in graduate education and leaders in science fields (<http://www.sacnas.org/>).

The W. K. Kellogg Foundation, a major philanthropic organization, was a leader in launching a National Native American Education Initiative in the mid-1990s aimed at strengthening the capacity of tribally-based higher education institutions and American Indian non-profit education organizations, and promoting partnerships between these entities and public and private higher education institutions. The W. K. Kellogg Foundation's initiative funded approximately 30 tribally controlled colleges and universities located on and off American Indian reservations. The intent of the initiative was to build institutional capacity in Native higher education, support the partnership of tribal institutions with mainstream institutions and non-profit educational organizations for culture and language preservation, land and natural resources preservation, social and economic community development, and inter-institutional access and academic success at both undergraduate and graduate levels, and to support strategies such as technical assistance and program evaluation (Benham & Stein, 2003).

Ivy League institutions such as Dartmouth College, Harvard University, and leading west coast universities such as Stanford University have long-established national recruitment programs that target high academically achieving American Indian students for undergraduate and graduate education. The American Indian programs were created by these institutions to

provide American Indian students culturally sensitive academic and student support services, and to recruit, retain and increase Native student graduation rates.

Some American Indian tribes have resources—both personnel and monetary, devoted to higher education programs while others may have little or no such resources available. Tribes that have established higher education programs provide their members with educational opportunities through academic counseling and financial support for undergraduate and/or graduate education. Since the late 1960s (Stein, 1990), several tribes established tribally-based colleges and universities to provide higher education opportunities for their tribal members. These higher education institutions also serve the educational needs of their tribal members who are place-bound. Addressing the issues of American Indian access and success in higher education requires the efforts of Indian tribes through their education programs and through partnerships with colleges and universities. Collective efforts can be directed at strengthening areas in which progress has been made and to improve those areas that require continued attention.

University of Washington

Some American Indian tribes in Arizona, Montana and Washington have taken initiatives to develop closer relationships and partnerships with public institutions directed at improving the education of their tribal members and to address areas of need that require advanced training and education. For example, the Office of Minority Affairs and Diversity (OMAD) at the University of Washington has established outreach and student support services programs that focus on recruiting and retaining a diverse undergraduate student population. The outreach programs include the Indian Education Programs in state school districts and tribal education programs. In

1993, OMAD created a Native American Advisory Board (NAAB) and its membership is comprised of representatives from various Washington tribes and American Indian organizations (<http://depts.washington.edu/omad/>). The NAAB serves in an advisory capacity on higher education issues to the Vice President for Minority Affairs and Vice Provost for Diversity. In 2007, the University of Washington administration and Board of Regents in Seattle, in cooperation with the Washington tribes, initiated a Tribal Leadership Summit. Since that time, the Summit has brought together the University leadership and tribal leaders to engage in discussions and to collaborate on education and research initiatives and issues. Further, in 2007, the Intellectual House, the longhouse style project, was initiated through collaborative fund raising efforts of the University of Washington administration, Washington State tribal governments, private donors, and students, faculty and staff. The Intellectual House will be an educational and cultural facility to support the University's recruitment and retention of American Indian students, and will serve as a gathering place for Native and non-Native communities.

Purpose of the Study

What are the factors that contribute to the persistence and academic success of American Indian students in doctoral programs at a Research Extensive University? It is not unusual that American Indian students find they are the only Native students in a doctoral program. Four of the ten students in this study were the only American Indians in their doctoral programs. The Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) disciplines are ones in which Native student representation is minimal if non-existent. For example, in 2001 national data on earned doctorates, American Indians represented 0.3 percent of doctorates earned in science and engineering disciplines compared to 5 percent for both Black and Hispanic populations (National

Science Foundation, 2004). Further, 2005-2006 data indicated that “only 3 percent of doctoral degrees awarded to American Indians/Alaska Natives were in the field of engineering and engineering related technologies compared to 12 percent of the total population” (DeVoe & Darling-Churchill, 2008, p. 140). Two doctoral students in this study were in STEM programs. Council of Graduate Schools’ national data on graduate enrollment indicated that in Fall 2008 American Indian graduate student enrollment was predominantly in education, business and other social sciences fields (Bell, 2010).

While a need exists to increase the participation of American Indians in all facets of graduate education, particularly in disciplines where representation has long been lacking, there is also a need for higher educational institutional leaders and policy makers to understand the nature of American Indians students’ experiences in graduate school. This study aims to expand the knowledge in understanding the factors that are critical to making a difference in American Indian students' success in doctoral programs.

Research Questions

The research questions to be explored in the study are the following which formed the key issues students addressed for this dissertation.

1. What factors, people or experiences, have motivated or influenced your consideration to pursue graduate school, and subsequently doctoral education?
2. What factors determined your choice of university to attend and your program of study?
3. How does tribal culture and identity influence your intellectual development? How is it manifested in your scholarly work?

4. What were the factors or conditions that made a difference or presented challenges (academic, cultural, economic, psychological or spiritual) in your progress toward completing your doctoral program?

Significance of the Study

A paucity of research exists on the experiences of American Indians in doctoral education. The findings of this research study are of significance at several institutional levels. First, Native students are generally a small component of the graduate student population at the University of Washington where this study occurred. They represent a microcosm of the national status of American Indian student enrollment in graduate education. The small number of students and institutional structures contribute to making students virtually invisible in graduate programs, creating the potential for their needs to be overlooked. Additional research data on this graduate population may serve to increase their visibility at the institutional level about the issues and challenges they face in their development as researchers and scholars. If institutions do not understand the factors or conditions that lead to American Indian students successfully completing doctoral programs, the lack of knowledge will impede achieving successful outcomes of recruitment and retention and graduation efforts, and result in the ineffective use of resources.

Second, the study is consistent with the institution's policies and diversity initiatives to increase the participation of underrepresented students of color in graduate education. This study may be informative for institutional leaders and policymakers by providing insight about how well it is serving American Indians in advanced education and training in the state and region.

Third, this study may be informative for faculty who teach and mentor American Indian students, and to be more effective in helping students in their professional development. It will contribute to faculty better understanding the factors or conditions conducive to American Indian students' progress toward degree completion in doctoral programs, the various challenges students encounter as they have described in their personal narratives, and the importance that cultural identity plays in maintaining cultural integrity in their research and scholarship. It may provide insight about the needs of Native students for practitioners who provide student academic and support services in graduate programs.

Fourth, nation building of American Indian tribes in the twenty-first century argue for the necessity for educated and trained Native people to build capacity for leadership and other essential roles within and outside their communities. The state's American Indian tribes have had to adapt to significant social and political changes before and since removal from homelands to reservations in the 1800s, and subsequently the 1950s-1960s relocation to cities for economic reasons. The future social, economic and political well-being of individuals and tribal communities require achieving education beyond high school diplomas. Tribal members with advanced education are critical to the economic development in which many tribes are immersed in their self-determination efforts to achieve self-sufficiency and to perpetuate their languages and cultural traditions. A major characteristic reflected in the personal narratives of doctoral students in this study is the idea of "giving back" and the desire to contribute to the nation building capacity of respective tribes or communities. This aspect is reflected in the nature of their chosen graduate programs, and their areas of research and future professional goals.

The following four chapters include the literature review that supports the study, the research methodology, findings of the study, conclusion, and implications of the study. Chapter

Two examines the literature that gives a historical perspective on the development of federal Indian education policy, its implications for American Indian education, and gives a perspective on American Indian doctoral students within contemporary higher education.

Chapter Three discusses the research methodology involved in data gathering and its analysis. Chapter Four focuses on the research questions and related personal narratives of students in response to the research questions. Chapter Five, the final chapter, provides a concluding summary of the study's findings, its limitations, and implications for future research on the American Indian doctoral experience, and conclusions of the study.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The literature review for this study is drawn from three areas: (1) a historical perspective on the education of American Indians and development of Indian education policy, (2) American Indians in contemporary higher education—the relationship of Indian education policy to current issues of American Indian participation, participation in higher education and degree attainment, and (3) American Indian and minority students in doctoral education. Before discussing the literature on the education of American Indians that support this research study, it is necessary to define the term used to describe the student population which is the focus of this study.

Definition of Terms

American Indians are described as “a unique branch of the human family possessing a wide variety of cultural expressions, origins, and traditions” (Deloria & Lytle, 1983, p. 1). The backgrounds and identities of doctoral students in this research study reflect the diversity in the description, each having affiliation with one or more American Indian tribes and some having a mix of non-Indian ancestry. Deloria and Lytle further noted, “many of the customs and traditions of the past persist in the minds and lives of Indians today and have been jealously preserved over several centuries of contact with non-Indians as the last remaining values that distinguish Indians from the people around them” (1983, p. 1). Harmon (2004) describes Indian identity as the following, “Individuals consider themselves Indians when they believe they have values, symbols, interests, and a history in common with Indians. If they demonstrate that belief in ways that most other people acknowledge as Indian, they are Indian, at least for some purposes” (p. 14).

Students' identities and backgrounds encompass the complexities of American Indian people who occupy a unique place within contemporary American society. Unlike other ethnic groups, the 565 federally recognized tribes have a unique legal and political status with the U.S. government. This unique status was established through treaties in late 1700s and U.S. Supreme Court cases in the early 1800s that defined the relationship of American Indian nations with the federal government, a government-to-government relationship. Despite the existence of over 500 tribes, a stereotype is that American Indians share the same culture in practices, beliefs, values, and other characteristics and identity. Whether an individual's identity and experience is grounded in the cultural values, practices and traditions of their respective tribal nations and whether their backgrounds are reservation-based, in small rural, urban or suburban communities, American Indians share some common threads about their sense of "being Indian." These differences and commonalities are reflected in the personal narratives of doctoral students in this study, their experiences in academia, and the similar academic challenges they have encountered as developing scholars and researchers.

Who are American Indians? Who is defined as American Indian and individuals who self-identify as American Indian has generated serious debate within and outside tribal communities. The debate is based on the idea that it is the right of tribal nations to determine their respective tribal members. Ethnic identify fraud, the appropriation of tribal identity by non-Indian people, has added to the debate. It is an issue in higher education whereby students, faculty or staff, self-identify as American Indian to gain admission to colleges and universities, for student funding, or for employment purposes. These individuals generally have no connection to any Native tribe or communities and know virtually nothing about the tribal identity they claim. In addition, there are a number of tribes in the United States who do not

have federal recognition. Non-federally recognized tribes are identified as either being recognized by the states in which they are located or groups that self-identify as American Indian tribes but do not have either federal or state recognition (United States Government Accounting Office, 2012).

The definition of American Indian used by the U.S. Department of Education is applied in this study. The Department defines American Indians as, “Anyone having origins in any of the original peoples of North American (including Central America) and maintaining cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community recognition, including federally and state recognized tribes” (DeVoe & Darling-Churchill, 2008, p. 3). The term “American Indian” includes Alaska Natives and is used interchangeably with “Native”, “Indian” or “Indigenous” throughout discussion of this research study.

Historical Perspective: The Education of American Indians

Fundamental to understanding aspects of American Indian people in contemporary American society and their participation in higher education in particular, is the appreciation of the history of American Indian experiences. The education of American Indians is an important piece of U.S. history for the way it was used by the federal government to address the perceived “Indian problem.” Federal policy on the education of American Indians represented a systematic transformative approach to acculturate and assimilate Indian children into the dominant society (Ellis, 1996). The implementation of federal education policy had an impact on every facet of American Indian lives. It provides an important perspective for this research study on American Indian doctoral students. Knowledge of the history of Indian education in the U.S. lends an interesting backdrop to view American Indian students pursuing doctoral education within a

public Research Extensive University. The intellectual bases of contemporary higher education institutions remain Western dominated. The theoretical and methodological frameworks inherent in students' chosen disciplines may not adhere to their ways of knowing and new paradigms of research or scholarship that students bring with their scholarly perspectives and identities as American Indians. American Indian students continually challenge, claim and define their intellectual space within the academy drawing upon Indigenous knowledge in their development as researchers and scholars.

Prior to Western European contact, tribal societies had their distinctive concepts of education that were grounded in their respective tribal or kinship cultures (Fries, 1987). Similar to other people in the world, indigenous cultures had established educational practices and processes through which certain knowledge was conveyed to their youth and at particular points of their maturity. An education process or *system* within indigenous cultures involved "parents, extended families, and communities" (Lomawaima, 1999, p. 5). Oral tradition characterized the practice and process through which indigenous knowledge was passed to the next generation. Language, traditions, practices, and values were transmitted from one generation to the succeeding one and served to perpetuate indigenous cultures (Kickingbird, 1975; Fries, 1987; Lomawaima, 1999). Indigenous education occurred in "structured and age- or ability-graded curricula developed by social and ceremonial groups such as kivas (Pueblo), longhouses (Northwest Coast), kin-defined clans (nearly everywhere), social classes (such as the Yurok Talth), women's or men's societies (Plains), or the Midewiwin lodge (Great Lakes Anishinabeg)" (Lomawaima, 2004, p. 425). Each educational process involved a progression of learning taught by community based 'scholars' who were recognized and highly respected for their knowledge within a social or ceremonial group. These scholars perpetuated Indigenous

societies' by sustaining traditional educational practices and knowledge. Access to knowledge within tribal communities, particularly esoteric knowledge, was not equal for all tribal members and was restricted to particular individuals due to the nature of certain knowledge. Lomawaima noted, "whether by heritage and/or aptitude, certain students may be singled out for instruction; certain bodies of skills or knowledge are transmitted only within select groups . . ." (2004, p. 425.)

Colonization of indigenous peoples that ensued following contact, and the subsequent development and implementation of federal Indian education policy that forcibly removed children from their families and communities, disrupted traditional education practices and processes of parents, families, and tribal communities. The transformative educational approach was a blatant reflection of European colonist's sense of "cultural and racial superiority" (Alfred, 2004, p. 463) while those of tribal societies were assumed to be inferior—in essence, what colonists valued and believed to be civilized versus uncivilized societies (Adams, 1995).

A change in federal control over the nature and process of education for Indian people occurred in the early 1800s when the U.S. Congress approved a monetary appropriation known as the "Civilization Fund" to subsidize the education of Indian children by religious groups (Lomawaima, 2004, p. 426). The congressional action sanctioned religious organizations as agents of the federal government in the education of Indian people. It translated into the loss of parental and tribal communities' power and control over education (Special Subcommittee on Indian Education, 1969; Lomawaima, 1999). It was not until the mid-twentieth century that a change occurred when Indian tribes began to assert the idea of self-determination and to reclaim their power to determine and control the education of their children (Lomawaima, 1999).

American Indian education history is characterized by different periods descriptive of federal Indian policy and reflected federal strategy to use education as a mechanism in its effort to assimilate Indian people into the dominant society. The mission, treaty, allotment, new deal, termination, the 1960s and 1970s were periods during which significant federal policy changes determined the course of Indian education (Senate Subcommittee on Indian Education, 1969). Federal policy shifts mirrored the national political climate and the nature of the federal governments' relationship with American Indian tribes. According to Szasz the Indian Bureau's Education Division "served as a barometer" (1999, p. 4) for federal Indian policy. When national federal policy changed direction, so did Indian education policy. Different approaches were undertaken in the education of Indian youth during these various federal policy periods.

The Mission Period

Mission schools were the earliest form of education established by religious denominations to educate Indian youth. Protestant and Catholic groups dominated formal education of Indian people in the mission period with assimilation and religious conversion as the driving forces of their efforts. Religious groups in the mid-1500s and colonial Anglicans in the 1600s viewed education as the best mechanism in achieving their aim to "Christianize and civilize the natives" (Szasz, 1988, p. 5). Native spiritual beliefs were demonized and religious conversion was considered the only path to saving Native peoples' souls. Early Indian converts to Christianity served as instruments to influence others to be converted.

Jesuits in 1568 established the first mission school in Florida to educate children of local tribes (Szasz, 1988). Overall, mission schools had minimal impact on the education of Indian people. The off-reservation boarding schools, and subsequently, public schools off reservations

served larger Indian student populations. Mission schools remained alternatives to schooling Indian students for a significant period due to strong support from both religious organizations and local tribes. School officials and some tribes considered them to be better alternatives to off-reservation boarding schools because children could remain at home (Szasz, 1999). Indian converts to Christianity saw value in the religious component of education that mission schools provided for their children.

The family and the church were the institutional foundation of colonial life. Religious organizations maintained significant influence and involvement in education. Protestants of the Virginia colonies followed practices of Catholic groups in devising opportunities for education and religious conversion to Native people (Szasz, 1988). Virginia colony Anglican clergy, merchants and the government established two schools, the College at Henrico and the East Indian School, a preparatory school for the College (Szasz, 1988). These schools did not prosper in Indian student enrollments although a few students attended the schools. Tribes resisted the colonists' formal education efforts, preferring to maintain their forms of education and thus continue their traditional ways of life. Tribal resistance, however, failed to deter colonists' efforts. It instead propelled colonists to seek other alternatives to educate Indian youth.

Puritan clergy and businesses joined the assimilation movement by taking a boarding school approach to educate Indian tribal youth. This model involved removal of children to schools for religious and industrial education training. An "outing system" (Special Subcommittee on Indian education, 1969, p. 141) placed children in Puritan homes during breaks in the academic year, a strategy intended to prevent students from reuniting with their families and the possibility of the children reverting to their tribes' traditional ways of life. The boarding

school education model returned two hundred years later and, with modifications, was implemented as the solution to assimilate Native people within mainstream American society.

Tribes located on the East Coast were the impetus for the creation of higher education institutions in colonial America. Compared to other regions of the country the largest number of schools to educate Indian people was in New England (Szasz, 1988). The Charters of Harvard College, established in 1650, the College of William and Mary in 1693, and Dartmouth College in 1756 (Wright & Tierney, 1991) stipulated that their intent was to educate the “children of the “infidels” (Wright, 1988, p. 3). Similar to earlier educational initiatives, remaking Indian people into idealized images of themselves and conversion to Christianity drove colonists’ efforts to create the colleges. Colonists raised funds locally and abroad for the colleges under the guise of educating Indian people, but their efforts failed to accomplish the colleges’ missions. An examination of institutional histories revealed that only a few Indian students graduated from the colleges. Children of colonists and subsequent generations of Whites were the largest beneficiaries of education at the institutions.

Treaty Making Period

Treaty making began in the 1700s and was the genesis for the federal-tribal relationship. It was an alien concept to Indian tribes and was used to take advantage of the tribes in relinquishing tribal lands. The treaty making process involved the cession of tribal land to the federal government in exchange for “financial consideration” (Ryan, 1982, p. 423), with provisions for education and to maintain accustomed rights such as hunting and fishing. Acquiring title to the homelands of tribal nations accomplished the federal government’s primary

intent. The federal government's treaty making with Indian nations thus tied education policy closely to land policy.

Federal involvement in Indian education began with education provisions stipulated in treaties with Indian tribes (Ryan, 1982). The 1778 treaty of the Delaware tribe with the Federal Government established the "legal interaction between tribes and the Federal Government" (Kickingbird, 1975, p. 5). Treaties, for example, with the Oneida, Tuscarora, and Stockbridge Nations in 1794, contained clauses that articulated specific or general education provisions for the tribes' youth (Special Subcommittee on Indian Education, 1969; Kickingbird, 1975). A congressional appropriation in 1819 created the "civilization fund" (Szasz, 1999, p. 8) for the purpose of educating the youth of tribal nations. It confirmed the basis of the federal-tribal relationship and demonstrated federal responsibility for Indian education (Ryan, 1982). Federal allocations from the civilization fund were directed to Protestant groups to provide the schooling for Indian children.

Allotment Period

The 1870 Allotment Act divided tribal land into individual parcels of land which reformers considered a step toward solving the Indian problem and the transformation of Indian people within American society (Fixico, 2002). The policy negatively impacted tribes through fraud and in the loss of land, creating further poverty and decline of tribal reservation communities.

An approach to schooling in the 1860s was the elementary level reservation day school. Theoretically, the idea of day schools was intended to capture parental and community support by establishing schools located geographically close to reservations. It was assumed the

assimilation of Indian students would occur in the interaction with White communities and that their parents would be influenced by their experiences (Adams, 1995). Reservation day schools enabled Indian children to remain with their families but did little to achieve mainstream cultural assimilation.

Two types of boarding schools, the reservation and the off-reservation school, emerged in the late 1800s offering what was considered to be new approaches to educating Native people. Boarding schools represented an important change from the approach of education being grounded in religion with the transition to a utilitarian educational concept of industrial training schools (Ryan, 1982). Reservation boarding schools became the major education model in the 1870s. The curriculum consisted of vocational training and instruction in basic academic subjects as English and mathematics. Adams (1995) described the institutions as “industrial work schools” (p. 30) which were designed to be self-sustaining. Thus, the industrial training model was designed to utilize student labor for maintenance of the schools. Students’ days were comprised of time in the classroom with the remaining hours spent laboring in some aspect of school maintenance.

The off-reservation boarding school system, established in 1879, went beyond the reservation-based boarding school model. Carlisle Indian School, which was located in Pennsylvania, was the first off-reservation boarding school founded by Richard Henry Pratt, a U. S. Army Captain. Pratt believed his model was the solution to the prevailing ‘Indian problem’ (Adams, 1995). He believed that by removing children from their families and tribal communities several goals would be accomplished. It would give total institutional control over students, facilitate and integrate students into the mainstream culture through placements in the homes of Whites during breaks between academic years, eliminate all remnants of respective

tribal influence, and result in the assimilation of students by altering their individual tribal identities (Adams, 1995; Szasz, 1999; Special Subcommittee on Indian education, 1969).

The off-reservations boarding school system flourished with extensive federal funding directed toward establishing twenty-five schools, primarily in the Western region of the country by 1902 (Adams, 1995). While policymakers supported the location of schools away from reservation communities, some argued that schools should be geographically located close to reservations to enable parental visits and to keep students connected to families and tribal communities. These ideas ran counter to the off-reservation boarding school concept. Reservation and off-reservations boarding school enrollments increased significantly by 1900, with approximately 18,000 students enrolled. Off-reservation boarding school enrollment grew to approximately fifty percent of all student enrollments in schools by 1920 (Adams, 1995). Education in these institutions failed students in several ways: the industrial training curriculum did not prepare students academically for higher education; students were unable to utilize the training and skills gained when they returned to the reservations; and students were not prepared to seek employment in White communities, except the young men as menial laborers or the young women as domestic workers (Adams, 1995; Szasz, 1999).

Indian tribes faced a major blow in 1887 with a change in federal Indian policy. Congress passed the General Allotment Act, known also as the Dawes Severalty Act, which mandated the individual allotment of land to tribal members (Deloria & Lytle, 1983; Special Subcommittee on Indian Education, 1969). Erosion of the land base through individual allotments impacted Indian tribes in two ways: the loss of land destroyed the tribes' economic base and it disrupted the organization of tribal communities and family structures (Special Subcommittee on Indian Education, 1969). The Dawes Act represented another example of the

close association of federal land policy with education policy. Adding insult to injury, federal authorities used the money generated from tribal lands to pay for the removal of Native children from their families and communities and placed in off-reservation boarding schools that remained in existence. Off-reservation boarding school attendance was mandatory and food and supplies were withheld from families that refused to send their children to these schools (1969). The alternative left no room for parental resistance.

Meriam Report and New Deal Period

Reform of American Indian Affairs marked the focus of federal policy in the 1920s. The nature of change in federal policy termed this period the Indian New Deal (Szasz, 1999). Critics of the federal government's treatment of Indian tribes, the impact of the Allotment Act to tribes, and education policy pushed for reform in Indian affairs. In her analysis of policy during this period Szasz (1999) describes the impact that examination of the Indian Bureau had on change in federal Indian policy, particularly in education.

The Brookings Institute was commissioned to examine the Indian Bureau to determine the social and economic status of American Indian tribes. Lewis Meriam, then at the University of Chicago, directed the study (Szasz, 1999). Results of the 1928 Meriam Report called for a "change in point of view" (Special Subcommittee on Indian Education, 1969, p. 13) in Indian affairs. It influenced change in federal Indian policy (Adams, 1995; Szasz, 1999). The Meriam Report was an indictment of the Indian Bureau in its responsibility to American Indian tribes, noting the lack of tribal participation in its own affairs, and the poor social and health status of tribes. It called for the reform of off-reservation industrial boarding schools, the development of culturally specific curricula in the schools, the establishment of community-based education

programs, particularly day schools, so that Indian children could remain at home. Szasz (1999) notes that during this period progressive education influenced Indian education policy.

Reformers involved in the progressive education movement advocated for community day schools (Special Subcommittee on Indian Affairs, 1969). The community day school concept was considered congruent with the pedagogical approach of progressive education and a way to advance the education of Indian youth (Adams, 1995; Szasz 1999). The Indian Bureau Education Director, a supporter of progressive education implemented “cross-cultural education” (Szasz, 1999, p. 50) within the curricula of reservation day schools. Cross-cultural education embraced both Native and White cultural values, an approach perceived to be needed in education of Indian students.

The Meriam Report led to Congress passing the 1934 Indian Reorganization Act, known also as the Wheeler-Howard Act, which brought to an end the federal allotment policy (Deloria & Lytle, 1983). Indian tribes gained more control of self-governance of their affairs with this policy change. Positive gains by tribes in this period were threatened in the following decade when Congress shifted policy direction and advocated for termination of the federal status of Indian tribes.

By the 1930s Indian student enrollment increased in public school systems as a result of federal Indian policy. Congress passed the Johnson-O’Malley (JOM) Act in 1934 (Szasz, 1999) which authorized the Bureau of Indian affairs to contract with public school systems in states where significant numbers of American Indian children were enrolled. Passage of the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 (Cowger, 1999) provided American Indian tribes involvement in the education of their children in public schools. The federal government compensated public school systems and states for increased Indian student enrollments resulting from Indian

education policy changes. The intent of Johnson-O'Malley was to supplement regular state funding to schools and to address the unique needs of Indian children in the areas of academic support, tutoring, and cultural and extracurricular activities. It allowed parent participation and control through the development of parent education committees, and required that education committees articulate a program plan to meet students' needs. Funding through the Johnson-O'Malley legislation continues to support education programs in public schools where a significant number of American Indian students are enrolled.

Termination Period

A change in the political climate on federal Indian policy gradually increased after World War II and continued into the 1950's. The Hoover Commission, in its review of federal programs in 1948, made a recommendation that "the responsibility for Indians be transferred to the states" (Deloria & Lytle, 1983, p. 16). Under the Eisenhower administration the Congress reversed its stance from support of a more enlightened Indian policy to that of terminating all federal responsibility for Indian tribes (Special Subcommittee on Indian Education, 1969). Decades of dealing with federal Indian assimilation policy left the tribes without strong social and economic bases. Tribes understood that termination would present serious implications for their communities. Policy on Indian education, in concert with the prevailing sentiment on Indian policy, shifted from a more progressive approach from "cross cultural education, which emphasized both Indian and non-Indian values systems, to education for assimilation" (Szasz, 1999, p.106). The assumption underlying this change was that Native people would leave the reservation and migrate to urban areas. As a result, a number of reservation and off-reservation boarding schools and community day schools were eliminated during this period.

Tribes were cognizant of the need for political action in the fight to maintain federal status. Tribal leadership emerged in the form of the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) which was founded in 1944 (Cowger, 1999). This organization was instrumental in turning the tide in convincing congress to forego initiatives aimed at terminating federal responsibility. It gave them impetus to advocate for and achieve policy changes that supported initiatives for community and economic development. The NCAI remains an advocate on Indian Affairs with Congress and the President.

The 1960s

Dramatic changes occurred in the 1960s in education reform with mainstream America and in Indian education policy. The political climate changed with Lyndon Johnson, then President, setting a different tone from the previous administration with the New Frontier and Great Society programs (Deloria & Lytle, 1983). President Johnson rejected termination policy and advocated for tribal self-determination. Federal Indian policy changed direction with a focus on economic development of reservation resources and support for higher education in the form of scholarships. Self-determination policy upheld tribal value systems and sovereignty in self-governance.

Federal policy changes resulted in a dramatic increase from 1930 to 1970 in American Indian students attending public schools. In 1930, of the total student enrollment, 39 percent of Indian children were enrolled in federal schools compared to 53 percent that were enrolled in public schools (Szasz, 1999, p. 89) Indian student enrollment in public schools in 1930 was 38,000 while in 1970 the enrollment increased to 129,000—representing 65 percent of Indian children in public school systems (1999, p. 89).

In August, 1967, the Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare authorized a national study to “examine, investigate, and make a complete study of any and all matters pertaining to the education of Indian children” (Special Subcommittee on Indian Education, 1969, p. 1). The report, *Indian Education: A National Tragedy – A National Challenge*, chaired by Senator Edward M. Kennedy, documented the history and federal policy on Indian education. Similar to the Merriam Report of 1928, the report described the “failure of major proportions” of the federal policies to education American Indian children (Special Subcommittee on Indian Education, 1969, p. xi). The subcommittee made a significant number of recommendations to change federal policy at all levels dealing with American Indian affairs. A major point was to increase tribal oversight of education programs.

Two major pieces of education legislation were passed by Congress that benefited Indian tribes in the 1960s. The Economic Opportunity Act gave tribes control over education programs and the Elementary and Secondary Education in 1965 provided funding to improve the education of Native children (Special Subcommittee on Indian Education, 1969). The preschool program, Head Start, which has significantly benefited American Indian children, was an important outcome of the Economic Opportunity Act. Change in the national political climate in the 1960s was the impetus for American Indians to pursue self-determination and which had particular impact in higher education. Four decades later, self-determination remains a driving force in national Indian affairs including higher education.

The 1970s

Federal legislation passed in the 1970s reflected yet another change in federal policy. Congress passed the 1972 Indian Education Act, an outcome of the Special Subcommittee on

Indian Education Report, which moved toward local control of education. The legislation provided additional support for existing education efforts in teacher preparation, higher education fellowships, and research in the education of American Indians (Croft, 1977; Deloria & Lytle, 1983). The Office of Indian Education, under the Department of Education, was established under the act. The National Advisory Council for Indian Education (NACIE) was another outcome of the Indian Education Act, which was established to advise Congress on national Indian education policy (<http://www.nacie-ed.org/>).

The National Indian Education Association (NIEA), an organization established in 1970, is the oldest American Indian education organization created to advocate the need for culturally sensitive educational opportunities, promote the educational achievement of Indian students, and cultural preservation for tribes on a national basis (<http://www.niea.org/>). The primary efforts of the organization has been directed to K-12 education of American Indians in public and tribally operated schools.

Tribally Controlled Colleges

Colleges and universities created early in American history for the purpose of educating Native people failed to achieve their missions due in part to tribal resistance. Tribes were cognizant the institutions were not designed to meet their educational needs. American Indian tribes long recognized the failure in many ways of American public and private higher education institutions to educate Native people. Olivas (1981) described the creation of these institutions as “majority dominance, paternalism, religious evangelism, and neglect” (p. 219). The idea of an American Indian higher education institution was raised at various times during the 1900s by

individuals whose core belief was that Native people should control such institutions (Stein, 2003). It was not until the 1960s that the idea came to fruition.

Self-determination manifested in the tribal college movement in the late 1960s, continued into the 1970s and the following decades. In 1968, a significant turn in American Indian higher education was the founding of the first tribally controlled college on the Navajo Reservation through Public Law 92-189, the Navajo Community College Act (Stein, 1990; Hill, 1995). Tribal educators and leadership approached the formation of a tribal institution to be a “treaty right and a part of the federal trust relationship” (Stein, 1990, p. 2). Creation of the college gave the tribe local control over the education of its tribal members. Central to the college’s mission was the perpetuation of its culture, language and history. The Navajo Nation’s tribal members perceived the college to be a mechanism toward ending the poverty that prevailed for decades throughout the reservation. The college name was subsequently changes and is known today as Dine’ College.

As of 2006, thirty-two accredited tribal colleges and universities existed primarily in the Western and Midwestern states aside from one in Alaska, and with all on or near American Indian reservations, with an enrollment of approximately 17,300 students (DeVoe & Darling-Churchill, 2008). Tribal colleges and universities are community based institutions that provide access to higher education to respective tribal populations, particularly to those students who are location bound. Tribal colleges’ curricula meet the educational needs of their communities by being grounded in indigenous knowledge and “culturally sensitive pedagogy” (Institute for Higher Education Policy, 2006). The twenty-five two-year institutions offer associate degree programs while seven of the institutions offer bachelor’s degrees and/or master’s degree programs in various disciplines (DeVoe & Darling, Churchill, 2008).

Since their inception, enrollment at tribal colleges and universities has continued to grow. The institutions experienced a significant growth in enrollment of 23 percent from the years 2001 to 2006 (DeVoe & Darling-Churchill, 2008). During those years, DeVoe and Darling-Churchill noted that enrollment at the tribal institutions grew more rapidly than the enrollment of the American Indian students in higher education nationally (2008). Enrollments at tribal institutions reflect the predominance of students over 25 years of age with many who are first-generation. Results of a 2005 survey of alumni revealed that seventy percent of scholarship recipients were non-traditional students, which is consistent with the tribal institutions' enrollment data (Institute for Higher Education Policy, 2007).

The majority of tribal colleges and universities are two-year institutions. The academic mission of the tribal institutions is to prepare students to continue their higher education beyond two years. To meet increased needs of tribes in their self-determination efforts in areas such as economic development, a need exists for the advanced education of tribal members. Tribal institutional alumni data indicated that 86 percent continued their education upon graduation by pursuing a baccalaureate degree and 17 percent matriculated to master's programs (Institute for Higher Education Policy, 2007). Further, compared to mainstream community colleges, a larger percentage (56%) of tribal college graduates transfer to four-year public or private higher education institutions (Institute for Higher Education Policy, 2007). This data speaks to the need for mainstream public and private colleges and universities, where tribal college graduates and other American Indian students seek advanced education, to provide educational environments conducive to advancing the educational success of the students.

A factor that is overlooked about the success of education in tribal colleges is the importance of how they prepare students for their transition to mainstream institutions. The

mission of the institutions' educational curricula is to prepare students academically and to perpetuate respective tribal languages and thus their cultures and traditions. In this systematic process, students are equipped with the knowledge and training that meets their educational needs while the colleges and universities meet their educational missions and visions. The survey data discussed in the proceeding section reflects the success of the tribal colleges and universities in the academic preparation of students to thrive internally and to move externally to mainstream public and private institutions. Students' accumulation of social capital and cultural in their educational experiences quipped them with the knowledge and expectations that were essential for their transition to mainstream colleges and universities. Social and cultural capital are two forms of Bourdieu's theory of social reproduction (Dumais, 2002) which are lenses generally used in examining inequality in education. In this context, cultural capital is defined as the class-based intergenerational transmission of particular knowledge that may have significant effect on an individual's educational success. Social capital refers to the social relationships an individual may develop in a social network, such as an educational institution, and from which support from key individuals or knowledge about resources may be gained (Stanton-Salazar & Dornbusch, 1995). Social and cultural capital is a key factor to consider for students in tribal colleges and universities and their transition to mainstream institutions, particularly due to a significant number of the students being the first-generation in their families to seek higher education.

In Chapter 4, Bourdieu's notion of social and cultural capital (1977) is discussed in the examination of American Indian doctoral students' experiences about their decisions to pursue graduate education.

Summary and Conclusion

Reflecting on the history of American Indian education and exploring the American Indian student experience in contemporary higher education indicates that issues of a similar nature still remain. In higher education, the generation of new knowledge is the underpinning of doctoral education. Western European epistemology formed the foundation of teaching and research in development of higher education the United States, and it continues to be reflected in research and scholarship protocols and practices across disciplines. This structural and intellectual framework has acted as the “gatekeeper” of knowledge and remains a barrier in many disciplines to valuing and respecting other kinds of knowledge, including indigenous knowledge. The federal government’s creation of residential boarding schools was designed to rid American Indian children of their tribal identities—the languages, values, cultural practices and traditions, represents early evidence that the knowledge of indigenous peoples was not highly valued and was perceived to be inferior. Indigenous scholars argue that this idea continues in contemporary academia and may be culturally conflicting for American Indian doctoral students whose professional goal may be in academia, but whose identities are grounded in their tribal cultures, beliefs and practices, and who draw their knowledge from those influences and aspects of their lives. The issues that surround the concept of knowledge—whose knowledge is privileged, what forms the basis of knowledge, is a major challenge that American Indian and other indigenous students face in doctoral study, considering that indigenous knowledge has been historically marginalized in academia. Battiste (2002) argues that higher education is “a highly contested terrain.”

How does indigenous knowledge inform students’ intellectual exploration and subsequent research and scholarship? Brayboy and Castagno (2008) argue that the knowledge of

Native people is “rooted in their experiences and reflect their own, internal belief systems” (p. 790). Native doctoral students’ express these ideas in the theoretical and methodological approaches to their research and scholarship. Cultural identity as Native people is manifested in students’ scholarly endeavors and represents subtle resistance to the status quo of academe.

Students draw upon an Indigenous-based body of scholarship which is a growing field of inquiry presenting an alternative theoretical and methodological perspective to the Eurocentric concept of research and scholarship. In *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (1999), the seminal work of Linda Tuhiwai Smith, she examines and challenges the historical, political and cultural bases of Western research paradigms and promotes the validation of Indigenous perspectives in conducting research with and in Native communities and externally. She views research “as a significant site of struggle between the interests and ways of knowing of the West and the interests and ways of resisting of the Other,” (1999, p. 2) the Other being Indigenous people. Taiaiake Alfred (2004) similarly asserts that academia is intellectually “contentious ground” (p. 92) for Indigenous people, and further argues, “We need to turn away from defining our purpose and methods by Western Academic standards and be accountable to our cultural heritage and to our people” (p. 95). Battiste (2002) refers to the work of Indigenous scholars in reaffirming the importance and relevance of Indigenous knowledge in academia as “intellectual self-determination” (p. 4). She argues:

Indigenous knowledge benchmarks the limitations of Eurocentric theory – its methodology, evidence and conclusions – reconceptualizes the resilience and self-reliance of Indigenous peoples, and underscores the importance of their own philosophies, heritages, and educational processes.

Indigenous knowledge fills the ethical and knowledge gaps in Eurocentric education, research, and scholarship. By animating the voices and experiences of the cognitive “other” and integrating them into the educational process, it creates a new, balanced centre and a fresh vantage point from which to analyze Eurocentric education and its pedagogies (2002, p. 5).

Indigenous scholars, however, argue that the idea of academic decolonization does not imply total rejection of the Western knowledge system, but the importance that it holds for Native people to “know and understand theory and research from our own perspectives and for our own purposes” (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999, p. 39). Battiste (2002) proposes a collaborative approach in the education of Indigenous people by noting the need to determine a “respectful way” (p. 3) to integrate and balance both Indigenous and Western based knowledges. Similarly, Deloria (1992) asserts that Native people should also seek ways to integrate both knowledge systems. The idea in these arguments is that connections exist between Indigenous and Eurocentric knowledge systems and that the latter can learn from the former (Brayboy & Castagno, 2008). Thus, American Indian doctoral students’ realities in a Research Extensive University require that they negotiate a balance between their intellectual cultural perspectives and the Western knowledge system in which their respective disciplines are based.

The American Indian doctoral student presence in disciplines throughout academia is important. They contribute a different world perspective to the intellectual dialogue with their non-Native peers and faculty within their disciplines. Their doctoral work encompasses areas of American Indian issues yet unexplored and that may even be deemed unimportant. Although Indigenous scholars encourage a collaborative approach of Indigenous and non-Indigenous perspectives in education, doctoral students face challenges in the academic culture to find balance between the two. In graduate education the socialization process mirrors that of assimilation imposed historically on Native people. The prevailing sense of the socialization process, a source of consternation for Native and other students of color, is that students will gain a new identity by ridding “one’s previous self-conception and taking on a new view of self” (Anderson & Swazey, 1998, p. 9). The assumption that assimilation within the academic culture

is important for students' academic and professional success does not lend to embracing other world perspectives in research and scholarship (Gilversleeve, Crook & Vasquez, 2011). Native doctoral students in this study expressed the challenges this idea presented them in their programs of study.

In Chapter, 3 I will discuss the methodology implemented to conduct this qualitative study in exploring the experiences of American Indian students in doctoral programs at the University of Washington.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the methods and research design that frame the study. The chapter reviews the research questions used in individual interviews with participants in the study describes the strategy for participant selection, discusses the procedures followed for data collection and, the process involved in analysis of the data.

Proposed Study

The topic for my dissertation research on American Indian doctoral students was determined by my knowledge about the lack of significant research on American Indian students' experiences in graduate school. Further, I was interested to know about other doctoral students' experiences in their programs of study and how those experiences compared with mine. Were their experiences similar or how did they differ?

This qualitative study explores the individual experiences of American Indian students in doctoral programs at the University of Washington, (Seattle, Washington), which is a Research Extensive University. The site for the study was selected for several reasons. First, it is the flagship institution in Washington State that offers the largest array of doctoral programs in the arts and humanities, the social sciences, natural sciences, engineering, and the health sciences. Enrollment at the University in doctoral programs encompasses a diverse national and international student population. Second, one hundred fifteen students enrolled in Master's and doctoral degree programs at the time of the study were self-identified as being American Indian. These American Indian students were one of the largest representations nationally of graduate students in a Research Extensive University. Third, the location provided convenient access to

solicit potential study participants enrolled in diverse doctoral programs, to conduct face-to-face interviews with the students, and to have follow-up interviews with the participants.

Historically, the enrollment of American Indians in doctoral programs has been small nationally. Therefore, the number of doctoral degrees awarded has not been significantly large. For example, 100 doctoral degrees were awarded nationally to American Indians in 1976-1977. This number increased only to 230 in 2005-2006 (DeVoe & Darling-Churchill, 2008, p. 28). Either is a small number of degrees granted during a period of time in which American Indian enrollment in higher education was increasing nationally.

Research Questions

The research questions explored with the American Indian doctoral students in this study were the following:

1. What factors, people or experiences, have motivated or influenced your consideration to pursue graduate school, and subsequently doctoral education?
2. What factors determined your choice of university to attend and your program of study?
3. How does tribal culture and identity influence your intellectual development? How is it manifested in your scholarly work?
4. What were the factors or conditions that made a difference or presented challenges (e.g., academic, cultural, economic, psychological, or spiritual) in your progress toward completing your doctoral program?

Methodology

A grounded theory influenced approach was used to explore American Indian students' experiences in doctoral programs. By the inherent Westernized structure of academia, the voices and scholarly perspectives of Indigenous peoples have been historically marginalized, or silenced, and is reflected in part by the paucity of research about American Indian doctoral students' experiences. Creswell argues that qualitative research is done "because we want to understand the context or settings in which participants in a study address a problem or issue" (2007, p. 40). Qualitative research is used in the development of theories when in the particular context they are not adequate or may not exist (Creswell, 2007; Strauss and Corbin, 1998). In line with Denzin's and Lincoln's (1998) discussion of qualitative research, the process of a qualitative study lends well to examining the participants' realities in doctoral programs and to gain an understanding about the nature of their experiences. Qualitative methods also assume the researcher's inherent personal interest in exploration of the research topic and the close relationship that emerges with study participants, and that dynamics or tension may exist or develop in the inquiry process. Given that so little has been written about American Indian doctoral students, a qualitative approach can yield the rich understanding of students' experiences that is currently not well understood.

Purposeful and theoretical samplings were strategies used in this qualitative study. Purposeful sampling allowed the identification of appropriate study participants within the University setting who served to "inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon" (Creswell, 2007, p. 125) that formed the focus of the study. The ten study participants who self-identified as American Indian were all in doctoral programs, although some were at different stages of their programs of study. Their personal narratives reflected shared

experiences with various aspects of the doctoral study process. The doctoral student population reflected the criteria Denzin and Lincoln articulate which is, “A good informant is one who has the knowledge and experience the research requires, has the ability to reflect, is articulate, has the time to be interviewed, and is willing to participate in the study” (1998, p. 73). Purposeful and theoretical samplings are strategies that appropriately connect with the grounded theoretical approach to the development of theory in this study.

Grounded theory as an approach utilized in a qualitative study is conducive to “generate or discover a theory” (Creswell, 2007, p. 63) of the research problem that is explored. Theory thus emanates from data the researcher systematically gathers and analyzes, and it reflects the lived experiences of the study participants. The process relies as well on the rigorous interplay of critical analysis and critical thinking (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) and developing sensitivity to understanding the data and making meaning of it.

Description of the Research Site

The site of the study was the University of Washington, located in Seattle, Washington. The city is located on Puget Sound, surrounded by water and mountains, has relatively a mild climate, and is a little over 100 miles from the U.S.-Canadian border. The Puget Sound is an area which has a significant American Indian presence and history. Several tribal reservations are located nearby. Data from the City of Seattle, Office of Intergovernmental Relations indicated that in 2008, the American Indian and Alaska Native population in the Seattle area was approximately 17,987 and 109,792 in the State (<http://www.seattle.gov/oir/>). The University of Washington is located on land which was home to the Duwamish and Suquamish tribes. The University of Washington is a public Research Extensive University and is considered the

flagship institution of Washington State. At the time of this study in 2007-2008, enrollment at the University was over 48,000. The institution offers baccalaureate, master's and research doctorate degrees in numerous fields of study, and professional programs in law, medicine, dentistry and pharmacy. A significant number of the University's graduate and professional programs are highly ranked nationally and internationally. Campus-wide efforts to increase the representation of underrepresented minority graduate students are reflected in on-going diversity initiatives. Of the historically underrepresented minority graduate student enrollment, American Indians have continually represented the smallest number at the University of Washington, in relation to the number and size of the American Indian tribes in Washington State. Currently, in Washington State there are twenty-nine federally recognized tribes and seven that are non-federally recognized.

Participants in the Study

The doctoral students in the study represent a microcosm of the national picture of American Indians enrolled in graduate school, and doctoral programs in particular. Their backgrounds reflect diverse tribal affiliations, and as is typical of the institution's graduate student population, the doctoral students come from various states throughout the country. The total number of American Indian graduate students was one hundred fifteen students in the 2007-2008 academic year. Of that number, 66 were students in Master's programs and the remaining 49 were students in doctoral programs. Therefore, the 10 students in this study represented twenty percent of all American Indian doctoral students at the University. Students in professional schools, (i.e., the Schools of Law, Medicine, Pharmacy or Dentistry that offer the Juris Doctorate, Doctor of Medicine, Doctor of Pharmacy and Doctor of Dental Science,

respectively), were not included in the study as they are traditionally considered professional programs and not graduate programs.

The University of Washington Human Subjects Office reviewed and approved the application to conduct this research study on the experiences of American Indian students in doctoral programs. Doctoral students were solicited to participate in the research study through a notice that described the proposed study and the process to be followed for data gathering. The notice was distributed by electronic mail to a list of doctoral students who had self-identified as American Indian. Since communication through electronic mail is not a secure mechanism to maintain confidentiality, students were asked to telephone a private office number if they had questions or to confirm their participation in the study. I spoke with each student who confirmed their desire to participate in the research study, again reviewed the process for data gathering and answered their questions.

Ten students in doctoral programs, four men and six women, responded to the notice indicating their interest and desire to participate in the research study. The participants were in seven doctoral programs of study located in the social sciences, humanities, natural sciences and the health sciences, with the majority being in social sciences programs. Each participant was at a different stage of their graduate work, (i.e, second, third or fourth year students) which gave the study the benefit of a diversity of students' experiences and perspectives about doctoral programs and the broader university environment in which they interacted. The participants' identities encompassed a mix of tribal affiliations, with some having ancestry of more than one American Indian tribe and White. Participants came from varied backgrounds both socially, economically and in locality. Two grew up on the reservations of their respective tribes, one

lived at various times on a reservation of her father, while the other seven were raised in small rural towns or large urban areas. The participants' ages ranged from the late 20s to mid-50s.

The following table provides demographic data of the sample involved in the study. The study involved 4 men and 6 women, six of whom (2 men and 4 women) were in social sciences programs, one woman was in a biomedical sciences and one male in a biological sciences program. Tribal affiliation, a key demographic, is fundamental to the identities of the participants as it is with other individuals whose identities are grounded as an American Indian. Tribal affiliations situate American Indians not only geographically in terms of ancestral homelands, but more importantly reflects their cultural identities in perspectives, values and traditions. Participants' responses to particular research questions are indicative of their indigenous cultural perspectives.

As Table 1 indicates, except for one participant, the remaining 9 individuals had significant years of experience in their doctoral programs from which to reflect at the point the study was occurring.

In preparation for the individual interviews, careful attention was paid to the location where each interview occurred and to maintain privacy. Scheduling interviews that allowed sufficient time for participants' responses to each question was important for the data gathering, as was maintaining focus of the interview.

Table 1: Demographic Data for American Indian Doctoral Students

NAME	TRIBAL AFFILIATION	BACKGROUND	PROGRAM	YEAR IN STUDY	PROFESSIONAL GOAL
Annette	Navajo	Urban and Reservation	Social Science	3rd year	Teaching or a Non-profit organization
Betty	Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa	Urban	Social Science	4 th Year	Academic Appointment
Kathy	Mohawk	Urban	Social Science	1 st Year	Consultant to tribes
Evans	Cree	Urban	Social Science	3 rd Year	Community college teaching and administration
Jerry	Hidatsa, Hochunk, Prairie Band of Potawatomie	Urban	Social Science	4 th Year	Filmmaking and/or teach at a university
Lisa	Colville	Reservation	Social Science	4 th Year	Teach, conduct social welfare policy research and work with tribes
Nicki	Cherokee, Choctaw	Urban	Social Science	3 rd Year	Academic appointment in a public state university
Owen	Pikuni	Rural (Pueblo)	Social Science	4 th Year	Academic appointment
Sherry	Haida/Tlingit	Urban	Biomedical Science	6 th Year	Teach at an undergraduate institution or a science writer
William	Northern Cheyenne	Urban	Natural Science	6 th Year	Teach at a college or university

Data collection with the American Indian doctoral students was conducted throughout the 2007-2008 academic year. Data was collected with each student through a standardized open-ended interview approach. Each student was asked the four research questions which elicited their reflections on experiences and factors that led them to graduate school and their

perspectives on experiences in their doctoral programs. The individual interviews were conducted in a conference room setting that provided privacy and confidentiality. Each interview was audio-recorded and lasted from one hour to one and one-half hours. If needed, the study participants were contacted for a brief follow up interview to gain clarity on comments or to pursue students' in-depth responses on comments they made in the first interview. Once the interviews were completed, the recorded interviews were transcribed. Each doctoral student was assigned a pseudonym to protect their identity in this study. In discussing the findings of the study in Chapter 4, the pseudonyms assigned are used in references to each doctoral student. The data acquired through the individual audio-taped interviews with the students remained secured in office files and were destroyed by the agreed upon timeline approved by the University of Washington Human Subjects.

Ethical Considerations

Important to the social context of this study is consideration of ethical issues as an insider/outsider in conducting research with an Indigenous student population. My dual position within the Research Extensive University as a professional staff member and simultaneously a doctoral student situated me as an inside/outsider researcher. My significant professional experience in graduate education and knowledge of institutional policies, practices, and administrative structures privileged my position. That I am also American Indian further problematizes my dual role. The knowledge of the participants' willingness to be a part of the study and to share the stories about their personal experiences en route to and in graduate school reflected an element of trust. This, to me, was an important responsibility that I had undertaken with the study and which presented ethical issues to consider, or best practices in working with Native populations.

An extensive experience with a wide variety of the graduate programs and the development of new graduate programs (my professional role at the University), afforded a perspective about graduate education that differed from other doctoral students. Through my work with graduate programs campus-wide, I gained significant knowledge about the students' home units—the programs, the faculty and staff. Further, my professional responsibilities at the University involved the recruitment of American Indian students and led to working on retention initiatives with my organization's graduate minority program and with graduate degree programs across campus. Through work on these initiatives within my organization and with academic units across the University, I came to know or became acquainted with the other American Indian doctoral students. I knew each student who responded indicating their desire to be a participant in the study. This dual position necessitated exploring and understanding my position as both an insider and outsider and implications for the study. In examining ethical considerations of the study, I drew on the work of indigenous scholars whose perspectives on codes of conduct in research resonated in the cultural values they asserted, that differ from the traditional Western research methodologies, and the guidance provided on managing the tensions inherent to the insider/outsider research experience.

Speaking from an Indigenous Maori perspective on ethics of conducting research as an insider, Linda Tuhiwai Smith asserts that "Insider research has to be as ethical and respectful, as reflexive and critical, as outsider research. It also needs to be humble . . . because the researcher belongs to the community as a member with a different set of roles and relationships, status and position." (1999, p. 139). The study participants and I were a part of the University community, in the broader sense, but more narrowly within the physical aspect of the University Native community. American Indian students, faculty and staff view the University Native community

not solely as a mechanism through which relationships are developed, collaboration occurs, and connections for support are made, but its existence is critical to the creation of a sense of place and space within an institution as the University of Washington. Tuhiwai Smith's perspective on ethics, in that conducting research within a Native community must embody the idea of humbleness and respectfulness, are concepts fundamental to the development of trust of participants in the conduct of research with a Native community.

Jankie (2004) considered the ethics of her dual role within the social context of her research study and raised critical questions important to be cognizant of in my study of participants within the same institution and their perception of my role. What did I represent in the eyes of the participants? Was I part of them? Was I an outsider? Similar to my situation as a professional staff and a doctoral student, Jankie conducted her doctoral research within an educational setting of her community and questioned the perception of her duality in being a part of the community yet also an educator and researcher. She questioned whether within her study site she "was viewed as an outsider doing insider research?" (2004, p. 87).

Jankie further notes, "To some degree, DuBois' notion of double consciousness can be equated to representations or images of native ethnographers or indigenous researchers working in postcolonial contexts. They strive to look at and problematize their lives, experiences, or cultures they are researching through the eyes of the participants themselves; yet they cannot achieve this without drawing on their own images and multiple identities. Failing to do so renders or positions them as colonizers of research participants." (2004, p. 101)

Wilson's (2008) position that, "Indigenous people have come to realize that beyond control over the topic chosen for study, the research methodology needs to incorporate their

cosmology, worldview, epistemology and ethical beliefs” (p. 15) echoes Tuhiwai Smith’s perspective. He asserts further that research is relational with accountability a key component, meaning “being accountable to your relations” (p. 77). The idea of ‘your relations’ relates to an Indigenous view of connections or the interconnectedness of indigenous people that exists on a broader scale beyond our friends or immediate families. Additionally, that “Respect, reciprocity and responsibility” (p. 77) are critical aspects in this relational concept and the conduct of research.

Methods and principles Tuhiwai Smith (1999), Jankie (2004) and Wilson (2008) discuss as Indigenous scholars in the conduct of research as an insider/outsider were important reminders of the ethics and responsibility in conducting my research study with participants in a community of which I am a member. Jankie’s question, “What did I represent in the eyes of the participants?” (2004, p. 87) was key to first considering why I selected the research topic and, subsequently, in the protocols followed in the study. . . Tuhiwai Smith (1999) says, “Respect is a reciprocal, shared, constantly interchanging principle . . .” (p. 120). With the study participants, respect was mutual and evident in the protocols involved in the interview process. Respect was shown to participants in subtle ways such as the interview setting, warmly greeting each one, and in a more obvious ways by thanking them at the beginning and the end of each interview for their time and for participating in the study. Additionally, reminding participants in the interview that they did not have to answer a question if they were not comfortable with it and that the interview could end immediately at their request. Wilson reminds us that respect is reflected in, “the integrity of methodology” (Wilson, 2008, p. 77). The integrity of the methodology is integral to the quality of the data gathered and evident in the study findings. Tuhiwai Smith (1999) posits “the constant need for reflexivity” (p. 137), in insider/outsider research on key components of the

study, including the methodology, the relationships present in the study, and a critical assessment about the quality of the data and its analysis. Revisiting the earlier discussion of Strauss and Corbin's (1998) grounded theory process in relation to Tuhiwai Smith's idea of reflexivity (1999), in that it relies on the rigorous interplay of critical analysis and critical thinking and the development of sensitivity to understanding the data and the meaning of it. My accountability as the researcher required my attention to these principles and practices in the data gathering and analysis processes which will be determined by the quality of the study results.

Study participants, in their generosity, gifted me the personal narratives of their experiences in doctoral programs. Reciprocity then occurs by honoring the gift of their stories in the theory that emerged from the data discussed in this dissertation. The study results will add to the dearth of information that exists in understanding American Indian students' experiences in doctoral programs in a Research Extensive University.

Data Analysis

The individual formal interviews allowed the opportunity for each doctoral student to reflect on their decisions to pursue graduate school and experiences in their doctoral programs in response to the four research questions. Students described aspects that have contributed to progress with their research and scholarly activities, and with the support of their faculty mentors. They described the challenges they encountered, how they worked through the various challenges, and factors that supported their motivation to move forward, even though some experiences were more difficult than others.

The audio-taped interviews were transcribed and the process of comparative analysis was used to review, identify and compare the content of the transcripts for similarities and

differences. The data were then coded and again compared to identify the relationships to context, situations, or language noted in response to the research questions. Coded data that were conceptually related were then grouped within specific categories. From the categories significant concepts were identified. Differences in the categories were identified by determining the characteristics of each—the properties, and the dimensions contained in each (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) to identify emerging themes. In the data analysis, I revisited the transcripts, the research questions, conducted follow-up interviews on particular questions or comments, notes written during the initial and follow-up interviews, and revisited the literature, all which reinforced questioning and comparing the data and confirming the findings.

Summary

This chapter discussed the methodological and theoretical frameworks for this study. It described the participants and the selection process employed, the study site, the research questions, and discussed the rationale for using a qualitative research approach. Grounded theory was discussed as an approach to inquiry and its appropriateness to a qualitative research study, and theory development. Additionally, the relevance of applying grounded theory in examining such an area and population in higher education about which little research has been conducted.

Chapter 4 will focus on the research questions and provide narratives of study participants that help answer these questions. This chapter will also describe the major themes derived from the data analysis and will provide a discussion on details of the themes.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

In this chapter the findings of the research data are presented. The focus of the study was to explore the experiences of American Indian students in doctoral programs. Four major questions guided the study for the purpose of gaining an understanding of participants' experiences in, and perspectives on, their doctoral education. I present the findings of the study through representative illustrations of the doctoral students' responses to the research questions rather than to include the responses of all the students to each question. This approach is more effective in presenting the data since the selected illustrative representations well present the findings that emerged in the data.

The findings may not be generalized to the broader American Indian doctoral students due to variables to consider in such a study and which will be discussed later in this chapter. The value in the findings of this study, however, is that they provide additional knowledge on a segment of the population in an area of higher education about which little data are currently available. Importantly, the findings present implications to consider for policies and practices in doctoral education if the institutional desire is to increase the enrollment of American Indians.

Lomawaima (2000), in her discussion on the history of American Indian education characterizes it as "battle for power" (2000, p. 2) when tribes did not have the opportunity to control and define what education should entail for their children. Tribal control over higher education emerged with the creation of tribal colleges in the late 1960s (Stein, 1990) which have increased in significant number since that time. Tribes determine the curricula of these institutions which reflect their respective knowledge and cultures. Nationally, colleges or

universities have developed relationships with particular tribes over time, in their mutual interest to enhance the relationships, and to meet tribal interests, needs, or curricula. Specific kinds of programs that may reflect more culturally appropriate course work such as in teacher preparation, tribal administration, or American Indian Studies programs, are three examples of such curricula. Doctoral programs in public and private universities have not instituted these kinds of changes and so, on a higher educational level, many challenges remain. Due to negative issues tribes experienced with research in tribal communities in the past, Lomawaima (2002) notes that some have developed research guidelines and protocols in recent years to attain some control over research that may occur within their communities and to protect intellectual property. Yet, it is not unusual that Native students encounter difficulties with institutional Human Subjects guidelines that conflict with those of tribes with whom they may be conducting research. Depending on the nature of the research study, tribal research protocols may dictate that a tribe should maintain control of research data or determine that certain data may not be shared or made public. This situation would present a dilemma for students and conflict with University research policies for dissertations. Doctoral dissertations for which data must remain hidden and cannot be published publicly would not be accepted.

Baptiste (2002), Alfred (2004), Deloria and Wildcat (2001) and other scholars view contemporary academia as an intellectual battlefield with the continued marginalization of Indigenous world views. Stanfield (in Denzin and Lincoln, 1994) also argues, “Westernized academic disciplines . . . continue to marginalize and exclude ethnically diverse interpretations of reality and styles of knowing in relation to mainstream normative knowledge creation and reproduction.” (p. 180). Further, the traditional doctoral socialization model reflects implicit assumptions about students’ integration within doctoral programs (Gildersleeve, Croom &

Vasquez, 2011). The expectation for successful outcomes in doctoral education is that students will assimilate the academy's "value and norms into their own" (p. 95) with the assumption that students will pursue academic careers. On mentoring graduate students of color to be successful, Davidson and Foster-Johnson (2001) are critical of the general approach in graduate education which assumes students of color "will integrate into the social and economic life of the dominant racial group by embracing the behaviors and values of that group's culture." The dominant theoretical and methodological paradigms, in combination with the prevalent socialization model, are wrought with significant challenges for American Indian students as developing researchers and scholars. Resistance occurs in subtle and not so subtle ways as they struggle to define their intellectual space within these confines. How the present study's participants negotiate these challenges is part of what emerges in the personal narratives explored in this study.

The following section of Chapter 4 presents the findings of the study and specifically in response to the four research questions.

Research Question 1:

What factors, people or experiences, have motivated or influenced your consideration to pursue graduate school, and subsequently doctoral education?

This question was important to understanding what determined students' decisions to take the step to the next educational level and how that influenced facets of their doctoral education experience. Decisions participants made to pursue graduate education differed for some but were similar for others. Personal motivations or influences of faculty, parents, or circumstances at the time were turning points. A faculty member at the college in Oregon, where

William received his undergraduate degree in biology, introduced the idea to him about going to graduate school. William described how the faculty member approached the idea of graduate school:

And I didn't know what graduate school was . . . I spent my previous summer after my freshman year at college doing manual labor back in Wyoming and was pretty miserable and didn't make much money. I was complaining to the professor about it . . . he asked me what I was going to do for the summer and he's like, well aren't you going to do research – aren't you going to go to grad school? And, I'm like – I don't know what grad school is. He encouraged me to seek out a summer research program . . . so, I applied to two summer programs and both of them were like 10 weeks for \$2,500 bucks.

They talked about how to apply to grad school, give a scientific presentation – all skills that I had no experience with. That was when I figured out: A, what grad school was, and B, that I could actually learn how to become a scientist. I was the first person (in my family) to go to college and to finish.

William touched on a critical factor, Bourdieu's notion of cultural capital (1977), the idea of social reproduction applied generally in the sociological examination of education and inequality. Perna (2004) advanced the idea as “the system of factors that are derived from one's parents that defines an individual's class status . . .” (p. 491). Social capital represents the social networks that individuals are a part of and relationships established in those networks that affords them access to particular knowledge. William's faculty mentor possessed both social and cultural capital. He was the “institutional agent” (Stanton-Salazar & Dornbusch, 1995, p. 117) who possessed the knowledge about graduate school and resources available (the summer research program). The faculty member demonstrated the interest and commitment to share with William the knowledge he needed to prepare for and pursue graduate school. Stanton-Salazar and Dornbusch (1995) argue that, “access to and use of social ties and networks reflecting high levels of social capital leads to the acquisition of valued institutional resources and support

previously not at the individual's disposal" (p. 119). William became aware that "learning the language," or the cultural capital, was important in understanding what graduate school entailed. Referring to his experience in the summer research program, William's comments illuminated a key issue with individuals who are the first generation in their families to pursue either a baccalaureate or graduate education.

And it just gave me the logistics of . . . this is what you need to do. I always refer to it as kind of like you're learning the language of how to play the Western science game and that knowledge isn't in my family and, there's nobody that could have ever told me about those kinds of things. I mean most of my graduate school peers, or the students, are offspring of fellow faculty members or people that have been in academia.

The faculty member knew that his encouragement for William to seek out the summer research program opportunities would provide critical experience in his preparation to go to graduate school and to be competitive. He knew that William would gain knowledge about graduate school and broaden his understanding about the language and expectations entailed in becoming a scientist. William also gained the awareness about the importance of the accumulation of social and cultural capital. William indicated that although his mother's side of the family (the reservation side) did not fully comprehend what graduate education entailed, they were continuously supportive of his efforts. They understood education was a positive endeavor.

Annette's personal story about going to graduate school differed from William's. She pursued her undergraduate degree at a university in the Midwest that offered both undergraduate and graduate programs. She was aware that educational opportunities existed beyond attaining a baccalaureate degree. Further, she had gained some knowledge about factors to consider if she chose to pursue graduate study. After completing her baccalaureate degree at the university she

moved back to the reservation where her parents lived and worked there for a period of time at a family literacy program. About graduate school, she indicated:

I think when I graduated from undergrad I already knew that I wanted to go to graduate school. I kind of started figuring that out toward the end of my junior year. And that, I think, was the result of encouragement from professors I'd had. And it motivated me to the degree that – my last year of undergrad I realized that if I wanted to go to graduate school I really had to make a very serious attempt to get my GPA as high as possible. I also knew that I needed some real world experience. I didn't really have a timeline for graduate school. But after 2-1/2 years . . . at least in that role – the learning curve was starting to go down. So, I started thinking about it very seriously. And, it was interesting because my mom was really, really supportive of me doing this . . . my dad actually was less supportive in that he really believed that experience kind of counts more than education. I could see where he was coming from . . . but for a while there he was really like – I don't really think you need a Master's degree, I think you just need more experience. I kind of just shrugged that off . . . in the field of education, the degrees actually do matter. So, I applied to two universities . . . then I actually got into both. I really chose the UW based on my gut feeling.

So, I did my Master's program here. And, I had a good advisor . . . towards the end of my first year she really kind of pushed me to think about whether or not I wanted to do a doctorate. I was like if I ever wanted to do a doctorate, this was the opportunity to do it. I had a lot of support not only from faculty in the college, but also peer support and, I couldn't really imagine building those networks at a whole new institution. And so, I decided to go after a doctorate.

Bourdieu's (1977) cultural and social capital theories provide a lens to examine the similarities between the experiences of William and Annette and their paths to graduate school. Within higher education social capital is represented in the established relationships that exist institutionally and are perpetuated by those—the 'club' members, who have had access. Cultural capital is inherent the knowledge and language shared and accumulated through the relationships of the system membership.

William's and Annette's experiences can be viewed from two measures of cultural and social capital. Initially, their moves from small rural communities to institutions in relatively

large cities broadened their experiences and exposure to social, economic and political elements not a part of the communities where they lived. More importantly, William's and Annette's undergraduate experiences introduced them to an educational environment that represented a new social network. Perna (2004) notes the "characteristics of the bachelor's degree-granting institution" (p. 497), and the academic experience it affords a student, is a factor influential in a student's consideration to pursue graduate education. The student populations within the institutions exposed William and Annette as well to new peer networks, which were diverse socially and economically, and in race and ethnicity. Additionally, significant experiences as undergraduate students were the relationships they developed with faculty who came to know them in their programs of study. It is assumed that William's and Annette's academic performances demonstrated their intellectual ability and drew attention of the faculty who saw their academic potential and encouraged them to pursue graduate school. The faculty were members of a social network through which they gained and possessed the language and knowledge about academia. The imparting of this knowledge demystified for William and Annette the expectations of graduate school and reflected the faculty's acknowledgement of their academic potential.

Sherry's background differs from those of William and Annette. She is from a military family, having the experience of growing up while living in different parts of the U.S. and internationally due to her father's assignments. She received her undergraduate degree from a private research university located on the West Coast. When Sherry was an undergraduate student at the university, her mother was in graduate school. Her mother received a doctoral degree from a West Coast university. Though she was not so specific about the extent of her mother's influence about pursuing graduate education, based on research about students'

decisions to pursue graduate school and the parents' level of education, we can surmise her mother's educational accomplishment had some effect. Many of Sherry's undergraduate peers also transitioned to graduate school after attaining their baccalaureate degrees. Perna (2004) argues that social networks, such as the type of higher education institution a student attends, are predictors that may influence students' decisions to pursue graduate school. She indicates, "The Carnegie classification systems reflects . . . the relative emphasis of the institution on research and graduate education" (p. 497). The educational environment of the private research university, a highly-regarded, world class institution, offers such an emphasis. Upon completing her baccalaureate degree Sherry applied to a Master's program at the University of Washington. In pursuing graduate school Sherry indicated:

I thought a Master's program was good for me at that time. .. I just wanted to take more classes and learn more, there were still a lot of math classes that I had wanted to take and I wanted to teach. So, that was my big motivation for the Master's program . . . that was the first time that I had ever taught and it turned out that I just really liked it. Oh my gosh, I was decked out like very day and I tried to come off as much, much older than my 23 years so that they would take me seriously.

In response to my asking about pursuing a doctorate, Sherry replied:

"Well I always thought that I would go back to graduate school. So that was another fluke at the end of my Master's program . . . that's when computational biology had taken root. So, I took a couple of human genetics classes . . . and then a couple of computational biology courses. The human genetics in particular just blew me away – the kind of stuff that they were talking about and how to track down and determine a genetic disease. So, I remember thinking, I am actually interested in this topic.

While Sherry contacted a professor who taught statistical genetics, her parents called in the meantime indicating a faculty member was wanting to contact her—one who she worked with in the Master's program. She subsequently met him for coffee and Doug, the faculty member, announced:

I think it's time for you to come back to grad school. I was like – well it's funny you should say that Doug.

Sherry applied, was interviewed and accepted into the biomedical science doctoral program at the University of Washington. She indicated, "I just knew I was interested in everything that I could learn." She was the first American Indian student to be admitted to the doctoral program and to subsequently graduate from it.

In their personal narratives, the three study participants described how they arrived at their decisions to eventually pursue a doctoral program. Initially, they possessed an intellectual curiosity to consider the idea of graduate school. The interest and encouragement of faculty was instrumental in helping students determine that graduate school could be a reality.

In review of Research Question 1, the study participants were asked to identify the factors, people or experiences which were influential or motivated them to consider graduate school and then to pursue a doctorate. Perna (2004) identifies attributes of a baccalaureate granting institution a student attends as one variable that may be influential, particularly, if research and graduate education opportunities exist. Other variables that Perna (2004) notes include institutional quality, which may be reflected in the level of tuition, and the location of an institution, specifically, whether it is in the state in which the student resides or out of state. William obtained his baccalaureate degree at a West Coast private liberal arts college and Sherry received her bachelor's degree at an West Coast private research university, both highly regarded institutions, competitive academically, with higher tuition and both located out of the students' home states. In contrast, the university in the Midwest is a comprehensive institution although it is not considered as academically prestigious as the West Coast private institutions. Research and Master's level educational opportunities are offered and it is in Annette's home state. For all

three students, the faculty played a significant role by sharing their knowledge about the expectations of graduate school, instilling the idea of pursuing graduate school, which signified recognition of their potential for advanced education. At an earlier point than William and Annette, Sherry had gained both social and cultural capital through her mother's pursuit of a doctorate and which was expanded in the social peer network afforded by her undergraduate experience at the university on the West Coast.

The experiences of William, Annette and Sherry are evidence that people, the exposure to other kinds of social networks and other factors, play a role in imparting certain knowledge and conveying the language and expectations of graduate school. Faculty instilled the idea that graduate school was an achievable reality for the students, based on their academic performance and intellectual potential. The faculty's actions and students' experiences are consistent with the impact and accumulation of Bourdieu's (1977) social and cultural capital theoretical concepts related to higher education.

Gaining an understanding of factors that motivated students to apply to graduate school raises the question about what determines students' choice of a particular university and a specific program of study. This question and the factors that determined students' decisions are explored in Research Question 2.

Research Question 2:

What factors determined your choice of university to attend and your program of study?

Results of the Fall, 2009 Council of Graduate Schools survey of first time graduate enrollment by field, race and ethnicity indicated that American Indians were enrollment was

predominantly in social sciences and business fields (Bell, 2010). American Indian doctoral student enrollment at the University of Washington reflects similar data with students predominantly in the social sciences, particularly in education and social work. Representation has been less in the STEM fields of doctoral study. A longitudinal study of African American, Hispanic and White students explored whether race was an influencing factor on plans for graduate school (Pascarella, Wolniak, Pierson & Flowers, 2004). It did not examine factors that determined students' plans for field of interest in graduate study and institutional choice. A need exists for more research to examine the factors that influence doctoral students' choices for programs of study (Poock & Love, 2001). Colleges' and universities' initiatives to increase diversity in graduate education, particularly in fields in which underrepresented minority population enrollment has been low or nonexistent, and the change in minority demographics, demonstrates the need for more research in this area.

Several variables determine a student's choice of a university and a doctoral program. Based on my work with American Indian students, the availability of financial support is a major factor in their consideration to go to graduate school. Financial support differs by field and the level of funding depends on the available institutional and academic unit resources. Anecdotal evidence exists as well that for academically high achieving American Indian students, private universities tend to offer better financial support packages than public institutions. Perna (2004) notes that students who have accumulated significant debt as undergraduates may be adverse to increase their debt by pursuing graduate school. The benefit of a graduate education in relation to cost is an added consideration as is the age of the individual.

In review of the study participants' responses to Research Question 2, I decided that approaching the examination of this question could be best accomplished through asking two questions. The first question is the following:

1. How did the students talk about deciding to go to graduate school?

Similar to other students, the American Indian students choose to go to graduate school because they were influenced by faculty who became mentors. Kathy's experience in her undergraduate program in American Indian studies at a public liberal arts college generated the interest of faculty. She commented on the impact of those relationships regarding her decision to go to graduate school:

Christina and Arlin both were just very taken with my work in every class that they had me in and strongly encouraged me to apply to a university in the Southwest and continue on in American Indian studies. . . So, it's people that I've known that have seen something in me that really propelled me to keep moving forward.

Students are also using graduate school as a means to a different life, to lead to something more fulfilling. Jerry described a turning point in deciding that he should go to graduate school. He was employed in an American Indian residential boarding school where he had worked as a dormitory manager and had done other administrative work. Jerry described the negative sense of the school's environment which motivated him to consider leaving the school. Additionally, the realization that his brother and sisters had attained graduate and professional degrees heightened the idea that graduate school was a possibility and could help alter his life's situation. His comments were the following about his employment and his sibling's accomplishments:

What really got me out of there is that I just really – just couldn't stand being in that place anymore. There is something about that environment that will kill you – maybe not physically but maybe spiritually. . . I really started noticing like the inequities of power and stuff like that.

And then you realize – okay, we’re getting paid less and we’re getting rewarded less because if we try to save for retirement we’re naturally not going to be making as much for savings and so, I mean, that really got to me. . . that just really helped me to keep thinking about going back to school. But also, your chances of going to college are greatly increased if you have a family member that goes to college. And so, that really stuck with me and I started thinking about graduate school at that point. My sister, Jill, she has a Master’s in sociology. My brother, Derek, has a M.D. and Joyce is a counselor.

I also realized that a lot of people that I knew – if I stayed there, I would be just like them, and I would be doing nothing.

Students also perceived the idea of pursuing advanced education could serve functional advantages such as the potential for higher salaries and career advancement. Betty had attained a Master’s degree in in the health care field but she was interested in making a change to a different field. Her comments on her situation were:

I really didn’t want to work at the hospital again, I’d worked there for years, and I didn’t want a clinic. There weren’t a lot of jobs except there were a lot of faculty jobs, and so that’s where I got this idea of if I got a Ph.D. then I could be on the faculty somewhere. And still, I was working under that total misconception that the more education you got, the higher your salary would be – ha, ha! I believed that. I thought that if I got a Ph.D., then it would open more doors – and, I would be able to have a higher salary which would help my retirement. So that was another reason I was interested in getting a Ph.D.

The second question within Research Question 2 captures the study participants’ various approaches in making a decision about doctoral programs and thus the universities.

2. How did students decide the specific doctoral program and institution?

Except for Betty, whose decision making about a specific graduate program reflected the typical “laser-focused” prospective graduate student, the other American Indian students made their choices about universities and programs in other ways. Some students had decided they wanted to go to graduate school, but they remained open to the possibilities of other programs

which they may have not considered or knew about. For example, Jerry described his visit to the University of Washington to explore graduate programs:

And so, I decided to come here and I looked at programs. Dr. Simpson, I met him and he recruited me for the Master's program in cinema studies. And so I said, sure. Plus, I wanted to get out of New Mexico.

Some pursued personal connections they had with faculty to seek advice about programs at the University of Washington or other institutions. Some students had narrowed down the fields of interest. Their intent was to find a program through which the education and training would provide an opportunity to make a contribution to a Native community. Owen described his search for a doctoral program in this way when he contacted a faculty member with whom he was acquainted:

I really wanted to give something back to my community and I did not know how to do that. What I did is, I Googled Dr. Thompson (laughter) and saw that she was in Seattle. And my email to her was: "I'm thinking of doctoral work, I'm thinking of law school, I'm thinking of all these other things to really deal with some Native health related issues, and I don't know what form it's going to be in, but I thought I'd give you a shout out so you can give me some advice on what institutions to look at."

And, I think I got an email like right away back from her and she said, you know, I'm here at the UW, I got a grant studying health issues of Native lesbian/gay/bisexual/trans-gender people throughout the country – funding wouldn't be a problem. Put your application in by next week (he laughs) and let's go forward with that, if that would work for you.

So, I printed out the email, I marched it home, I shared it with my mother and my grandma who was in her last days but she knew I was applying for an advanced degree . . . and everyone was just happy! And, I got the call one night from Dr. Thompson saying that I was admitted, and I was very excited.

A combination of factors drove the decision making for some students about an institution and program of choice. These included educational background, connections to a tribal community and/or issues related to the Puget Sound Region. Kathy sought the advice of

Vine Deloria, a highly regarded Native scholar known for his work on American Indian history and related issues. After determining that Law was not an option, Kathy considered pursuing a doctorate in a social science doctoral program, a highly contested field due to historical research conducted by Whites on Indigenous populations, and of which Vine Deloria was a critic.

Kathy's interest in the social science discipline was a continuation of the work she had done in her undergraduate and graduate programs in American Indian Studies programs on tribal issues as "land possession . . . and some desecration" which she termed, "activist scholarship." Kathy commented:

He strongly encouraged me to take that route because he knew that law school wasn't open to me anymore. And he knew that I was serious in my commitment to working with tribes to protect land and water. . . . I knew that pursuing study in discipline would be difficult to say the least.

My friends here, the hope – all these little signs that I've been given throughout the years that I actually do have a role to play in – well, of course, my own healing but in the healing of my communities and my relations and the relationships that I have with medicine people throughout this region support me deeply. People have been so generous with me in terms of sharing knowledge with me and either taking me out on the land, including me in family functions, and in ceremony and in reburials.

In summary of Research Question 2: What factors determined your choice of university to attend and your program of study? Students' personal narratives describing their decision making in determining the institution and program of study that best fits their education and professional goals reflect various approaches that are dependent on their specific situation and resources available. What did I learn from the American Indian doctoral students' accounts of their decision making? First, students make decisions in ways similar to all students. Second, the motivation to pursue a graduate education may differ for these students such as for functional advantages—opening doors to professional opportunities and higher salaries, or the perception that advanced education can improve one's life situation. When decisions are made about a

graduate program, the relationship of a faculty member with a student, in some cases, may be a stronger factor in the decision making. It indicates that relationships do matter. Ultimately, their stories convey their perceptions that graduate school, particularly doctoral education, is attainable and they took the initiative to pursue it.

The concept or idea that a relationship matters to American Indian students may not be unique to them as a group, but points to the idea that imbedded within many minority communities is the cultural emphasis placed on various ideas such as relationship. In the next question I will explore specifically how culture and identity reflect these experiences.

Research Question 3:

How does tribal culture and identity influence your intellectual development? How is it manifested in your scholarly work?

How cultural identity of the American Indian doctoral students is reflected in the work is examined through particular concepts related to the way they make decisions about their research, teaching and scholarship. The first idea is the sense of obligation, or giving back to the community. It is reflected in various ways students conceive the focus of their work. For example, when Owen was initially seeking a doctoral program, he indicated, “I want to do something with my Native community.” His description about his work in the Social Work doctoral program further reflects this idea:

I came initially wanting to do HIVwork, HIV prevention in Indian Country. When I started investigating HIV, there was talk about mental health. What is mental health? So then I started problematizing mental health and I’m like okay, well how can I advance the field or how can I help our communities? So why don’t we investigate discourses and constructs of mental health? I think that’s important and that’s going to advance our

thinking about how we define and construct health services for Native peoples. I study critical theory and discourses in mental health in Indian Country from a historical standpoint . . . the history of social welfare and critical theory is what I do as an academic.

In response to my question about how he dealt with theoretical concepts that are basically Western defined in his work on mental health issues with Native communities, Owen replied:

I seek the work of theorists who have emerged in the 70s and 80s, those individuals who have histories of subjugation . . . who have written and critiqued Western philosophy. Edward Said, for example, and his writings on orientalism and, you know, Franz Fanon, “The Wretched of the Earth,” who wrote about the Algerian experience and the French overthrow of that country. There’s Iwa Ang who writes from an Asian perspective of immigrants and her ideas of cultural citizenship in the United States. So, I do appreciate and reach out to those intersections of identity focused writers who talk about the hybridity of experiences through class, sexuality, gender, race, ethnicity and speak to those pivotal areas of growth and development.

And, my work is always for children . . . my work is to not have any child grow up hating themselves. That’s my principle. That’s why I do the work.

William reflected on his cultural identity and how he has dealt with it as a developing scholar. He described the conflict he experienced in determining how to intellectually articulate his critique of the Western based idea of science, that of learning the language. He reflected on questions about how he could effectively integrate a cultural perspective in his teaching biology to Native students.

The cultural ties to where I’m at now are a lot more on the surface for me. My tribal background and perspective on traditional knowledge is a lot more on the forefront of how I think about biology now than when I was earlier as a student. . . I didn’t let struggles of cultural identity stop me or I just didn’t address them very directly in a sophisticated way. And, I don’t think I had the knowledge base of what was out there. I didn’t know terms like colonialism of the mind and things like that. I mean I knew it in structure and in stories of my family, but I didn’t have an intellectual language there. A lot of that education of combining my scientific training (with cultural identity) began when I was at the University where I pursued my Master’s degree. That’s due in part to the influence of my Master’s advisor. And, some of it was how can I be more effective in talking about biology – something I love and enjoy talking about and reaching a bunch of students –

and primarily to Native students in the audience? How can I help them understand ecological principals or evolutionary biology and tie that into traditional cultural aspects of culture?

Lisa's focus in her social welfare doctoral program is in "international indigenous policy, national federal Indian policy and tribal policy." Her cultural and familial influence is manifested in her approach to this work:

I've been doing a lot of research with those different entities. I've been to New Zealand. I've done a lot of work with national organizations. And I've done work with local tribes.

. . . when you're born into certain families and they are well known, then you are received in communities based on the kind of pattern of action that those people have laid in front of you. And so I have a responsibility. So my relationship with tribes is very unique because of that responsibility. My father . . . believed that the knowledge that you receive and the experiences that you gain are not yours. It's your responsibility to share it. And I 100% believe that. I don't believe anything should be individual. I think it should be for our family and our community.

Owen's, William's and Lisa's intellectual approaches to their doctoral programs and with the Native communities they work with, or plan to work with, reflect how their cultural identities and values are embodied in both aspects. Ultimately, they perceive that the purpose of their work is to benefit Native communities, and with both Owen and William, specifically to the younger Native population.

Another concept of how cultural identity is manifested in students' work is reflected in the sense of relationship through their collaboration with individuals or particular tribes. One area of Kathy's interest within her social science doctoral program is the protection of tribal cultural resources. She described the potential collaborative work on areas of need with local tribes in the following way:

I had been in discussion with – most definitely one and sometimes two people in one of the Coastal tribes about collaboratively developing a cultural landscape study for various purposes—for the tribe. One would be for cultural resources protection purposes. Another would be to really bring together in one easily accessible document a lot of tribal history and cultural knowledge so that the tribe could develop a tribal curriculum for both children and adults. And then also to augment their family services programs and their programs in dealing with addition and healing historical trauma – just having a synthesized document because their archives are just a mess and gaining access to the anthropological research that has been done on them since this department was founded – knowing how to do that and providing that back for them to have.

There's also a possibility of some collaborative work with either the tribe or elders in the tribe, depending on how this goes and I'm not sure really how I'm going to negotiate how I feel about sovereignty and you know, tribal rights as opposed to the importance of doing what this elder has asked me in terms of helping him to document his knowledge for future generations because he really knows things that nobody else in the community knows. . . . It's extremely special and it's something that he and I have talked about for several years . . . so that's on the horizon.

Though not directly articulated, inherent in Kathy's consideration about working with the two tribes is the relational aspect of the potential collaboration. An initial relationship had to exist for the tribes to consider collaboration on particular issues. In particular, the tribal elder's desire to collaborate on documenting his knowledge for the tribes' future generations indicates that a relationship and trust in Kathy to do the work existed between the two. Her comments reflect sensitivity to the cultural parameters in understanding the meaning and importance of the projects for each tribe in the knowledge to be eventually available to them.

The students' reflections on their work and how their cultural identities are represented conveys an openness that intellectual experiences that shape them as scholars and recognition that learning can occur, and lessons can come from people outside the University. Students' learning and knowledge is thus based on a combination of sources. It begins with the influence in the upbringing of their families, the relationships Native faculty at different points of their

educational experiences, and collaborators with Native communities who have interest in their work and may seek their help. Kathy's comments indicate how she perceives her role in working with tribal communities and the anticipation that her learning should emanate from a tribes' perspectives on their issues of collaboration.

I'm talking about being an advocate – you know, and it started really in the communities here that have given me so much in working collaboratively with the tribes to figure out ways of not just preserving cultural resources, sites, languages and things like that, but actively using these things to strengthen our communities.

But, since reading Ty (Taiaiake Alfred, a Mohawk scholar at the University of Victoria) and really questioning whether I can do this in an anticolonial manner. . . I think I can, if while working with a particular people, the questions asked, the theories that are articulated, and the methodologies used all come from within that community, I think I'll be okay.

A final concept in examining how cultural identity is manifested in the work of the American Indian doctoral students is that of mutual regard. It is the basis of a relationship and one of respect, understanding and sharing. Native doctoral students demonstrate this concept in the way they approach their work on Native issues and how they choose to collaborate and share their knowledge and scholarly work with Native and academic communities. It can also encompass the idea of giving back, or reciprocity, and being open to learning outside of academia and drawing on the knowledge of elders and other Native community scholars. Students' narratives speak to the mutual regard present in their development as researchers and scholars, how they view Native community members as resources to enhance their work, and in their relationships within and outside of academia.

The assumption is that the cultural identity of the American Indian doctoral students is reflected in their research, teaching and scholarship. However, the assumption that it may occur

organically is not realistic and does not acknowledge the challenges students encounter doing doctoral level work from an Indigenous perspective in a Research Extensive University based on Western European epistemology. Research question 4 explores the various challenges the students face as they progress in their program of study.

Research Question 4:

What were the factors or conditions that made a difference or presented challenges (e.g., academic, cultural, economic, psychological, or spiritual) in your progress toward completing your doctoral program?

The American Indian students responded to this question by recalling both positive and negative experiences they encountered in their doctoral programs. Certain experiences presented significant challenges and others enhanced student's experiences in their work. Negative experiences in the form of racial micro-aggressions, such as stereotyping, presented challenges to some students and reflected the climate and inclusivity of academic units. Stereotyping in the classroom occurred in the form of faculty expecting students of color to be the voices or representatives of their respective race or ethnicity. In classroom discussions, students felt the privileging of certain knowledge marginalized alternative perspectives. Nicki commented on her experience in a course in Race and Gender in the Media. Her initial experience involved the indignity of a professor questioning her identity as an American Indian. In her view, Nicki did not fit the physical stereotype of an American Indian. The faculty member's racial micro-aggressive behavior led to the expectation that Nicki and other students of color would be the voices or representatives of their respective racial or ethnic group. Nicki described her experiences in the following way:

He was the one who first started the statements about me passing, me not looking Indian, my need to speak up for Native Americans, you know . . .

And the professor, he won the teacher of the year . . he had done his dissertation on some African American issues. And darn if it wasn't a class totally about African American issues . . . So, it was interesting because it became who speaks for whom. First off, everybody was put in that position. So I was put in charge – if anything Native American was going to come up, it was up to me, and if I didn't, then it wouldn't be said. Carlita was totally having anything to do with Spanish . . . And Geni was totally the Black chick. I was not raised on a reservation and Carlita was not raised in a barrio. And it didn't matter. So it was just kind of weird, like where did this come from?

All of those stereotypes still live on . . . there's no recognition of various populations, or the whole idea of privileging . . . even in some of my women studies classes, if you meant women of color it was only Black. And there was not the shared discourse – so it became a competitive environment, which I just totally opted out of.

I didn't think I would be in a position where if you want anything else presented it's your responsibility to do it. If I didn't speak up it wasn't going to be there. | What the amazing thing in this is, there wasn't any credence to the idea that tribes are different. That even the Cherokees and Choctaws have vast differences and the water based cultures – not everybody did the Trail of Tears, you know.

Jerry spoke about his experiences in course discussions when he raised issues about other perspectives, or “a counter discourse” being ignored in the discussions. Other students expressed appreciation for his critical thinking and contributions to the course content, and told him they missed his participation when he was not in class. Students indicated “you always bring up all these things and make us really think.” Responding to students' supportive comments about him raising challenging issues in the course discussions and the impact of that role on him, Jerry commented:

Well sometimes it's tiring, sometimes I like it and sometimes I feel like it's something that needs to be done. But then I realize that, being a critical theorist choosing the work in American Indian studies . . . is much more political . . . That's what we do – we critique the academy. We critique the dominant culture. We even critique ourselves. And that's where it lies.

How does it affect me? Well, maybe I could begin with how it has affected me in the classroom. Like let's say there's something you want to take a look at and you want to bring – let's say, Vignor, Momaday or Deloria, any Native scholar

at any level be it literature or whatever. It seems to me that there is such a strong bias against being able to just simply quote them and give the reference. I have been told all too often – you need to explain this more in your writing, and I'm saying – why? And I go – I thought the purpose was that if I provide the quote and the reference, it is incumbent upon you as the teacher to delve into it.

And that's been the big politics thing – there's that privileging and tiering of knowledge that really has annoyed me to no end.

In following up to Jerry's comments, I asked whether he perceived a faculty member's request to provide information about a Native scholar to be questioning the validity of the particular scholar. He responded in the following way trying to understand why that behavior occurs:

I think that's what it is and I'm just wondering why. And maybe it could be that I decided to pick that particular scholar because he gives that counter discourse or questions something. And that can always be a slippery slope. So, yeah, it's always dangerous but – you know, we're suppose to be looking at new knowledge or specific knowledge, the alternative . . .

I've had professors here that when you bring something up they'll shift it back to a discourse that they're familiar with . . . I've had other professors who have said – I've never thought about that and can you give me the name of a person in something that you've read. So maybe it depends. I think it's just more of the individual at that point . . . they are both white males. One was very open and the other one wasn't . . .

Lisa described her experience with another form of racial micro-aggression. This behavior occurred when two faculty questioned the composition of her doctoral supervisory committee. Lisa described the faculty's questioning and how she dealt with their questions:

. . . you don't want to have a whole committee of all Natives. You don't want to do that. (She replied) You want to make a bet? I do want to do that. You know why? Because they're the best. And you know what else? They're not easy on me. In fact, they rip me apart. And you know what? It's because they want me to get it right. They know that I'm kind of breaking some ground here in my study. There's not a lot of people doing indigenous social welfare policy.

Lisa lamented further about the faculty questioning the make-up of her committee:

... why would you want to have an all-Native committee? That might look like it could be a little bit biased.

Lisa's reply to the question and comment was the following:

Let it look like it's biased because you know what? When a white student walks in here and has a full white committee, has anybody said – why are they having a full-White committee? No, nobody says that.

While faculty viewed an all-Native doctoral advisory committee negatively, Lisa felt she was mentored well. She valued the relationships with the Native faculty. The Native faculty held her to rigorous standards in her work in indigenous social welfare policy research and scholarship. They possessed the cultural sensitivity and knowledge to guide her in developing intellectual grounding as a Native researcher and scholar.

Nicki's, Jerry's and Lisa's experiences they encountered with unexpected racial micro-aggressive behavior presented challenges in and out of the classroom. Though, as Native people, they inherently understood the racist nature of faculty behavior, they still questioned "Where did that come from?" Their personal narratives, however, about experiences in their doctoral programs also involved positive and supportive experiences in interactions with other faculty and graduate students.

Some of the American Indian students noted the imposter syndrome was a challenge they were dealing with in reflecting on their academic progress but yet questioning whether they deserved to be at the University of Washington or have earned what they have accomplished. In self-reflection students related the questioning of their accomplishments to issues of self-esteem.

Kathy spoke about this phenomenon in her self-reflection:

I have serious self-esteem issues. I mean believe me, I know I'm bright and critical thinking, and a sensitive and caring person, but there's still a huge part of me that doesn't really feel as though I deserve to be successful. A lot of

the imposter syndrome works on one part and then your sense of identity works on the other part, which are all intertwined.

Evans was another student who reflected on his educational accomplishments and described his sense of the imposter syndrome in the following way:

The challenge is feeling like a fraud, is kind of part of it. I think one of the reasons why I want to do well is to kind of prove to myself and other people that I belong here, you know. It's kind of like some self-esteem issues . . . like this isn't our school, you know, like we're affirmative action cases, that kind of stuff – the legitimacy.

I would imagine that there's probably a lot of Native people who could feel that way because of the long history of, you know, this being pretty much a place where White kids . . . and privileged kids go to school, and you know, legacies, sororities, fraternities, and ivory towers – all that stuff.

We understand the imposter syndrome phenomenon is not unique to American Indian doctoral students. Many doctoral students and other individuals question whether they deserve the success they've achieved whether it is either academically or professionally.

While it is assumed that students will face various kinds of challenges in their programs of study, the American Indian doctoral students spoke about their experiences of a positive nature that made a difference in their academic progress. Sherry responded to the question about the factors or conditions that made a difference for her to progress in her doctoral program.

I think there were three factors that were most important in driving me forward: 1) internal motivation, 2) realistic career goals, and 3) open support from my friends and family. In terms of internal motivation, I honestly enjoy learning. I enjoy taking classes teaching, designing projects, compiling notes, synthesizing everything, etc. I try not to compare myself to other students in my program because I know I am not exceptional, as far as scientists in my field go – I can get by, but I am not going to be a superstar research professor. And that is okay, because I am content to learn about my field and focus on developing my strengths.

That's where my realistic career goals come in. Although I enjoy doing science, my strengths are in teaching, writing, synthesizing, and project management.

I know I am headed for a career that won't necessarily look like my professors', but will be interesting and fulfilling. I remind myself of that during the frustrating parts of grad school as a way of pushing myself and forging ahead, i.e., 'If you can just get through this, there will be something great waiting for you on the other wise!'

In terms of friends and family, I have nothing but unconditional support, which I am extremely grateful for during the difficult times. It doesn't matter whether they understand what my research is about, or what is involved in a Ph.D., because many don't. They simply listen, tell me I can do it, and help me clear my head. Their support and lack of judgment is essential.

Another thing that also helped out is having a big committee – six. And it actually served me well. Two senior faculty on my committee are like two of my favorite people in the world. I took classes from Mary and TA'd for John. And so, having the two of them . . . it was really nice because it was kind of a security blanket knowing that they would always be my advocates.

For Sherry, having a clear sense of what was important to her progress, the moral support of friends and family, and the faculty mentors played instrumental roles in helping her to gain the knowledge and skills needed to progress in her doctoral program.

Jerry offered a different factor in his response about what made a difference in progressing through his program of study and the kind of support that was available or that he sought out. His response was similar to Sherry's about the role other graduate students.

Being older I think and having a little bit more maturity about oneself. I think that's definitely a factor. Not just confidence, but a self-discipline, and that's of course built off previous failures and previous attempts in realizing – you know, it suites you to just get this done – because I think that it's very easy to be distracted. Unfortunately, I think within the graduate level . . . you're always going to be as a minority, the only one. And so, then if you can just find enough people just to hang out with that may not even be with any discipline but there is still an indigenous person that you can just hang out with, I think that's important also. Plus, if you have some form of family connection, which I do in this town, that's important also.

Kathy's response to the research question about what factors or conditions that made a difference in her academic progress was the following:

Drive – there's a spiritual element to my drive. Working with the tribal Elder to protect and preserve ancestral knowledge – the great community need. There's a real purpose for my work. Having a clearly defined purpose from the get-go.

Sixty people have gotten Ph.D.s and six are working in the cultural resources area. Only few can work between the two worlds, communicate with the tribes and meet their needs. I wouldn't be able to live with myself if I didn't finish. There are so many who are ABD – there's a big difference in how you're perceived with a PhD. The work is so important – a lifetime commitment.

For Betty, her strategy in achieving progress toward degree completion involved making some basic decisions that resulted in changes with her doctoral supervisory committee. The following is how Betty described the steps she took:

I got rid of two committee members who were not helpful. No one understood what I was trying to do. I reconstituted my committee with faculty who had expressed a strong desire to help me finish. We set up weekly meetings with the Chair and one of the department faculty to provide comments on my work. It worked!

Summary

Several of the American Indian students' personal narratives describe the challenges they experienced of repeated racial micro-aggressions that characterized them as stereotypes and privileged knowledge in the classroom which did not encourage alternative perspectives. These experiences were confounding to the students who considered themselves to be in an intellectual environment where the idea of innovation and exploration of new knowledge forms the foundation of graduate education. Although the experiences presented significant challenges for students to negotiate, they maintained their movement forward in their programs of study.

Students described the various personal or academic sources that helped them to maintain momentum in their doctoral work. Friends, family and mentors, whether they are faculty or community relationships, have played key roles in their support systems. One significant factor that has contributed to maintaining their motivation is the importance that students perceive their

work to be for Native communities. Their initial intent to make a contribution to Native people in whatever field of study they decided to pursue influenced their decisions to go to graduate school and keeps them moving forward. As Kathy indicated “Drive” is a key aspect that is significant to their progress toward degree completion.

In Chapter 5, I will provide a brief overview on the major findings of the study on American Indian doctoral students. I will discuss limitations of the study and implications of the study findings for future research on American Indian students, and policies and practices of graduate education.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This final chapter entails a review of the major findings that were described in Chapter 4 in response to the four research questions that guided the qualitative study. I will discuss the implications of these findings for the students involved in the study, graduate education policy and practice overall, and literature related to these findings. I will then address the limitations of the study, followed by proposed ideas for future research on American Indian graduate students, particularly doctoral education.

The study explored the experiences of ten American Indian students in doctoral programs at the University of Washington. Data was gathered through an individual interview process with the students. A small body of data exists that gives some understanding of American Indian students' experiences in doctoral programs of study. More information is needed to identify factors that work to advance American Indian students' educational experiences and those that may present challenges and hinder progress toward students' educational goals.

Summary of Major Findings

Research Question 1: What factors, people, or experiences influenced your consideration to pursue graduate school, particularly doctoral education?

First, the findings indicate that faculty mentors were overall the most influential people for the doctoral students. Faculty were the individuals who initially raised the idea of graduate school and encouraged students to pursue it. The faculty were knowledgeable about students' academic performances and perceived that they possessed the intellectual capacity to pursue graduate education. Second, the faculty were instrumental in various ways of conveying to

students the knowledge required to understand graduate education – the language and expectations of it. For example, this process occurred by a faculty member suggesting to a student that he should apply for a summer research program. He was aware the program would provide information about graduate school, what was involved in the application process, how to apply to and the relevance of research to graduate education. Another student explained that her mentored advised her about how to develop a publication from a research project and the value of scientific conferences for professional development. Faculty represented Bourdieu's (1997) notion of social and cultural capital. Through their social networks and educational experiences they had acquired extensive knowledge about graduate education. Thus, they shared their knowledge with students which enabled their entry into the next educational level. Third, some students had a basic idea about graduate school and others did not. Their personal narratives reflected their intellectual curiosity and motivation to achieve educationally and professionally. It positioned them to be receptive to the faculty's encouragement that graduate school could be a reality for them.

Research Question 2: What factors determined your choice of university to attend and your program of study? This question was explored in two ways. How did students talk about going to graduate school? How did students decide on the specific institution and doctoral program?

Decisions students made about their respective doctoral programs were determined by them identifying the programs that best fit their education and professional goals. Students perceived that graduate education was a path not only to a different life for them but one more meaningful. They knew that an advanced education would equip them with more knowledge, training and to pursue potential professional opportunities. Second, students considered graduate

education to serve a functional advantage as well as career advancement that could potentially lead to a higher income. Third, the faculty-student relationships were a determining factor above other factors in students' decision-making process about a doctoral program. There were two facets to this idea. Some students had relationships with faculty outside of the University of Washington and the program they chose. They trusted the opinions of the faculty with whom they sought guidance about their particular field of interest. Then, there were the faculty who recruited the students to a doctoral program and who subsequently became their mentors. In summary, students considered that graduate school was a positive endeavor for their professional development and it would also serve as a functional advantage for upward mobility. The faculty's role proved to be significant in their decision making about selecting a doctoral program and thus the university.

Research Question 3: How does tribal culture and identity influence your intellectual development? How is it manifested in your scholarly work?

First, the concept of giving back to the community represents one aspect about how cultural identity is reflected in students' intellectual development and how it is manifested in their educational and professional goals. Students' described how their education and professional goals were driven by their desire to benefit the needs of American Indian people. Evidence of students' cultural identities is reflected in their approaches to teaching, in the methodological and theoretical perspectives in their research and scholarship, and in their intent to influence change and development of culturally relevant policies and practices in their professional fields to meet the needs of American Indian populations.

Second, the cultural identity of some students is reflected in the research projects they pursued. The students whose research is tribally based look to tribal Elders or other community members as sources of knowledge and learning. Students perceive that these individuals are the tribal scholars for their lived experiences and the knowledge they possess. It reflects students' perspectives that learning can occur outside of academia because the knowledge is not available within their particular discipline. Research projects require that students establish collaborative relationships with tribal members. The success of the research projects is incumbent upon the strength of these relationships since students' data gathering must come from the tribal informants. That an indigenous perspective is the basis of students' research and scholarship is indicative of their cultural identity and the way it is manifested in their work. As developing Indigenous scholars, the students' work in doctoral programs reaffirms the importance and relevance of Indigenous knowledge and that all knowledge is not located in academia.

The final finding to the question of how tribal identity and culture is manifested in students' academic development is that of mutual regard. Respect is the basis of mutual regard. The essence of the concept is reflected in students' tribally based research projects – seeking and gaining knowledge and giving back to the community, the collaborative relationships developed with tribal members to do their work – the reciprocity that the relationships entail, and how the results of their work is shared with tribal and academic communities.

Research Question 4: What were the factors of conditions that made a difference or presented challenges (academic, cultural, economic, psychological or spiritual) in your progress toward completing your doctoral program?

One finding to this question was the climate in their programs that students experienced. Racial micro-aggressions in subtle and unconscious forms occurred in the classroom in course discussions and one-on-one interaction with faculty. Racial micro-aggressive behavior occurred through forms of stereotyping, privileging of knowledge or world views of a particular group, and questioning the validity of non-white scholars. This behavior was a challenge and created stressful situations for American Indian students. Stereotyping occurred in the expectation that students were to be the designated speakers, or experts, to supplement course content on American Indians. It occurred as well with students' phenotype questioned because they did not fit the physical characteristics of what an Indian person should look like. The privileging of certain world views in classroom dialogues marginalized alternative perspectives. In this form, course content was narrowly defined although the course titles reflected broader content and perspectives. The onus was on students of color rather than the faculty for the inclusion of alternative perspectives on course content.

Further, students experienced racial micro-aggressive behavior when white faculty questioned the validity of American Indian scholars. References in students' research were questioned if Indigenous scholars were key sources on content, many of whom were distinguished scholars in their fields. Students were required to justify the use of Indigenous scholarly sources or to provide information to the faculty member on the scholars' work. Finally, white faculty questioned the composition of students' all-Native doctoral supervisory committees. They questioned whether an all-Native doctoral committee would hold students to rigorous standards and if broader representation would better serve students. Students felt well mentored because the Native faculty were leading scholars in their fields, their culturally

sensitive perspectives were important to students' intellectual grounding as Native researchers and scholars.

The findings on students' experiences of racial micro-aggressions in their programs of study were challenges they did not anticipate would occur in doctoral programs. Despite these negative experiences, students were not derailed in their progress toward degree completion. Students' experiences of racial micro-aggressions are empirical evidence that racism remains a reality in the educational environment and is an issue that requires further attention in the University of Washington diversity initiatives.

Limitations of the Study

In this following segment of Chapter 5, I will discuss some of the limitations of the qualitative study that I learned would have provided further in depth information about American Indian.

First, the study was limited geographically since it focused on a population of American Indian doctoral students located only at the University of Washington. A larger study designed to include multiple Research One Extensive sites would provide a larger sample size and more robust study results. Further, a larger study population would provide the opportunity to compare and contrast the data to identify similarities and differences of American Indian doctoral students' experiences and to generalize results to the larger population. A multiple site study with a larger student population would also provide an opportunity to explore the differences in gender experiences as well.

Second, a limitation of the study was that the sampling strategy did not include individual interviews with faculty and tribal community members who were mentors to students. Both

faculty and tribal members provided different kinds of mentoring to the doctoral students. Individuals from tribal communities shared knowledge drawn from their indigenous cultural traditions, data critical to students' research projects which would not have been available to them in academia. The faculty were the content experts of students' particular field of study in that they provided knowledge critical to students' intellectual development as researchers and scholars. Interviews exploring the roles of both tribal community members and faculty mentors would have been informative in understanding the dynamics of their interactions with students and how they viewed their mentor roles.

A third limitation of the study was that the concept of social and cultural capital was not explored with the students. Bourdieu's (1997) notion of social and cultural capital is an important concept relevant in examining American Indian students' experiences in pursuing graduate education. The opportunity to explore this idea in depth with the American Indian doctoral students would have been informative in understanding the sources from which students acquired knowledge about graduate school and the extent of the knowledge that students possessed. Purposeful sampling would allow gaining an understanding about the differences in students' backgrounds, and comparing and contrasting the knowledge of students – one group that possess high levels of social and cultural capital knowledge related to graduate school and others who in their experiences may have acquired little or no knowledge about it.

Implications for Future Research

This study made an initial exploration of American Indian students in doctoral programs, an area in which limited research has occurred. Students in the study represented a small segment of the American Indian student population in doctoral programs. Further research on

this population of graduate students is important to gain further understanding about the experiences of American Indian students in doctoral programs.

A multiple geographic site designed study: The limitations of the study indicate areas in which further research is needed. A study designed to encompass multiple geographic sites providing an increased number of doctoral students would potentially generate more meaningful study results. Data from such a study would provide a more in depth understanding of American Indian students' experiences in doctoral education. An exploration of gender experiences would provide data on commonalities or differences and determine any peculiarities of experiences requiring further attention.

Tribal community members and faculty mentors: Gaining an understanding about how tribal community members and faculty view their mentor roles as keepers and conveyers of knowledge and the dynamics of the mentor-student interaction would be valuable in learning how these relationships impact students' academic experiences and success. Added to this idea is the need to explore with students their perceptions of the mentor relationships, how they assess the value of the mentoring and what they identify as the key components of these relationships.

An idea closely connected to tribal community members serving as doctoral student mentors raises another consideration to be explored. Graduate students whose research projects focus on tribally based issues and work with tribal community members may encounter challenges in the translation and acceptability of their work in academia, specifically with institutional Human Subjects guidelines and Institutional Review Boards. Exploring with students challenges they may encounter with their tribal research projects help to understand the nature of these challenges and how students negotiate them.

Social and cultural capital: Many American Indian students remain the first generation in their families to pursue baccalaureate degrees. The number of students who decide to pursue advanced education are a significantly small number than those who attain bachelor's degrees. The findings of the study provided an example of one student's experience about the idea of pursuing graduate school. He, like many other American Indian students, due to their social and economic backgrounds, have acquired little if any social and cultural capital knowledge that would help prepare them to consider or pursue graduate education. A future multiple geographic site designed qualitative study that explores the extent of knowledge that American Indian students' possess of the social and cultural capital related to graduate education would provide informative and important data on this student population. The study could entail exploration of their backgrounds and allow a comparison and contrast of the extent of their knowledge and the impact of that knowledge on their educational experiences. Social and cultural capital is important for the implications it has for American Indian students and whether or not they pursue higher education, and especially graduate education.

Faculty as Mentors: A significant overall finding of this study was the role of faculty as mentors, or institutional agents, and the importance of the relationship between faculty and students and the implications for students' academic success. This finding is important for education leaders and policy makers to consider in future graduate education policies and practices, and for diversity initiatives. For the American Indian doctoral students in this study the faculty mentors made a significant difference in their lives. Faculty took the initiative to encourage the students to consider graduate school. Subsequently, faculty in their doctoral programs mentored them their academic progress. In the Graduate School's program review process students in academic units in which they are well mentored by faculty tend to progress

through their graduate programs in a timely manner, usually receive financial support, are encouraged to engage in professional development activities, and express overall satisfaction with experiences in their programs of study. It is the opposite for students in academic units in which a mentoring program do not exist and few are mentored well.

Findings of the study demonstrate the need for deeper connections between faculty and students. This idea raises some questions to consider: What would be the most effective mechanism to approach faculty on an institution-wide basis about the importance of mentoring students? What is the impact of faculty mentoring on academic excellence? Leadership is key in determining and articulating institutional priorities and new initiatives. The Provost, as the chief academic officer, seems to be the appropriate leader to initiate a faculty/student mentoring initiative. For example, one current goal of the University of Washington's Office of the Provost is to enhance student support beginning with their entry to the University through to their degree completion. While this goal may be directed more toward undergraduate students, the goal could be expanded to include an initiative on a faculty mentoring program directed at graduate students. The Provost's leadership on such an initiative would signify that faculty mentoring is one of the University's priorities to enhance graduate student support and their educational success. The initiative could be implemented in partnership with organizations as the Graduate School, which has institutional purview over graduate education, and the Graduate and Professional Student Senate (GPSS) and the representative student governing body. The policy incentive could be given consideration for buy-ins from faculty and leadership of academic units with the following criteria:

1. A proposal process for the development of mentoring programs in academic units would be established which would include a monetary award for program development.

2. Guidelines would be established for the periodic evaluation of mentor programs. Program evaluation criteria would require academic units to address the impact on academic excellence, student diversity recruitment, retention and graduation. Successful programs and participating faculty could be highlighted by the Provost's Office on an annual basis to maintain high visibility of the mentor programs.
3. Faculty mentoring would be a part of the criteria for tenure and promotion, and consideration for (eventual) salary increases.
4. Faculty mentoring would be one of the criteria by which graduate programs would be evaluated in the program review process.
5. Expand the Marsha G. Landolt Graduate Mentor Award to include more than one faculty member and add a significant monetary value to the awards.

An innovative and strategic approach is required from institutional administrative leadership to impress upon the faculty and leadership of academic units' about the important role of faculty mentoring in graduate education and research, and in the success of their educational missions.

Conclusions

I will briefly review the impetus for this qualitative study and its importance for graduate education. This study explored American Indian doctoral students' experiences at a public research university to understand the factors, conditions or individuals that influenced students' decision making to pursue doctoral education, to understand how students navigate their programs of study, how they negotiate through the various challenges they encounter, and importantly, how the American Indian doctoral students maintain their cultural integrity and balance in a predominantly White public institution, and how their cultural identity is manifested in their doctoral work as developing researchers and scholars. Equally critical in the exploration of students' experiences is to understand how the institutional climate, structure, policies and

practices foster their educational experiences or impede students' progress toward degree completion.

The significance of this study is that the American Indian student experience in graduate education, and particularly students in doctoral programs, is an area of higher education about which national research studies seldom have been conducted. It was not until recent years that the American Indian student population was included in national studies such as those conducted by the Council of Graduate Schools on graduate enrollment and degrees awarded. While these studies provide informative quantitative data (enrollment by fields of study, breakdowns by race and ethnicity, and gender) on the total national graduate student population, the studies do not include qualitative components that give a descriptive and comparative idea of students' experiences in graduate school. Other national studies conducted in recent years provide similar quantitative data on both American Indian undergraduate and graduate student populations (Pavel, Skinner, Farris, Cahalan, Tippeconic, & Stein, 1998; DeVoe and Darling-Churchill, 2008) but, as noted earlier in this study, also do not include a qualitative component that examines student's experiences. Garrod's and Larimore's (1997) qualitative study on Dartmouth College Native American graduates' provides compelling personal narratives of their experiences at an Ivy League institution. The graduates' reflections on their educational experiences help understand the challenges they faced in maintaining cultural integrity in a predominantly White elite educational institution. The value of the quantitative studies data is that they provide a national lens on the status of American Indian students in higher education compared to the other minority and White student populations. National data on graduate school enrollment and graduate degrees awarded continues to indicate that American Indians remain the smallest representation of traditionally underrepresented minority groups in graduate education.

The small number in graduate education is compelling evidence of the need for further research on American Indian doctoral students.

In his analysis of the study on Native undergraduate students' experiences, Tierney (2002) posed the following questions: "What do we know about Native American participation in academe . . . what happens to them when they enter?" Questions similar to those Tierney raised were explored in this study on American Indian doctoral students. These questions are important to consider for American Indian students at all levels of higher education. At the University of Washington, an important component of peer reviews of academic programs is to learn about undergraduate and graduate students' experiences in their programs of study. Inquiries of this nature are not conducted on a one-to-one basis but in group sessions. The academic program review format is not conducive to exploring students' personal experiences in depth. Many academic programs may have one student of color which would inhibit that student in providing certain information about their experiences. Overall, what is learned in the review process about students' experiences is not as meaningful as the information an in depth study would provide.

The University of Washington, similar to other public and private colleges and universities across the country, has continually enhances its diversity initiatives to increase the undergraduate and graduate student populations from underrepresented racial and ethnic minority groups. Tierney's question of, "What happens to them when they enter?" is an important question for practitioners and policy makers to consider in devising diversity initiatives, related particularly to American Indian students. This question argues for the need for further knowledge about American Indian students' experiences in graduate school at the University of Washington.

The findings of this qualitative study on American Indian doctoral students provide information that is useful for educators and policy makers involved in graduate education. Their experiences represent a microcosm of the nature of other American Indian graduate students' experiences in their academic programs. Themes identified collectively in the American Indian doctoral students' personal narratives describe key factors that helped them determine that graduate school could be a reality and the individuals or situations that enhanced their educational experiences or provided particular challenges for them. The findings of this study provide data relevant to academic programs, such as the significance of mentors to students' educational experiences and success. Further, the data is relevant to policies and practices of institutional diversity initiatives, for example, the need to address institutional climate issues, with the knowledge that racial micro-aggressions are a reality for students of color in the educational environment, and which have implications for the nature of students' educational experiences. Finally, the findings of the study offer considerations for policies and practices in the recruitment and retention of American Indian students.

I look forward in the future to continue to learn about the work of other scholars in examining and conducting research on graduate education and the experiences of American Indian doctoral students. My hope is that this study has contributed to this important scholarly conversation.

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Appendix A: Research Study Protocol

A. Notification to Doctoral Students:

1. American Indian doctoral students were sent a notice through a listserv. An overview of the proposed research study was provided. Students who were interested in participating in the study were instructed to respond by a phone call to confirm their participation.
2. Ten students responded to the notice confirming their interest to participate in the study.
3. A follow-up was made with the ten doctoral students to reconfirm their interest in participating in the study.

B. Individual semi-structured 1.5 hour interviews were scheduled and conducted.

Before each interview began students were given a Consent Form to review and sign which included the following information:

1. purpose of the study and that the interviews would be audio recorded;
2. a follow-up might occur to pursue clarification of comments or a particular question;
3. the possible risk, stress, or discomfort in providing personal information and being audio taped;
4. they could withdraw from the study at any time;
5. their identity would be held in confidence, and that the audiotapes would be held in a locked file and destroyed by a certain date;
6. benefits of the study to practitioners and policy makers.

C. Research Study Questions

Each student was first asked demographic questions, i.e., their name, tribal affiliation, program of study, year in doctoral program, background (e.g., reservation, urban), and college or university where they receive their undergraduate and master's degree.

Each student was asked the following four questions:

1. What factors, people or experiences, have motivated or influenced your consideration to pursue graduate school, and subsequently doctoral education?
2. What factors determined your choice of university to attend and your program of study?
3. How does tribal culture and identity influence your intellectual development? How is it manifested in your scholarly work?
4. What were the factors or conditions that made a difference or presented challenges (e.g., academic, cultural, economic, psychological, or spiritual) in your progress toward completing your doctoral program?

Appendix B: Resume

Augustine McCaffery

Tribal Affiliation: Comanche Nation of Oklahoma

EDUCATION

- Doctor of Education University of Washington (2012), College of Education
Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, (Higher Education)
Dissertation topic: *American Indian Students: Exploration of Their Experiences in Doctoral Programs*
- Master of Education University of Washington (1992), College of Education
Thesis: *Implications for American Indian Tribes and the State of Washington with Developing a Higher Education Partnership*
- Bachelor of Arts University of Washington (1985), School of Social Work
Focus: Community and Organizational Development

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

University of Washington

- 2002 – Present Senior Academic Program Specialist, Office of Academic Affairs & Planning; Advisor, Native Organization of Indigenous Scholars, The Graduate School
- 1986 – 2002 Assistant to the Dean, Office of Academic Programs
The Graduate School
- 1982 – 1986 Program Assistant, Office of Faculty Research & Planning
The Graduate School
- 1978 – 1982 Staff Associate, Office of Faculty Research & Planning
The Graduate School
- 1974 – 1978 Assistant to the Director, Staff Training and Development,
Office of the Provost

Lake Washington School District

- 1973 – 1974 Teaching Assistant – Finn Hill Junior High School
- 1971 – 1973 Secretary to the Principal, John Muir Elementary School

SELECTED PRESENTATIONS

- “Center for Studies with Indigenous Women at the University of Washington”, Aboriginal Education Research Forum, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, June 2005.
- “Role of Communities in Native Education”, 3rd Annual Showcase of American Indian and Alaska Native Scholarship at the University of Washington: Roles of Community in Knowledge Building, University of Washington, Seattle, WA, April 2004
- “Retention of American Indian and Alaska Natives in Graduate School” American Indian and Alaska Native Professors’ Annual Conference, Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ, February 2003.

“Policy Issues in First Nations/American Indian Education”, Dialogue on Multicultural Diversity Policies in Canada and the United States: Symbol of Substance?, University of Buffalo, Buffalo, NY, May 2003.

“Models of Community Stewardship/Future Invention”, Leadership Tomorrow Program Regional Challenge Day Panel, Redmond, WA, May 1998.

“Silent Whispers: Voices and Powers of Native American Women”, Northwest Center for Research on Women Forum, University of Washington, Seattle, WA, May 1997

Interactive Symposium: “Can We Talk? Dialogue and Pedagogy Across Difference”, Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, IL, March 1997

PUBLICATION

McCaffery, A. (2007). What We Know about Native Participation in Higher Education. In R. Josee and L. Johnson (Eds.), *Multicultural Education Policies in Canada and the United States* (pp.83-89). UBC Press, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C.

PROFESSIONAL HONORS

RSO Advisor of the Year Award, Office of the Vice Provost for Student Life, University of Washington, 2012

Nomination, Distinguished Professional Staff Award, University of Washington, 1997 and 2012.

Distinguished Leadership Award, National Association for Community Leadership, 1997.

The Edward E. Carlson Outstanding Alumni Award, Leadership Tomorrow, Greater Seattle Chamber of Commerce, 1995.

American Indian Educator Award, Washington State Indian Education Association, 1993.

Leadership Tomorrow Program, Greater Seattle Chamber of Commerce, Class of 1988.

ACADEMIC SERVICE

Member, Intellectual House Working Group, University of Washington, 2010–Present.

President’s Advisory Committee on Women, University of Washington, 2006–2008.

Governing Council Executive Committee, National Institute for Native Leadership in Higher Education, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM, 1998–Present.

Advisory Committee, American Indian Endowed Scholarship Program, Washington State Higher Education Coordinating Board, Olympia, WA 1994–Present.

Native American Advisory Committee, Office of Minority Affairs, University of Washington, 1994–Present.

Multicultural Advisory Committee, Office of the President, Western Washington University, 1998–2003.

Chair, Board of Directors, Professional Staff Association, University of Washington, 1995–1996.

Evaluator, American Indian Fellowship Program, Office of Indian Education, U. S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C. 1991-94

COMMUNITY SERVICE

President, Board of Directors, Friends of American Indians in Education (non-profit charitable education organization), Seattle, WA, 1993–Present.

Commissioner, Seattle Indian Services Commission, City of Seattle, 1994–Present.

Board of Directors, United Indians of All Tribes Foundation, Seattle, WA, 1992–2006.

Board of Directors, Northwest International Women's Conference, Seattle, WA, 1993–1994.
Citizens Advisory Committee, City of Seattle Community Development Block Grant/Human
Services Program, Office of the Mayor, Seattle, WA 1992-1993.

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

American Educational Research Association, American Indian and Alaska Native SIG,
National Indian Education Association