

Fostering Communities for BIPOC Students in Higher Education Spaces: The Impacts of Targeted Student Supports Services on Racially Hostile Campuses

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### **Abstract**

Racially hostile campuses often have significantly different retention rates based on students' race and ethnicity. Existing literature suggests that a better understanding of the negative impacts of a racially hostile campus climate at public universities can help to improve college outcomes for BIPOC students. BIPOC students may benefit from well-designed systems of support to bolster their retention rates, including a focus on targeting specific populations of students. This study was designed to improve understanding of the impacts of such targeted student supports within a racially hostile campus climate, examining the impact on first year retention rates of BIPOC students at one predominantly white institution in the Pacific Northwest.

This dissertation included college records of 2,046 First Year Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) BIPOC students at UW-Seattle from 2016-17. Chi-square goodness-of-fit analyses were conducted to determine whether retention rates in the first year differed across EOP status. Multiple logistic regression test was used to determine the relative influence of the independent variables EOP status, Gender, Frequency meeting with advising, Pell grant eligibility, Husky Promise grant eligibility, GPA, UW-prescribed racial category, and the average number of Instructional Center visits. Results from multiple logistic regression analyses suggested that student ethnicity (being Black, Latinx, and Asian) and GPA explained a significant amount of variance in measures of retention rather than-targeted student support services, (e.g., advising, academic seminars, scholarship). The findings suggest that while targeted student support services have important associations with retention, BIPOC and GPA are the most important predictors of retention. While the larger goal should remain transformation of a racially hostile campus climate, in the meantime, expansion of targeted student support services can dramatically impact retention rates for specific BIPOC students.

*Keywords:* racially hostile campus climate, BIPOC, targeted student support services, advising, retention

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## Introduction

Legacies of institutional, cultural, and individual racism remain deeply embedded in higher education policy, procedures, and practices. The history of higher education—specifically at public universities, is laden with the hostile and sometimes violent exclusion of students of color by white folk<sup>1</sup> (Bensimon, 2004; Harper, 2008; Torres, Howard-Hamilton, & Cooper, 2003). In 1963, as he personally denied the admission of Descendants of Slaves African American students in front of Foster Auditorium at the University of Alabama, Gov. George Wallace (a known racist white man) infamously promised “segregation today . . . segregation tomorrow . . . segregation forever” (Elliott, 2003). Most all-white male leadership in the 60s at public universities echoed Wallace’s sentiment, and despite national legal mandates to the contrary, never fully embraced the enrollment and support of students of color at “their” schools; with physical labor and gladiator/slave type activities (i.e., football, basketball, and track) serving as exceptions (Kozol, 1991; Darling-Hammond, 1995; Cameron & Heckman, 2001; Rothstein, 2004; Sedlacek, 2004). Over the past 60 years, this resistance to educating and supporting students of color has calcified into what is now referred to as racially hostile campus climates (Chang, 2000; Griffin & Allen, 2006; Solórzano & Ornelas, 2004; St. John, 2003; Harper, 2011; Quaye & Harper, 2020).

The term racially hostile campus climates describe learning environments that developed from a legacy of racial exclusion and institutional, cultural, and individual racism and are characterized by unwelcoming, unsafe, and/or uncomfortable experiences for students of color at public universities from white-framed philosophies (Chang, 2000; Griffin & Allen, 2006;

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<sup>1</sup> used especially to explicitly signal the inclusion of groups commonly [marginalized](#) (Lahmann, 2019)

Solórzano & Ornelas, 2004; St. John, 2003; Harper, 2011; Quaye & Harper, 2020). An example demonstrating a racially hostile campus climate came in early 2019 when a group of white University of Washington college republicans hosted an affirmative action bake sale displaying racially insensitive advertisements near a multicultural event (Wiles, 2019). Another example was in late 2017 when at least 100 Harvard students exchanged social media posts of racist and sexually offensive language (Kamenetz, Lattimore, & Depenbrock, 2017). The Harvard white students posted images with captions that were racist and anti-Semitic, among other offensive themes. These hateful examples represent the many ongoing incidents that contribute to racially hostile campus climates and continue to shape the day-to-day and cumulative collegiate experiences for many students of color, often leading them to leave before graduation.

In 2006, the University of Washington (UW) supported an internal study that attempted to understand the impacts of a racially hostile campus climate and why students of color leave UW at higher rates than Asian and white students. This report, Study of Attrition and Retention (UW STAR) (2006) was conducted by the Office of Educational Assessment (OEA) and the Office of Minority Affairs and Diversity (OMA&D). OEA and OMA&D hoped that information produced by the study would help UW build on retention intervention strategies then used to foster social, academic, and emotional support for students of color. This current study tested the efficacy of UW STAR recommendations for retention intervention strategies within the first year at UW. Although the UW STAR report proposed several retention and intervention strategies for students of color, this dissertation focused specifically on targeted student support services (targeted SSS). For the purposes of this dissertation, targeted SSS included advising, academic seminars specific for Black Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC), and first year academic tutoring. Through first-year programs (FYP), BIPOCs are- in theory, better able to integrate into

the campus community, access resources, be involved in inclusive programs, and navigate a racially hostile campus climate (UW STAR, 2006; Gregerman, Lerner, Hippel, Jonides, & Nagda, 1998; Quaye & Harper, 2020; Tinto, 1987, 1993; Whitt, 1993). To assess the impact of such interventions, I applied an ecological model of human development (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, 2005) to explore the conceptual relationship between FYP targeted SSS and BIPOC retention within the first year.

Since about 2016, there has been a growing trend of documented overt racism, hate speech, and racially motivated violence across society; such racism is argued to specifically impact BIPOCs at public universities (Quaye & Harper, 2020; Lott & Love, 2020). This resurgence of overt racism (hate speech and violence) exacerbates the more covert racism (e.g., subtle microaggressions, lack of welcoming environments, culturally insensitive or exclusionary curriculum, and hostile learning environments) that the UW STAR Report addressed (Quaye & Harper, 2020; Lott & Love, 2020). While violent, hate-filled attacks often make the news, BIPOCs constantly face less commonly acknowledged racial microaggressions (Huber & Solórzano, 2015), or what Sue (2010) refers to as “brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults to the target person or group” (p. 273). A racially hostile campus climate thus reflects both overt and covert racism (Derman-Sparks & Phillips, 1997). This dissertation thus focused on the effectiveness of targeted SSS in an FYP for BIPOCs enrolled at a racially hostile public university.

### Statement of the Problem

Racial microaggressions contribute to a racially hostile campus climate leading to lower retention rates of BIPOCs at public universities (UW STAR, 2006; Quaye & Harper, 2020; Quaye & Chang, 2012; Patton, 2006). Despite gradual raising awareness of microaggressions, public universities have not systematically addressed racial microaggressions on their campuses (UW STAR, 2006; Bell, 1992; Pierce, 1995). In effect, many BIPOCs feel threatened, isolated, and alienated at public universities (UW STAR, 2006; Museus, Mueller, & Aquino, 2013; Nunez, 2011; Strayhorn, 2012). This causes BIPOCs to feel unsafe, unwelcomed, and unsupported (UW STAR, 2006; Strayhorn, 2012). According to UW STAR, there are always going to be some students who drop out or stop out in the first year - regardless of race (UW STAR, 2006). Yet as the report clarifies, white and certain Asian groups do not face the same racism as BIPOCs, leading BIPOCS to stop out at higher rates than their white and Asian peers (UW STAR, 2006).

It is important for BIPOCs to feel supported, welcomed, and safe at public universities (Strayhorn, 2012; Quaye & Harper, 2020). Research shows once BIPOCs feel safe within their campus environment, they are more likely to integrate with the campus community and that is a key predictor of retention (UW STAR 2006; Hurtado, 1992; Harris III & Wood, 2013; Jayakumar, 2012). The UW STAR report provided two justifications for retaining BIPOCs: 1) UW desire to build a critical mass of BIPOCs to help combat the racially hostile campus climate; this cannot occur if a significant number of BIPOCs students stop out after the first year. 2) UW desires to have a diverse student body to enhance the learning of all students (UW STAR, 2006). An important caveat is this dissertation is limited to assessing the impacts of FYP targeted SSS in increasing retention rates, as a first step towards addressing racially hostile campuses. While

the goal is to transform from overt systemic racism, the current study is limited to mitigating the impacts of racial microaggressions on first year BIPOC students.

Through this dissertation, I tested the efficacy of FYP targeted SSS intervention strategies from the UW STAR as currently applied by UW practice. Two specific research questions guided this dissertation: (a) How does FYP targeted SSS for BIPOCs impact participating students' retention at UW in the first year? and (b) How does FYP targeted SSS for BIPOCs impact participating students' retention at UW after the first year?

### **Literature Review**

This literature review clarifies how racially hostile campus climates, including racial microaggressions, impact BIPOCs retention. Two sections justify the need for this research: a) Racially hostile campus climates and b) Retention intervention strategies for BIPOC students.

#### **Racially Hostile Campus Climates**

Higher education has a long history of resistance to even acknowledging the racial hostility of campus climates (Bourke, 2010; Fisher & Hartmann, 1995; Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Whitt, 1996). Apart from Historically Black Colleges & Universities (HBCUs) and other minority serving institutions, institutions began to accept students of all races only after extended litigation. Institutions' long-running resistance to integration and inclusivity conveyed not only the message of institutional racism but, in some cases, outright hostility toward BIPOCs (Ozaki & Parson, 2008; Pascoe, 2009; Solórzano, Allen, & Carroll, 2000, 2002).

Some researchers have thus explored the relationship between BIPOC students' perception of a racially hostile campus climate and their retention rates (Patton, 2006; Oberg, 1960; UW STAR, 2006; Person & Christensen, 1996). Both Hurtado and Ponjuan (2005) and

Hurtado & Carter (1997) found that BIPOC students who perceived a racially hostile campus climate had lower retention rates. To be clear-BIPOC students attending public universities are not the problem, the hostile racism that they are met with is the problem under focus. Others have found that perceptions of a racially hostile campus climate are the most powerful predictor of BIPOC students' retention rates (Rooney, 1985; Wang, Sedlacek, & Westbrook, 1992; Stewart, 2008; Strayhorn, 2012; Tierney, 1999). In contrast, Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, Whitt, & Associates (2005) found that having positive perceptions of a campus racial climate (e.g., having trans-racial friendships, feeling the campus was committed to the success of BIPOCs, feeling professors respect BIPOCs) was significantly positively related to a higher retention rate.

Hurtado and her colleagues (1998, 1999) focused on the influence of a racially hostile campus climate on the outcomes of BIPOC students. Hurtado pointed out four aspects of a racially hostile campus climate that affect the experiences and retention of BIPOCs in college. These dimensions include the institution's historical legacy of exclusion of various groups, its structural diversity being the numerical representation of BIPOC on campus, the psychological dimension which includes the perceptions and attitudes between and among different ethnic groups, and the behavioral dimension focusing on the intergroup relations on campus. Hurtado (1998) emphasized that if institutions are to create a positive welcoming campus climate, the interconnectedness of all aspects of climate must be understood and addressed. Simply having many BIPOC students on campus will not ensure that the psychological climate on campus is supportive and welcoming for BIPOCs. Thus, to help recruit and retain BIPOCs, institutions must commit to addressing all aspects of campus climates and ensure a welcoming and supportive environment where all students can succeed (Solórzano, 2000; Harper & Hurtado,

2007). This framing suggests that, as institutions diversify, institutions must change to meet the needs of the increased diversity of students.

Also looking at aspects of campus climate, Solórzano (2000) studied the effects of “racial microaggression” on the experiences of BIPOC students on PWI’s. Racial microaggressions, first defined by Chester Pierce (1974), are visual, verbal, or nonverbal insults—often subtle and sometimes unconscious—directed specifically toward Black people. Solórzano points out that many BIPOC students carry the cumulative burden of a lifetime of microaggressions into any new situation. Solórzano (2000) notes that racial microaggressions take a variety of forms on college campuses, including negative assumptions and expectations that are communicated to students by faculty or peers, being ignored when speaking in class, rude treatment by roommates in and out of the residence halls, and being excluded when groups are forming in class or for study purposes outside class. A lifetime of contending with racial microaggressions leads BIPOC individuals to constantly evaluate their interactions with others and question the motivation of others’ behavior. At the least, this need to interpret others’ behaviors and comments is distracting. At the worst, microaggressions cause BIPOC students psychological stress, exacerbating students’ sense that they do not belong and discouraging their desire to deal with a racially hostile campus environment (Solórzano, 2000).

Research on BIPOC retention thus often focuses on the racial hardships BIPOC students face when attending public universities, noting that the key challenges facing BIPOC students include being underrepresented and feeling alienated (Brown, 2000; Schwitzer et al., 1999). Tinto (1987) suggested that a sense of separation pervades BIPOC students’ perceptions at public universities and that this feeling of separation contributes to dissatisfaction and increased attrition. However, Tinto fails to consider why BIPOC students feel like this in the first place,

which is because they are targeted by racism at public universities. For example, Harris III and Ward (2013) argued that a lower level of retention for BIPOC students was due partially to their transition and adjustment to Eurocentric college environments that expected students to assimilate into a dominant (Eurocentric) culture. They pointed out that this culture was often very different from BIPOC students' own cultures and communities. They further argued that the problem with this expectation, and the reason BIPOC students leave an institution, was that colleges often put the burden of change on the students— expecting them to assimilate into a culture that does not value them, while doing little to transform the culture into one that is more welcoming and supportive for BIPOC students.

Rendón (1994) agreed with this perspective, suggesting that several factors affected BIPOC student retention. The first was that students could have difficulty making connections in an institution that they perceived to be racially exclusive. Obviously, such difficulty would have a bearing on Astin's (1984) and Tinto's (1993) findings regarding the importance of retention of students making a significant connection with a faculty or staff member at their colleges and universities. It is hard for BIPOC students at public universities to make meaningful connections with faculty and staff members if they do not believe in them and/or believe the only reason they are on campus is because of race and not merit. Tinto's (1993) model of integration draws on Durkheim's (1951) theory of social integration and posits that the more that students are integrated within their respective institutions' academic and social structures, the more likely they will thrive in college and persist through graduation. Although Tinto's theory is one of the most cited explanations for college student retention, this perspective has been criticized for placing the responsibility of integration on the student with little attention given to the responsibilities of the institution (Hurtado & Carter, 1997; Nora, 1987; Rendon, Jaloma, & Nora,

2000; Tierney, 1999). In other words, according to Tinto's theory, if a student leaves college, it is largely due to their inability to become integrated and not to the inadequacies of the institution.

Rendón (1994) identified other barriers, including low socioeconomic status, poor academic preparation, and lack of clear career goals. Rendón pointed out that the first factor was often particularly difficult for students who were the first in their families to attend college, and in part due to racially exclusive historic policies, many BIPOC students are what are now commonly referred to as first-generation students. According to Rendón, such a position—being BIPOC and first in one's family to attend school—forced students to navigate multiple identities, asking them to fit in with family members and old friends who mattered to them at the same time they were being asked to establish themselves in a racially hostile new educational system. Rendón (2009) later referred to strategies to address this disjoint as *sentipensante*, which translates into sensing (in relation to contemplative thoughtfulness) and thinking (in relation to more traditionalized academic knowledge). Importantly, Rendón (2009) clarified that, while students can strengthen their approaches on their own, best practices support students through thoughtful, race-conscious institutional support structures.

### ***Structural Aspects of a Racial Hostile Campus Climate***

Based upon the UW STAR (2006), the aspect of a racially hostile campus climate that UW faculty and staff felt was most significant for BIPOC was the lack of a critical mass of students like themselves. About 80% of faculty and staff identified critical mass as a key factor, and most students also identified the impacts of a lack of a critical mass of BIPOC students at public universities (UW STAR, 2006). Furthermore, critical mass is often cited by the literature on retention as a serious issue for BIPOC students (Rendón, Jalomo, & Nora, 2000; Hurtado et

al., 1999, Throgmorton, 1999; Brown, 2000; Schwitzer et al., 1999; Tinto, 1987). Based upon the UW STAR (2006) faculty, staff, and students said that without a critical mass of students who shared their races, ethnicities, and backgrounds, BIPOC students often feel isolated and threatened (UW STAR, 2006). As one staff member pointed out, students can feel simultaneously lost in the large group unlike themselves and conspicuous in that group, and both feelings are uncomfortable (UW STAR, 2006). According to one faculty member, such isolation can lead to what Cross (1991) referred to as “spotlight anxiety” (UW STAR, 2006). Spotlight anxiety can make students feel that they are carrying their race into every academic and social encounter (Steele, 1997). However, spotlight anxiety has a greater impact than personal discomfort (Steele, 1997). Linked to the message that BIPOC students do not belong in college (Steele, 1997), spotlight anxiety connects with academic performance by silencing students, keeping BIPOC students from asking or answering questions, from articulating their own views or commenting on those of others—in short, from full participation in their own learning.

**Lack of Diversity.** A plethora of higher education literature demonstrates the benefits of interacting with diverse others such as advancing student retention and intellectual self-concept (Chang, 2000), promoting cross-cultural acceptance (Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin, 2002), and facilitating the ability to see the perspective of others (Hurtado, 1992). This evidence calls for a broader exploration of campus cultural affiliations and how those affiliations might be associated with diversity goals, namely interactional diversity, and a sense of belonging (Strayhorn, 2012). The lack of a critical mass of others like oneself can influence aspects of learning related to peer groups (Quaye & Harper, 2020; UW STAR, 2006). Based upon the UW STAR (2006), faculty and staff members pointed out that when students—especially first-year BIPOC—feel disconnected from other students, it can be difficult to form academic networks, such as study

groups, or to find partners with whom they can work on projects (UW STAR, 2006). They noted that the sheer size of the campus and classes, as well as the racially segregated nature of the campus, meant different groups often have little meaningful and sustained interaction with each other, a reality on many college campuses, as noted by Rimer (2002).

The sense that there are few other students like oneself can make students hesitate to speak with others about their experience in college. If students feel they cannot share their experiences with other students, it can be difficult to separate hurdles associated with being a college student from those based on navigating individual or systemic racism. Without the ability to compare their experiences against those of others, students sometimes fear that they are the only ones who are homesick, who have failed a test, who are having trouble with financial aid, who are having difficulty separating from parents, or who are afraid to approach faculty and staff (Quaye & Harper, 2020). Furthermore, when students cannot share their experiences with other similar students, they lose the possibility of learning how others have resolved similar issues.

Networks that allow students to work with faculty are also essential for students' success (Quaye & Harper, 2020; Brown, 2000; Tinto, 1993). About half of the faculty and staff and many of the students in UW STAR, noted that the small number of BIPOC faculty, staff, and administrators are part of the critical mass problem. Such limited exposure to BIPOC communities increases both the students' sense of isolation and the message that BIPOCs do not belong at public universities (UW STAR, 2006). Moreover, students acknowledged that the few faculty members of color on campus are often overextended and over-involved just as they themselves are, making the process of building connections with faculty of color even more difficult (Quaye & Harper, 2020).

Based on recent trends, public universities are increasingly becoming diverse; however, without institutional commitment to eradicate prehistoric policies and protocols, a critical mass of BIPOC students, staff, and faculty, will continue to experience structural racism. The UW STAR (2006) similarly reported that faculty, staff, and students identified two aspects of a racially hostile campus climate that paralleled Hurtado's (1992) "behavioral" category that affect BIPOC students' decisions to leave: curricula and teaching practices. In addition to not having a critical mass exacerbating racially hostile campus climates for BIPOC students, about 60% of the faculty and staff the UW STAR (2006) interviewed believed that the curriculum and the teaching strategies students experience may be additionally problematic for BIPOC undergraduates. The UW STAR, in parallel with other higher education research, noted that classroom curricula often leave out the experiences of BIPOC students and that teaching strategies often leave little room for student participation or intellectual contributions (Placier, Kroner, Burgoyne, & Worthington, 2012; Solórzano, Allen, & Carroll, 2002; Tierney, 1999).

Based upon UW STAR (2006) data, another feature of a racially hostile campus climate that some faculty and staff members noted was a general insensitivity to the needs and experiences of BIPOCs in some academic departments. Several interviewees pointed out specific academic units that students felt they had to avoid or that they were advised to avoid by others (UW STAR, 2006). Some students spoke of feeling that they were "funneled" into certain majors (such as American Ethnic Studies or Sociology) and not encouraged to pursue others—what one faculty member described as "the underground railroad approach" to advising. According to several interviewees, they believed that interactive pedagogies were more consistent with BIPOC students' cultural practices than lecture/test teaching modes (UW STAR, 2006).

According to Rosenberg and McCullough (1981) mattering is “the feeling that others depend upon us, are interested in us, are concerned with our fate, or experience us as an ego-extension” (p. 165). Thus, mattering is a psychological desire to feel loved and accepted. Mattering is important because it is positively associated with self-esteem (Dixon & Kurpius, 2008). One of the ways to facilitate mattering and, invariably, a sense of belonging is to welcome and support various cultural affiliations (Strayhorn, 2012). Embedded within the concept of a sense of belonging is the understanding that students arrive on college campuses with distinct cultural affiliations and lived experiences (Hurtado & Carter, 1997). Such affiliations and experiences influence how students perceive their campus interactions and maneuver to find places where they feel mattered.

Relatedly, scholars have emphasized the need to create culturally responsive environments (Tierney, 1999), in recognition that student cultural background has been reported to be a significant factor in determining how various groups transition to campus (Museus, 2011). Such research demonstrates the importance of students acquiring membership within cultural spaces that reflect their identities. Such scholars agree that colleges committed to creating diverse campus environments must attend to many student cultures, social identities, and interests.

**Sense of belonging.** ‘Belonging’ in educational settings is most often conceptualized as an individual’s subjective/internal perception of his/her connectedness to an institution and its social and environmental contexts; an individual feels some level of belonging in response to social interactions and environmental features (Strayhorn, 2012; Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Dill & Zambrana, 2009). Widely agreed to be essential to academic success, the construct of a sense of belonging is dynamic, multi-faceted, and highly contextualized. Furthermore, there are

individual and cultural variations in how people perceive external cues and how they express and satisfy the need to belong (Baumeister & Leary, 1995).

According to the UW STAR (2006), regarding climate issues, faculty, staff, and students noted that BIPOC students often “get the message”—from the society at large, as well as from individuals on campus—that they do not “belong” in college at all. This message becomes clear when one sees few faces like one’s own among the student and faculty populations. The sense that one does not belong in college can lead students to stop out when other factors are also present (Quaye & Harper, 2020). The message that BIPOC students do not belong at the UW comes from friends and families, who sometimes argue against pursuing a college education. These complexities add to the difficulties of BIPOC students developing a strong sense of belonging at all PWI’s, and as in this study, at UW as reported by the UW Star (2006).

Understanding how to facilitate BIPOC students’ sense of belonging is thus a key element for campus administrators and higher education researchers concerned with student retention, persistence, success, and a variety of learning and development outcomes. The intersections of various social identities produce unique experiences of belonging in various contexts, such that not all BIPOC students experience belonging in the same way in the same context. BIPOC students’ need to belong is a continuous process that changes as contexts change. These contexts included the message that BIPOC students do not belong in college, and that faculty/departments are insensitive to BIPOC students’ feelings (Quaye & Harper, 2020; Strayhorn, 2012). Using Tinto’s (1993) framework of student departure, Strayhorn (2012) examines the academic and social experiences that contributed to BIPOC students’ sense of belonging rather than Tinto’s often critiqued concept of integration. Intersectional theory—the notion that social identities are interconnected and construct individual experiences within

systems of power, privilege, and oppression (e.g., Dill & Zambrana, 2009) —is used to consider differences in how BIPOC students experience belonging compared to white students.

The culture of racially hostile campus climates reflects the norms, values, and experiences of whiteness, thus making it difficult for some BIPOC students to feel like they belong (Strayhorn, 2012). Institutionalized forms of racism, heterosexism, classism, sexism, and other forms of oppression serve as the backdrop against which students from BIPOC groups search for their belonging (Strayhorn, 2012). For those who do find their sense of belonging, it may be within contexts that are not reflective of the dominant culture (e.g., BIPOC Greek organizations, summer bridge program serving mostly BIPOC and first-generation students, and cultural centers), thus leaving the larger institutional culture unchallenged and unchanged (Quaye & Harper, 2007).

Based upon the UW STAR (2006) conversations with faculty, staff, and students revealed a sense of belonging that affects BIPOC students' decisions to leave campus. BIPOC faculty, staff, and students reported ongoing experiences of insulting treatment (UW STAR, 2006) that impact their sense of belonging at UW. On the one hand, such treatment can be viewed as examples of racial microaggressions, described as subtle visual, verbal, or nonverbal insults directed towards BIPOC, which are sometimes unconscious (Solórzano, 2000; Pierce, 1975). On the other hand, such treatment may not be racially motivated but rather attributable to generalized inhumane behavior. As faculty, staff, and students described behaviors that could be perceived as racial microaggressions, their focus was on how difficult it becomes to have a sense of belonging and continuously weigh behaviors that other students might not think twice about (UW STAR, 2006). They noted that time and energy spent on weighing and interpreting several such behaviors every day becomes overwhelming and that students would rather seek

environments in which racial microaggressions were infrequent— where they knew they were safe from such behaviors—than to stay in those where frequency necessitated constant interpretation.

Applying sense of belonging to college experiences is complicated because racially hostile campus climates have multiple contexts; for instance, social contexts with friends, academic contexts in classrooms and with professors, and institutional contexts such as student support services and curricular offerings. Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pedersen, and Allen (1998) note that college campuses “are complex social systems defined by the relationships between the people, bureaucratic procedures, structural arrangements, institutional goals and values, traditions, and larger socio-historical environments,” (p. 10). The college environment has many sub-contexts and is also shaped by larger socio-historical forces, suggesting that a multi-faceted approach to the study of belonging in college would be appropriate. Despite the multi-faceted nature of the college experience, most extant studies of belonging in higher education define the construct in broad terms without differentiating whether it concerns institutional, social, or academic contexts (Quaye & Harper, 2020; Strayhorn, 2012). For example, Hurtado and Carter (1997) define ‘sense of belonging to the campus’ as an “individual’s view of whether he or she feels included in the college community” (p. 327). Maestas, Vaquera, and Zehr (2007) define a sense of belonging as “students’ subjective feelings of connectedness or cohesion to the institution” (p. 239), and Hoffman, Richmond, Morrow, and Salomone (2003) write, “Sense of belonging is theorized to reflect students’ integration into the college system” (p. 1).

These existing definitions, however, fail to address several issues; for example, does feeling “included in the college community” refer to the people within the college environment or the institution? Does “integration into the college system” imply social, academic, or

institutional integration? More nuanced and multifaceted definitions and corresponding measures are needed to better understand factors that affect sense of belonging and outcomes of that belonging. A more differentiated approach to studying belonging may be especially useful to practitioners focused on supporting specific BIPOC populations. Some researchers thus focus on one dimension of belonging in college: social belonging. In their study of Latinos across nine public universities, Hurtado and Ponjuan (2005) defined belonging as “students’ feelings of social cohesion and group membership” (p. 239). While more specific in their definition of belonging, in this study, Hurtado and Ponjuan (2005) perhaps miss out on other dimensions of belonging that may be equally important to understand in relation to understanding student success in college and how institutions can change practices to support BIPOC students.

### **BIPOC Retention Strategies**

Higher education persistence and retention programs seek to avoid the negative consequences of attrition by offering support for students (Habley, Bloom, & Robbins, 2012; Tinto, 1993). Models of academic and social integration provide the conceptual foundations for such programs (Lee, Donlan, & Brown, 2010; Longwell-Grice & Longwell-Grice, 2008; Wolf-Wendel, Ward, & Kinzie, 2009). Those models reflect the evidence that integration within a campus community and an individual-level sense of belonging are important dimensions of BIPOC student persistence in higher education (Hoffman, Richmond, Morrow, & Salomone, 2002; Strayhorn, 2014; Strayhorn, 2012). Within college systems, some racial minorities (e.g., African Americans, Hispanics, and Native Americans) and stigmatized groups (e.g., first-generation, or sexual-minority students) question their social belongingness (Hobson-Horton & Owens, 2004; Hollifield-Hoyle & Hammons, 2015; Walton & Cohen, 2011). Interventions that affirm and cultivate social belonging can positively affect BIPOC student behavior over time and

may have broad relevance as university programs are increasingly focusing on retention (Patterson & Butler-Barnes, 2016). For instance, Walton and Cohen (2007) tested a social-belonging intervention that exposed students to statements about social difficulties in college. Findings indicate that the intervention successfully protected participants' sense of belonging and that overall academic performance was better among participants than among nonparticipants. However, these authors blame BIPOC student for their struggles, rather than the racially hostile campus climate they are situated in.

Literature on college student retention suggests that many factors contribute to a student's decision to stop out of college. Schrader and Brown (2008), for example, suggested that four areas affected the success of students in college, including personal characteristics (growing up in the hood), demographic characteristics (being a black male), racist structures (being a poor Black male), and institutional characteristics (racially hostile campus climate). Tinto (1993) echoed these stereotypical attributes, attributing the following risk factors for retention:

- Attending school part-time
- Having lower test scores or high school rank than others
- Being African American, Latino, or Native American
- Stopping out of college at some point
- Living off-campus
- Working more than 20 hours per week
- Not participating in campus activities
- Attending a college that was not the student's first choice
- Being turned down for a program or major
- Receiving loans rather than grants (educational debt)

Tinto (1993) argued that a personal connection with any faculty or staff member at public universities was strongly correlated with whether students decided to stay or leave. However, Tinto's list ultimately relies upon deficit framing, putting the burden on the BIPOC student rather than recognition of racism, classism, or racially hostile campus climates. Tinto ultimately

suggests that being BIPOC and potentially poor are risk factors, rather than racially hostile campus climates. In addition, Quaye and Harper (2020) suggested that supportive student personnel services, such as advising, orientation, and academic support programs, are positively correlated with retention (as opposed to racial identities and income status). It is important to note that, while potentially successful, these services are meant to help students navigate racially hostile campus climates, not transform the context of racial hostility.

Additional research has examined support structures to further mitigate the impacts of racially hostile campus climates. A mix of survey items and measures has been used to assess interpersonal support and interaction at college. Across all the studies reviewed, there is evidence that feeling interpersonal support both socially and academically predicts student retention. Examples of measures of social support included in prior research as predictors of retention are the following: whether residence hall climates were socially supportive (Quaye & Harper, 2020); whether students, in general, had a high frequency of positive interactions with both students and adults on campus (Hurtado & Ponjuan, 2005); how hard it was to make friends at college (Hurtado & Carter, 1997); how socially adjusted students felt at college (Ostrove & Long, 2007); how socially accepted they felt (Quaye & Harper, 2020)); and whether they were a member of a fraternity on campus (Maestas et al., 2007). Extant research on retention offered the following examples of measures of academic support: whether residence hall climates were academically supportive (Quaye & Harper, 2020); frequency of discussions about courses outside of classes (Hurtado & Carter, 1997); feeling academically adjusted at college (Ostrove & Long, 2007); feeling that professors were pedagogically caring (Quaye & Harper, 2020); and feeling that professors took an interest in their development (Maestas et al., 2007). Some researchers

included an item or two related to a racially hostile campus climate as part of their measures of social support, whereas others treated hostile racial campus climate as a separate variable.

Although all measures of faculty interaction were significantly related to retention, how researchers measured interactions with professors varied. For example, Hurtado and Carter (1997) measured the frequency of student interactions with professors, whereas Maestas et al. (2007) measured the nature of those interactions—the level of perceived caring in the former and the level of perceived interest in the student in the latter. Some researchers report that BIPOCs are more likely than white students to question whether their professors respect them or feel that they belong in their classes (Mina, Cabrales, Juarez, & Rodriguez-Vasquez, 2004), which in turn is associated with an overall lower level of reported retention at college. For some BIPOCs, finding a genuine and caring faculty mentor is significantly related to their comfort levels on campus, or serves as a protective buffer against adversity, which in turn helps them be successful in educational endeavors (Bowen & Bok, 1998; Dayton, Gonzalez-Vasquez, Martinez, & Plum, 2004; Hurtado & Ponjuan, 2005). Similarly, Hurtado and Ponjuan (2005) and Maestas et al. (2007) measured the frequency that a student participated in academic support programs on campus and both studies found frequency to be a significant predictor of retention. Previous research has shown that feeling socially connected to peers at college is correlated with retention at college. Likewise, perceiving a campus climate supportive of diversity and inclusion has been linked with higher retention.

To summarize, research suggests that, while racial identity may not affect attrition, a racially hostile campus climate does. The literature also suggests that variables that are external to the student, such as the characteristics of the institutions themselves (campus site, regional location, selectivity, curriculum, and enrollment) influence student retention, and these characteristics may

also interact with others in ways not yet understood (Whitt, 1996; Kuh, 2008; Guiffrida, 2006; Harris III & Wood, 2013; Kiang, 2002). Taken together, many complex issues affect the retention of all students. However, BIPOC students contend with additional circumstances that can affect their retention, rooted in structural and institutional racism. BIPOC students are dealing with a climate they experience as unwelcoming, leading to the sense that they do not belong at the institution. These two aspects of BIPOC students' college experience may reduce involvement with campus activities, as well as limit connections with college faculty and staff. In addition, this accumulated racism may cause psychological stress, which can affect students' academic performance, as can family and financial issues that may take students away from their studies.

There is a direct alignment between this extensive research documenting the racialized barriers BIPOC students face at public universities, and the UW STAR study. Both clarify how racial microaggressions are a normalized aspect of a racially hostile campus climate. These contexts and experiences directly impact BIPOC student retention rates, particularly within the first-year experience. While there are many interventions used to interrupt these systemic and individual barriers, the focus of this research is to examine one set of approaches as applied to BIPOC student supports at one comprehensive public university. In the next section, I explain Bronfenbrenner's ecological model of human development (1977, 2005) to frame conceptually how FYP targeted SSS impacts BIPOCs on a racially hostile campus climate.

### **Theoretical and Conceptual Framework**

Bronfenbrenner (1977) argued that human development research involved artificial, unfamiliar, and short-lived situations that were not easily generalized to real-life settings. Bronfenbrenner further argued that “human environments . . . are so complex in their basic organization that they are not likely to be captured . . . through simplistic unidimensional research models that make no provision for assessing ecological structure and variation” (p. 514). To address this problem, Bronfenbrenner proposed an ecological approach to include multiple theoretically relevant environmental variables. According to his model, everyone develops within their unique ecological environment consisting of “a nested arrangement of structures, each contained within the next” (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, p. 514).

The first two layers, the microsystem, and the mesosystem, directly contain the individual and reflect the settings of the individual’s day-to-day experiences. Microsystems represent a complex of relations between the developing person and the environment in an immediate setting containing that person (Bronfenbrenner, 1997, p. 514-515). As such, the microsystem comprises the home, school, peer group, and community environment of the individual. An example of this would be teachers, community leaders, principals, and academic advisors. The mesosystem, or the “the interrelations among major settings containing the developing person” (Bronfenbrenner, 1997, p. 514-515) is, in essence, a system of microsystems that involves links between home and school, between peer groups and family, and between family and community. An example of this will be community centers, mentorship programs, tutoring centers, and seminars.

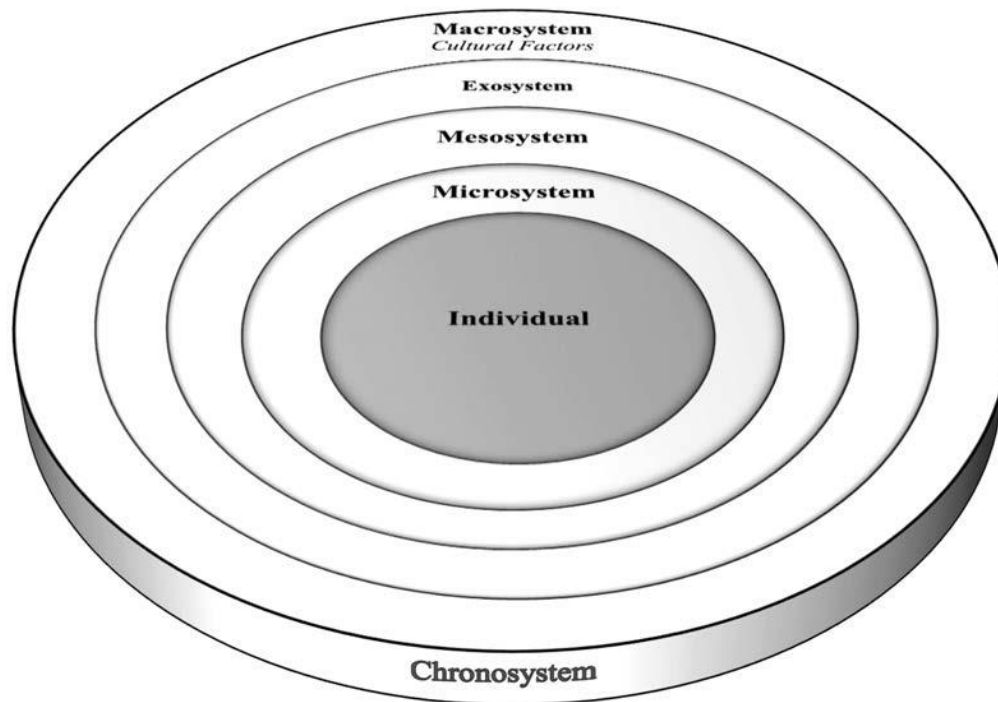
The outer two layers, exosystems and macrosystems, represent the factors that influence developmental settings (Bronfenbrenner, 1997). The exosystem contains links between two or more settings that indirectly affect individuals (Bronfenbrenner, 1997). These linkages can be in

the form of policies and mandates that indirectly influence individuals, such as financial aid, affirmative action, and immigration policies. The macrosystem is the largest and most distant collection of people and places to the individual that still exercises significant influence (Bronfenbrenner, 1997). The macrosystem is composed of cultural patterns and values, specifically dominant beliefs, and ideas, as well as political and economic systems, such as shifts in the political climate, community gentrification, and conflict of cultural traditions. These systems all interconnect to influence human development.

Lott & Axland-McBride (2015) used Bronfenbrenner's model to explore the relationship between campus environments, female college student peer culture, and the tendency to volunteer while in college. They emphasized a framework to (a) identify one multi-faceted campus environment that is linked to volunteerism among college women and (b) investigate the experiences of both those who do and do not volunteer in college (Lott & Axland-McBride, 2015). The results of their study offer a template to apply the ecological model to FYP targeted SSS. This dissertation thus applies Lott & Axland-McBride's conceptualization of Bronfenbrenner. Instead of the focus on volunteerism, the focus was on the impact of FYP targeted SSS on BIPOC retention.

In this dissertation, I used Bronfenbrenner's two innermost layers, microsystem and mesosystem, to conceptualize the roles FYP targeted SSS play in supporting BIPOC students within a specific racially hostile campus climate. For example, a BIPOC student at UW may receive vital information and potentially comfort from their academic advisor, who, in turn, might support them in navigating a racial incident with a faculty member. In this hypothetical case, the academic advisor is part of the student's unique microsystem. Perhaps the BIPOC student is also part of a seminar designed to support BIPOC students in the first year. Both

microsystems, the advising relationship and seminar, interact to create part of this student's unique mesosystem. This mesosystem should be designed to connect students to other FYP targeted SSS as well, maximizing the support structures that are available to BIPOCs at UW. For example, if a BIPOC student needs academic support, they may first reach out to their academic advisor for support (microsystem). The academic advisor may then provide information about where to find help (mesosystem), such as a specific tutoring service (another microsystem).



*Figure 1.* Three-dimensional Model of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Model  
With the chronosystem depicted as the third dimension

For the purposes of this dissertation, the microsystems under consideration are developmentally instigative characteristics, ecological niches, and proximal processes. These microsystem features help shed further light on why BIPOCs stop after the first year within the context of a racially hostile campus climate. First, developmentally instigative characteristics are personal attributes that “involve an active orientation toward and interaction with the

environment” which, in turn, can nurture or disrupt human development (Bronfenbrenner, 2005, p. 139). Second, ecological niches are “particular regions in the environment that are especially favorable or unfavorable to the development of individuals with particular personal characteristics” (Bronfenbrenner, 2005, p. 111). Last, proximal processes include “social interaction between the developing person and one or more others” and “engagement in progressively more complex activities and tasks” (Bronfenbrenner, 2005, p. 97). Microsystems and mesosystems create spaces with proximal processes to act as navigators through which FYP targeted SSS can impact BIPOCs’ retention at public universities. Furthermore, developmentally instigative characteristics may prompt BIPOCs to be attracted to specific microsystems (advising and seminars) and specific ecological niches (other FYP targeted SSS) within a racially hostile campus climate.

For example, a BIPOC student enters the first year of UW with the expectation that they will feel welcome and connect with faculty, staff, and students who reflect their backgrounds. These developmentally instigative characteristics may cause the student to engage more with their FYP targeted SSS (here, representing a unique microsystem). Because of the interplay between developmentally instigative characteristics and the nature of the ecological niche, the first-year student experience at public universities for those who engage with FYP targeted SSS may be different from that of other BIPOCs whose microsystem may not include FYP targeted SSS. This is because BIPOCs may be engaged in more activities and networking with BIPOC staff, faculty, and students (here, representing proximal processes) as part of FYP targeted SSS, which may help the student develop a deeper understanding of how to navigate racially hostile climates. Taken together, these unique components are intended to contribute to a mesosystem of

supports to influence first-year BIPOC persistence. Thus, in the next section, I lay out methods for examining the effectiveness of such approaches.

## **Methodology**

This section describes the methodology used in this dissertation, clarifying participant demographic characteristics and measurements used in the study.

### **Study Context**

This dissertation compared retention rates for two sets of students: 1) EOP-1 (EOP students who were not eligible to receive EOP's FYP targeted SSS) and 2) EOP-3 (EOP students who are mandated to receive FYP targeted SSS as a condition of admittance to UW). The first set is designated EOP-1 students, who are BIPOC students that are traditionally admitted as first-year students at UW. These students are invited to participate in EOP programming with an opt-in or opt-out choice provided during summer orientation and are encouraged to use OMA&D's auxiliary services, including-EOP advising, scholarship support, the Instructional Center, EOP-specific study abroad supports, and related services. EOP-3 students, on the other hand, are conditionally admitted and mandated to participate in two academic advising sessions per quarter, an academic seminar in the Fall and Spring quarters, and 75 hours per quarter at the IC, all during their first year. While the majority of EOP students are low-income BIPOC students, EOP-3 students represent a similar background, with less successful institutional academic indicators coming into UW. Thus, the expectation is that EOP-3 students would need additional support to transition to UW, and these are provided through the previously mentioned augmented EOP services. EOP-3 students are BIPOCs that have been holistically admitted to UW and are typically from less resourced high schools, lower income, and first generation, with the expectation that they will excel at UW with FYP targeted SSS provided by OMA&D. Additional programs that provide FYP targeted SSS, such as federally funded TRIO and College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP) programs and support programs offered

through academic departments, while expected to benefit BIPOC students, are excluded from this dissertation because they have a more specific focus.

### ***EOP Advising***

The Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) promotes academic success and graduation for BIPOC students at the University of Washington. EOP academic counselors are BIPOC generalists, trained to successfully steward BIPOC students through the selection and scheduling of classes, exploration of possible majors, and development of career goals. The EOP team also assists BIPOC students with financial aid, housing, social and emotional issues, and a host of additional supportive services' advisors, in theory, practice holistic academic advising that acknowledges and supports diverse educational pathways that BIPOC students might engage during their UW experience. Supports include:

- Academic and Career Planning
- Culturally Sensitive Personal and Social Support
- Pathways to Research, Internship, and Job Opportunities
- EOP Endowment Scholarships
- OMA&D Study Abroad Opportunities
- Financial Aid and Scholarship Counseling
- Leadership and Professional Development
- Mentoring
- Networking Opportunities
- Student Centered Advocacy

EOP-3 students are required to meet with their academic advisor twice every quarter for the first year to help plan courses, go over academic performance, and check-in about social

emotional support. EOP-1 students have the same access to the same EOP advisors; however, they are not mandated to see EOP advisors in the first year, and thus, typically do not use such advisors as frequently.

### ***Academic Seminar***

EOP Scholars Academy is a year-long program designed to help facilitate a successful first-year transition into college for incoming BIPOC EOP-3 students. EOP advisors and former EOP-3 students teach these sessions to strengthen personal and academic relationships with EOP-3 students. EOP-3 students are required to take this seminar in the Fall and Spring quarter as conditions of their enrollment into UW. EOP-1 students do not have the option of the EOP Scholars Academy. The goal for the EOP Scholars Academy is to support EOP-3 students in a culturally relevant transition into UW, including understanding and accessing OMA&D resources, understanding, and developing habits for academic success, exploring education pathways, and setting personal educational goals.

### ***The Instructional Center (IC)***

The mission of the OMA&D Instructional Center (IC) is to promote the academic achievement, retention, and successful graduation of BIPOC students and to improve their chances of gaining admission to graduate and professional schools. This is achieved through providing academic support and mentoring, a supportive and nurturing learning community that specifically acknowledges a range of cultural, racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity. EOP-3 students are required to attend at least 75 hours of IC support each quarter as a condition of admission. EOP advisors monitor students' hours weekly. EOP-1 students have

the same access to the IC as EOP-3 students however, there is no requirement to access services and EOP advising does not monitor how frequently they go. The goal of this is to support BIPOC students academically through culturally relevant tutoring support from instructors. Also, some of the academic support is in the form of supplemental instruction.

### **Research Questions and Hypotheses**

This dissertation assessed the individual and cumulative impacts of EOP-3 specific supports on student retention, guided by the following research questions:

RQ1. How does FYP targeted SSS for BIPOCs impact participating EOP-3 student retention at UW in the first year?

*Hypothesis 1.* EOP-3 students are retained from Fall to Winter Quarter at rates comparable to EOP-1 students.

*Hypothesis 2.* EOP-3 students are retained from Winter Quarter to Spring Quarter at rates comparable to EOP-1 students.

RQ2. How do EOP-3 services impact participating students' retention at UW after the first year in comparison to EOP-1 students?

*Hypothesis 3.* EOP-3 students are retained from first-year Spring Quarter to second-year Fall Quarter at rates comparable to EOP-1 students.

## Data and Variables

Pre-existing data from 2016-17 were drawn from the UW Student Database (SDB), with permission granted by UW OMA&D. The SDB consists of all 2016-17 UW students, and includes quarterly retention, EOP Grouping, Gender, GPA, Financial Aid information, Race & Ethnicity, registration quarterly, advisor visits, IC hours, and participation in academic seminars in the first year. Following data collection, and after pairing data with variables and survey data, participants' student IDs were changed to unique numbers and names removed to keep student identities anonymous.

My sample of EOP BIPOC students were drawn from this larger data set that included 7,136 UW First-Year students in 2016-17. After excluding low-income, first-generation White students participating in EOP programs, as well as students participating in CAMP and TRIO programs, the study sample of First Year EOP BIPOC students resulted in 2,406 students. I only included the three largest BIPOC racial groups at UW, Latinx (n=1009), Asian (n=971), and Black (n=426). I did not include American Indian or Pacific Islander due to the limited number of participants from these racial groups. Most of the sample were EOP-1 students (n=2050) while the remaining (n=356) were EOP-3 students. The sample for first year EOP students was predominantly female (n=1589) and comprised mostly of first-generation college students (n=1570).

Please note that all BIPOC students (Not including BIPOC International Students on F-1/J-1 Visas) are coded as EOP-1 regardless of if they utilized EOP services or not. In addition, UW uses a data method called "maximum representation," in which UW chooses which race to

report if a student is multiracial. For example, if a student is Black and Japanese, UW records the student as Black for maximum representation. This racial recoding, while extremely problematic, is not the focus of this dissertation (for additional discussions on the impacts of monoracial racism on multiracial students, see Knaus, 2005; Root, 1996; and Wijeyesinghe & Jackson, 2001). Students coded as African American / Black; Asian (which included Filipino, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Laotian, Cham, Burmese, Hmong, and Mien), and Latinx were included in this dissertation. EOP students coded as Korean, Japanese, and Chinese were excluded to prioritize historically underserved Asian BIPOC, such as Southeast Asians. Due to limitations in the pre-existing data, gender was reported as sex, limited again as only a binary option; non-binary participants were thus not accounted for in the data set.

**Table 2***Demographic Characteristics of Study Sample (N=2,406)*

	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
<b><u>Race/Ethnicity</u></b>		
Black	426	17.7
Latinx	1009	42.0
Asian	971	40.3
<b><u>Gender</u></b>		
Male	817	33.9
Female	1589	66.1
<b><u>First Generation</u></b>		
	1570	61.5
<b><u>EOP</u></b>		
EOP-1	2050	85.2
EOP-3	356	14.8

*Note.* The Asian group consisted of students of identified as Asian Other, including Filipino, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Laotian, Cham, Burmese, Hmong, and Mien.

Table (2) presents the educational characteristics of all sample participants. Over half of BIPOC students were eligible for the Pell Grant and Husky Promise grant (54.4%). This means that in my sample, over half of the first year BIPOC students needed aid to attend UW in 2016-17.

**Table 2***Educational Characteristics (N=2,406)*

	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
<b>Pell Grant Eligibility</b>	1311	54.4
<b>Husky Promise Grant Eligibility</b>	1311	54.4

## Variables

The dependent variable is retention for this study, retention is a dichotomous variable that represented whether a EOP student was retained in the First Year of college at UW. A dummy variable was created in which EOP students who were retained in the first year was coded (1) and EOP students who were not retained coded (0) (see Table 3 for variable definitions).

Independent variables selected in this study are based on extant literature from the UW STAR that found them to influence retention on a racially hostile campus climate. Variables are: (a) Average IC Visits, (b) Average Visits with Advisors, (c) EOP Grouping, (d) Pell Grant Eligible, (e) Husky Promise, (f) GPA, (g) Gender, and (h) Racial Grouping (see Table 3 for full list of independent variable definitions and coding schemes). Please note, for Racial Grouping I had three response categories: *Being Black*, *Being Latinx*, and *Being Asian*. Since race is a categorical variable that can take on three different values in my model ("*Being Black*", "*Being Latinx*", or "*Being Asian*"), I needed to create  $k-1 = 3-1 = 2$  dummy variables. To create this dummy variable, I let "Latinx" be the baseline value (reference group) since it occurs most often in race categories.

**Table 3**

### *Variables*

<b>Dependent</b>	
Retention	Dichotomous: 0= no, 1=yes
<b>Independent</b>	
Hours spent at IC	Continuous: 0=none to 130 hours per quarter
Frequency meets with advising	Continuous- 0=none to 10 times per week
EOP Grouping	Dichotomous: 0=EOP-1, 1=EOP-3
Gender	Dichotomous: 0=not female, 1=females
GPA	Continuous: 0=C or less to 5=A
Pell Grant	Dichotomous: 0=yes, 1=no
Husky Promise	Dichotomous: 0=yes, 1=no
Racial Grouping	Dichotomous: 0=Asian, 1=Black

## **Analytic Strategy**

Bivariate logistic regression analysis was the most appropriate data analytic technique for this study given the dichotomous nature of the dependent variable (Retention). Logistic Regression allows researchers to explore associations between a binary outcome (Dependent=Retention) and predictors (Independent=Predictors of Retention). The outcome is the propensity for the event to occur. The logistic regression model represents the effect of the independent variables on the odds of being retained. Specifically, logistic regression is the statistical approach to use when the outcome that is being predicted is dichotomous, which is the case for the retention variable (0=no, 1=yes). One advantage of logistic regression is that it can be a mix different types of predictors (e.g., scaled, and categorical) simultaneously, which allowed examination of multiple predictors. Variables were entered using the all-in (enter) model (e.g., Racial Grouping, EOP status, Pell grant eligibility, Husky Promise grant eligibility, GPA, gender, the average number of IC visits, and average number of advisor visits) to allow for the analysis of the impact of the variables on retention. For instance, the pell grant eligible variable predicts the impact of pell grants for retention; the gender variable predicts the impact of gender for retention.

SPSS provided the Exp(B) results for each predictor(s) which indicates how a change in each predictor (s) (e.g., EOP group) by (1) unit multiplies the odds of a EOP student returning the next year. The sign of the B statistic tells you if the variable is statistically significant or not. Positive Bs indicated positive relationships and negative Bs indicate negative relationships. The Exp(B) statistics are the odds of the outcome happening. The Wald test is the squared logistic coefficient ( $B$ ) divided by the squared standard errors. It was used to determine whether the

individual contributions of each independent variable on the prediction of whether a student returned to school is statistically significant or not at the 0.05 significance level.

The data set revealed a small amount of missing data (7). The seven missing cases were removed from the analyses because they had missing data for at least one of the variables included in the logistic regression. To be included in the regression analysis, a participant must have responses for every variable included in the analysis.

Also, given that the logistic regression analysis that were continuous included- GPA, average IC visits, and average visits with advisors as predictors did not require the assumption of normality to meet; therefore, normality tests for these variables were not run. For my other independent variables- I cannot show minimum, maximum, mean, and SD for those that are dichotomous variables. Those are done for continuous variables. Whereas for dichotomous variables, I show the counts – which are currently in Table 1 & 2 of this document.

I have included a table (Table 4) for each of these variables that contains the skewness and kurtosis values for each variable. These statistics are indicators of normality. Skewness values that range between -1 and +1 are indicators of normality. Based on my results, only GPA falls within normality ranges based on skewness. Kurtosis values that range between -3 and +3 are indicators of normality. Based on my results, only GPA falls within normality ranges based on kurtosis.

**Table 4***Continuous Variables Descriptive Statistics*

	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
					Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
GPA	2.51	4.00	3.7010	0.24970	-0.981	0.048	0.508	0.097
Average IC Visits	-0.35	123.25	5.9505	13.26197	3.646	0.048	16.755	0.097
Average Visits with Advisors	0.00	7.60	0.7930	0.79462	2.017	0.048	7.639	0.097

While there are minimal assumptions of the logistic regression, correlations were used to assess whether there was a multicollinearity threat to logistic regression. Multicollinearity exists when the correlation among the predictors in the regression model are too high ( $r = 0.80$ ) and can weaken the analysis by inflating the size of the error terms in the model. As shown in Table 5 there was no threat of multicollinearity as none of the correlations among the predictor variables exceeded 0.90. Outliers in my study were defined as having residuals that are three standard deviations from the average residual. There were no outliers that identified under this definition.

Chi-square goodness of fit was used to examine whether the fall (Hypothesis 1), winter (Hypothesis 2), and annual (Hypothesis 3) retention rates among the EOP-3-Scholar group differ significantly from those in the EOP-1 group.

**Table 5***Intercorrelations among Predictors*

	<i>Constant</i>	<i>EOP Group(1)</i>	<i>Pell Grant Eligible(1)</i>	<i>Husky Promise(1)</i>	<i>GPA</i>	<i>Gender(1)</i>	<i>Racial Grouping</i>	<i>Average IC Visits</i>	<i>Average Visits with Advisors</i>
<i>Constant</i>	1.000	-0.697	-0.077	-0.001	-0.988	0.066	-0.086	-0.024	-0.042
<i>EOP Group(1)</i>	-0.697	1.000	0.034	-0.088	0.690	-0.135	0.029	-0.003	-0.013
<i>Pell Grant Eligible(1)</i>	-0.077	0.034	1.000	-0.839	0.051	-0.001	0.062	0.018	0.009
<i>Husky Promise(1)</i>	-0.001	-0.088	-0.839	1.000	-0.012	-0.026	0.025	-0.025	-0.016
<i>GPA</i>	-0.988	0.690	0.051	-0.012	1.000	-0.134	-0.002	0.017	-0.006
<i>Gender(1)</i>	0.066	-0.135	-0.001	-0.026	-0.134	1.000	-0.008	0.005	0.015
<i>Racial Grouping(1)</i>	-0.086	0.029	0.062	0.025	-0.002	-0.008	1.000	-0.051	-0.011
<i>Average IC Visits</i>	-0.024	-0.003	0.018	-0.025	0.017	0.005	-0.051	1.000	-0.245
<i>Average Visits with Advisors</i>	-0.042	-0.013	0.009	-0.016	-0.006	0.015	-0.011	-0.245	1.000

Note. \* $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

## Results

This section presents the results of data analyses, organized into four parts that address the overarching research question: How does FYP targeted SSS for BIPOCs impact participating EOP-3 student retention at UW in the first year? The results show a cautiously optimistic trend from retention of EOP-3 students as shown in Table 7. Each quarter EOP-3 students stop out more than EOP-1 students. For example, in Table 7, EOP-3 students went from Fall retention at 100% to 86.2% in the following Fall. This is by no means saying that FYP targeted SSS for EOP-3 students are not working, but instead that the first year of support might wear off. Based upon the Logistic Regression Model (Table 8), FYP targeted SSS for BIPOCs is not a

statistically significant predictor of retention of EOP students. The biggest predictor(s) of retention is GPA, and Race Grouping (Being Black, Asian, or Latinx).

### **Test of Hypotheses**

RQ1. How does FYP targeted SSS for BIPOCs impact participating EOP-3 student retention at UW in the first year?

*Hypothesis 1.* EOP-3 students are retained from Fall to Winter Quarter at rates comparable to EOP-1 students.

As shown in Table 6, there was 100% fall retention among students across both EOP groups; therefore, there was no variance amongst EOP status in fall retention rates.

*Hypothesis 2.* EOP-3 students are retained from Winter Quarter to Spring Quarter at rates comparable to EOP-1 students.

There was variance in EOP status for both winter [ $\chi^2(1) = 8.57, p < .01$ ] and annual retention rates [ $\chi^2(1) = 24.81, p < .001$ ]. Specifically, the winter quarter retention rate (98.8%) in the EOP-1 group was greater than in the EOP-3 group (96.8%).

RQ2. How do EOP-3 services impact participating students' retention at UW after the first year in comparison to EOP-1 students?

*Hypothesis 3.* EOP-3 students are retained from first-year Spring Quarter to second-year Fall Quarter at rates comparable to EOP-1 students.

A similar pattern emerged for annual retention rates as from winter to spring quarter. As shown in Table 7, the EOP-1 retention rate of 93.9% was larger than that of the EOP-3 retention

rate of 86.8%. Based on these findings, there was statistical support for all Hypotheses; EOP-3 retention rates are comparable to EOP-1 through the first year to second year Fall, though at slightly lower rates. However, as soon as EOP-3 students are not required to receive FYP targeted SSS, their retention rates gradually drop.

**Table 6***Retention Rates of Combined EOP*

	%
<b>Fall Retention</b>	100.0
<b>Winter Retention</b>	98.5
<b>Annual Retention</b>	92.9

**Table 7***Fall, Winter, and Annual Retention Rates Across EOP Status*

	Fall		Winter		Annual	
	EOP-1	EOP-3	EOP-1	EOP-3	EOP-1	EOP-3
No	0%	0%	1.2%	3.2%	6.1%	13.2%
Yes	100%	100%	98.8%	96.8%	93.9%	86.8%
<u>Total</u>	<u>2177</u>	<u>379</u>	<u>2151</u>	<u>367</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>319</u>

### **Logistic Regression**

Table 8 shows the relative contribution of each of the independent variables in their ability to determine retention status. The Logistic Regression helped answer question(s) on why EOP students stop out of college. The significance of my model includes the collection of all 8 predictors of whether BIPOC were retained over a year or not is statistically significant,  $\chi^2$  statistic, [ $\chi^2 (11) = 33.21, p < .0001$ ]. Table (8) showed the relative contribution of each of the

independent variables in their ability to determine retention status. However, my model accounted for a small amount of variance- the model explained about 5% (Nagelkerke  $R^2 = 0.050$ ) of the variance in determining whether a student was retained over the course of a year. While this is a small amount of variance, it is a significant amount. This basically means that there is a remaining 95% of variance in BIPOC retention that is not explained by my prediction model.

As shown in Table 8, (2) independent variables are statistically significant in predicting EOP retention: GPA and Racial Grouping. As shown in Table 8, GPA ( $B = 1.48$ ,  $Wald = 9.53$ ,  $p < .01$ ), was a predictor of retention; EOP students are 4.37 times more likely to return to UW for every 1-point increase in their GPA. Students belonging to Black, Latinx, and Asian groups ( $B = -0.38$ ,  $Wald = 3.25$ ,  $p < .07$ ), are .68 times more likely to return to UW.

**Table 8**

*Logistic Regression Results (N=2046)*

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	p	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for EXP(B)	
							Lower	Upper
EOP Group Participant	-0.40	0.31	1.72	1.00	0.19	0.67	0.37	1.22
Pell Grant Eligible	-0.07	0.38	0.04	1.00	0.85	0.93	0.44	1.95
Husky Promise Recipient	0.14	0.38	0.14	1.00	0.71	1.15	0.55	2.41
GPA	1.48	0.48	9.53	1.00	0.00	4.37	1.71	11.16
Being Female	-0.04	0.20	0.03	1.00	0.86	0.96	0.65	1.44
Racial Grouping	-0.38	0.21	3.24	1.00	0.07	0.68	0.45	1.03
Average IC Visits	0.00	0.01	0.25	1.00	0.62	1.00	0.99	1.02
Average Visits with Advisors	-0.01	0.12	0.00	1.00	0.96	0.99	0.78	1.27
Constant	-2.43	1.78	1.86	1.00	0.17	0.09		

## **Limitations**

There are several limitations to consider when interpreting the results of this study. The sample does not allow this study to be generalized to all public universities as it is unique to accessing UW-specific services and based upon UW-specific racial categorizations. This study also does not consider part-time, transfer, returning, and commuter status students. The sample thus might not be compared to other regional public universities (i.e., University of Oregon, Boise State University, or Portland State University), despite potentially similar student profiles. In addition to sample size limitations, low variance of analytic measures and lack of BIPOC student voice (such as surveys about sense of belonging) prevented a complete analysis of leading predictors of BIPOC students being retained during the first year of college. Future studies should attempt to survey BIPOC students, using pre/post surveys, asking them about their experiences on a racially hostile campus climate, particularly paying attention to impacts on race, sexual orientation, and gender identity of students, Campus Climate surveys, and GPA for students who are retained at lower rates.

## **Discussion**

This study investigated the impact of FYP Targeted SSS on BIPOC students' retention within a racially hostile campus. Few studies have focused on effectiveness of BIPOC targeted supports in the first year on a racially hostile campus climate. Retention of BIPOC students is an important task that promotes life altering opportunities for BIPOCs to career advancements and grows diverse perspectives on racially hostile campuses. The results from the logistic regression model indicate that GPA, Husky Promise, and Student Race are statistically significant correlated with retention within the first year for BIPOCs on a racially hostile campus climate. Based upon the results from the Hypotheses test, EOP-3 students are retained at an overall rate

that is only slightly lower than EOP-1. The first hypotheses, that EOP-3 students are retained just at the same rate as EOP-1 students from fall quarter to winter quarter, is supported (with both at a 100% retention). There is, however- a cumulative drop off in effect of FYP targeted SSS for EOP-3 students, which shows a gradual decline in retention of EOP-3 students compared to EOP-1 students over time. Thus, hypothesis two, that EOP-3 students are retained from Winter Quarter to Spring Quarter at rates comparable to EOP-1 students, is not supported. Similarly, hypothesis three, that EOP-3 students are retained from first-year Spring Quarter to second-year Fall Quarter at rates comparable to EOP-1 students, is also not supported.

This analysis, however, suggests a meaningful pattern of supports. As soon as EOP-3 students are not required to receive FYP targeted SSS, their retention rates gradually drop. This may not be solely attributed to individual or cumulative impacts of FYP targeted SSS, as external and internal factors not engaged by this analysis could contribute to EOP-3's gradually declined retention rate. Importantly, based upon my model, EOP status is not a statically significant predictor of retention based upon the Logistic Regression Model (Table 8). This could also be in part since EOP-1 students can also access most resources for EOP-3 students. Logistic Regression results instead suggest that there are or five statically significant retention indicators, such as: GPA, Husky Promise eligibility, and Race [including Black, Latinx, Asian].

### **GPA**

GPA represented the largest predictor indicator of retention of BIPOC students, with students being 4.67 times likely to return for every 1-point increase in their GPA ( $B = 1.48$ ,  $Wald = 9.53$ ,  $p < .01$ ). This finding is consistent with other studies that have found retention and GPA to be a predictor of retention (Bender, 1997; Boudreau & Kromrey, 1994; Jamelske, 2009). However- based upon my results, I believe the Instructional Center (IC) played a part in this

predictor, and further analysis should be done to study this potential impact. Hurtado and Ponjuan's (2005) found in their BIPOC sample that visiting tutoring services specific for BIPOC increased GPA and predicted retention. The IC has evidence which shows that students who use the IC are up to 3.14 times more likely to continue after their first year compared to students with similar backgrounds who don't (OMA&D, 2015). Nevertheless, GPA in numerical value -is not reflective of the services that BIPOC students' access that can lead to academic engagement (The IC, Advising, or FYP Targeted SSS).

### **Advising Visits**

Based upon the results of my model, advising represented was not a statistically significant predictors of retention for BIPOC students (Table 7). This finding is inconsistent with other studies that have found Advising and Retention to be statistically significant (Hurtado & Carter, 1997; Walton & Cohen, 2007; Quaye & Harper, 2020).

### **Visiting The IC**

Based upon my model, The IC was not statistically significant predictor of retention for BIPOC students. This is inconsistent with other studies that have found academic tutoring tend retention to be statistically significant correlated (Boudreau & Kromrey, 1994; Wright Sidle & McReynolds, 1999).

### **Husky Promise**

Based upon my model, Husky Promise was not statistically significant predictor of retention for BIPOC students. This is inconsistent with other studies that have found Grants and Scholarships play a critical role for retention (Quaye & Harper, 2020; UW STAR, 2006).

**Pell Grant**

Based upon my model, Pell Grant was not statistically significant predictor of retention for BIPOC students. This is inconsistent with other studies that have found Pell Grant's led to retention (Clary & Snyder, 1991; Smith, 1994; Sundeen & Raskoff, 1994).

**Gender**

Based upon my model, Gender was not statistically significant predictor of retention for BIPOC students. This is inconsistent with other studies that have found Gender to be a predictor of retention (Bauman, Yeh, & Lott, 2022; Strayhorn, 2016).

**EOP Grouping**

Based upon my model, EOP Grouping was not statistically significant predictor of retention for BIPOC students.

**Race Grouping (Being Black, Asian, or Latinx)**

This analysis indicated that student race (Black, Latinx, and Asian) is a predictor of first year retention at UW for EOP students. This is regardless of if students are EOP-1 or 3, receiving FYP target SSS in the form of advising and academic support.

One way to explain this finding is that EOP has world class services that impact retention, these services are disrupting institutional and structural racism. Advising supports students in developing a sense of belonging and escaping the campus environment to talk to someone that looks like them on a racially hostile campus climate. According to Quaye & Harper (2020), BIPOC students highlighted the importance of meeting and being advised by individuals who were matched in terms of race. Growing evidence suggests that BIPOC students may perceive critical feedback from advisors differently than their White counterparts. Data from randomized controlled trials show the BIPOC students, who may already be aware of negative

cultural stereotypes about their ability, respond better to “wise feedback”, wherein critical feedback is accompanied by an acknowledgment of high standards and expressed confidence in the student’s ability to meet those standards (Quaye & Harper, 2020). As mentioned, The IC supports academic achievement by providing academic supports from a culturally relative perspective. Academic seminars provide BIPOC students a chance to interact with peers that look like them in a safe space.

This is an indicator that racism exists outside OMA&D services. A racially hostile campus climate cannot be fixed only by programmatic options. The point is, while EOP supports [FYP targeted SSS] do make an impact in first-year retention for BIPOC students, they are and not designed to transform the institution. Instead, I recommend, racially hostile campuses should be addressed by putting BIPOC racially hostile students’ experiences in the center of Bronfenbrenner’s Model as mentioned in my conceptual framework. A racially hostile campus climate makes BIPOC folx feel unhuman, it has us thinking that we are not smart enough to be around so called “elite” students and not “privileged” enough to share the same space as white students. Thus, more needs to be done, and my reconceptualized Bronfenbrenner model in the next section suggests concrete actions to foster BIPOC safety campus wide outside of OMA&D.

### **Reconceptualizing Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Model**

Racially hostile campuses tend to attribute student retention to personal characteristics of the students rather than characteristics of the institution. Unfortunately, this traditional approach ignores dynamic interactions between BIPOC students’ identities and the environment (e.g., institutional policy, campus climate, and classroom experiences) that affect students’ decisions to stay or leave early. It is imperative that racially hostile campuses consider how BIPOC students

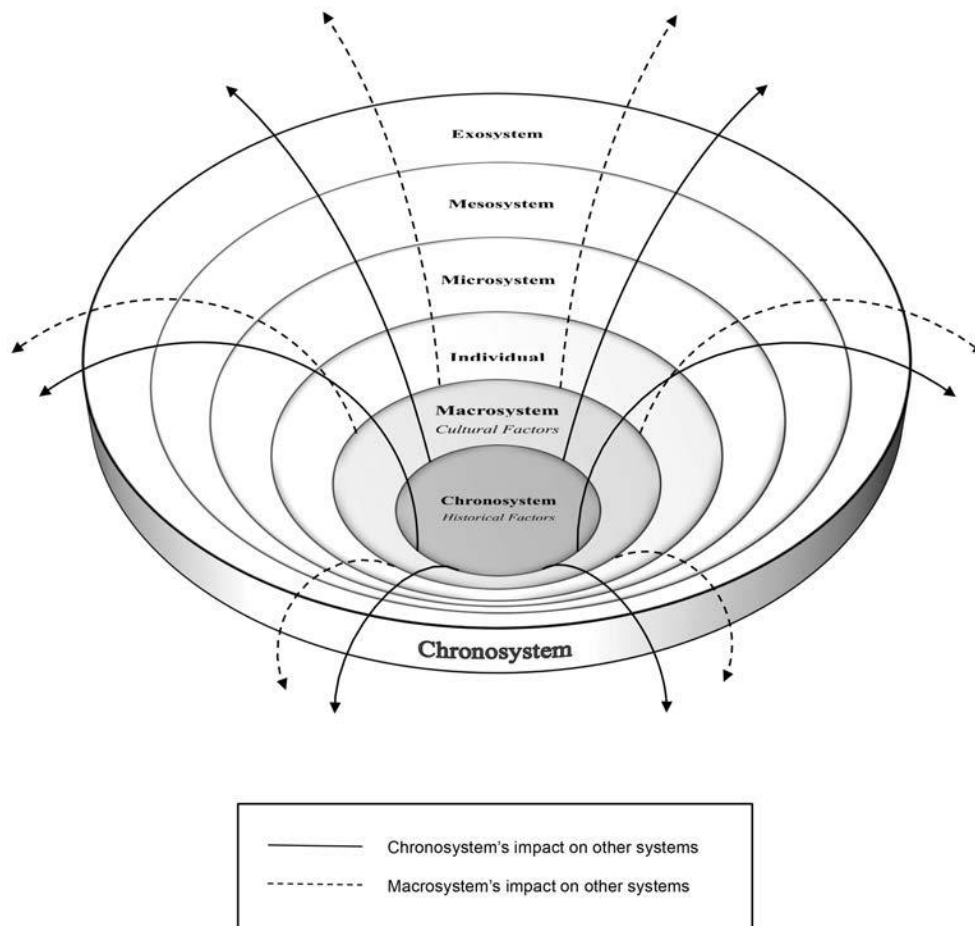
are operating on their campuses and examine how this interacts with BIPOCs' identities (Flynn, Olson, & Yellig, 2012). Other scholars have similarly claimed that a racially hostile campus climate impacts retention of BIPOCs and solely intervention services through FYP targeted SSS is not enough (Freeman, Anderman, & Jensen, 2007; Hausmann, Schofield, & Woods, 2007; Hoffman, Richmond, Morrow, & Salomone, 2003; Ostrove & Long, 2007; Walton & Cohen, 2007). Numerous researchers have also asserted that BIPOCs are more vulnerable to questioning their sense of belonging within a racially hostile campus climate than others (Hurtado & Carter, 1997; Johnson, Alvarez, Longerbeam, Inkelas, Leonard, & Rowan-Kenyon, 2007; Maestas, Vaquera, & Zehr, 2007; Walton & Cohen, 2007). This dissertation was designed to improve the understanding of the impacts of FYP targeted SSS within a racially hostile campus climate using Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model. This chapter thus includes a reconceptualized Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model based on the results of impacts of FYP targeted SSS at one racially hostile campus climate.

The legacy of racially hostile campus climates has resulted in long-standing incongruences between BIPOCs and retention at public universities and shapes their experiences in the present day (Brayboy, 2005). Given how FYP targeted SSS impacts retention of BIPOCs, the Bronfenbrenner Ecological Systems model provided a useful approach for framing BIPOCs' retention experiences from the innermost systems—Microsystem and Mesosystem—within a racially hostile campus climate. In this current conceptualization, EOP-3 students were guided by BIPOC academic advisors, and an academic seminar taught by a BIPOC instructor, creating a supportive Microsystem during the first and third quarters of the academic year. However—regardless of their interactions with these events in the Microsystem, these EOP-3 students were not retained at the same rates as EOP-1 students over the course of their first academic year.

Considering these results, race, not FYP targeted SSS, played the largest role in retention. Thus, I recommend rearranging the levels of the ecological systems to focus more on the outermost systems, the chronosystem first and macrosystem second, as a way of addressing the larger racially hostile campus climate. This model is based upon Fish & Syed's (2018) Ecological Model and differs from my prior strategy in which I began with the microsystem first and mesosystem second.

Fish & Syed (2018) reconceptualize Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems model as an alternative framework for the experiences of Native American college students. In privileging historical and cultural factors, this reconceptualization demonstrates how transforming educational institutions could influence the experiences of Native American college students (Fish & Syed, 2018). Given the above findings, I suggest reconceptualizing Bronfenbrenner to acknowledge and attend to the racially hostile campus experiences of BIPOC students. This rearrangement accomplishes several goals. By beginning with the chronosystem, I lay the foundation on which the understanding of other levels of the ecological system rests. First, that any considerable experiences of BIPOCs must be grounded within the recognition of a racially hostile campus climate. Second, moving the macrosystem to the inside of the ecological systems model places a racially hostile campus climate at the center of retention efforts, which other scholars have advocated (Fish & Syed, 2018; Juang, Syed, Cookston, Wang, & Kim, 2012). This change emphasizes BIPOC students' sense of belonging and safety, rather than minimizing these aspects, which are typical of how most Eurocentric frameworks place BIPOC students (Fish & Syed, 2018; Brayboy, 2005; Castagno & Lee, 2007). By placing emphasis on racially hostile campus climates and not students, I recognize the racialized labor BIPOC students and OMA&D student support staff are subjected to as they navigate oppressive systems. Smith (2018)

introduced the concept of racial battle fatigue in higher education, arguing that universities are rooted in white supremacy. In this environment, BIPOC students are confronted with how White privilege and the inherent valuation of Whiteness are embedded in the culture of America. The accumulation of race-related stressors is thought to leave BIPOC students psychologically, physiologically, and behaviorally taxed. Third, by placing the chronosystem and the macrosystem at the core of my model, I argue based on my results, that a racially hostile campus climate is inextricably connected to the remaining levels, making it impossible to ignore the role a racially hostile campus climate plays in retention of BIPOCs (Juang et al., 2012). This reconceptualized ecological systems model suggests expansion of EOP programming, with a targeted approach on less retained students, such as BIPOC students, as a foundation for PWIs to alleviate the hostile racialized experiences of targeted BIPOCs.



*Figure 2.* Three-dimensional conceptual Model of the chronosystem and the Macrosystem in relation to the other levels

### ***Chronosystems***

The chronosystem was added to the ecological systems model well after the original model to acknowledge the critical role of time for development (Fish & Syed, 2018; Bronfenbrenner, 1997). Time within the chronosystem consists of stability and change at two levels: (a) individual ontogenetic change, corresponding to how individual lives change over the life course, and (b) historical phylogenetic change, parallel to historical and cohort shifts across generations (Fish & Syed, 2018). This definition moves beyond conceptualizing time equivalent with chronological age to extend the model into a third dimension, cutting across the other

systems. In terms of applying the chronosystem to the experiences of BIPOCs within a racially hostile campus climate, it is imperative to begin with historical trauma (Fish & Syed, 2018).

**Historical Trauma.** Despite the connection between racially hostile campus climates and the experiences of BIPOCs, historical trauma has received limited attention from retention-focused researchers, and even less from higher education practitioners. Though there has been limited research on the historical trauma BIPOC students within a racially hostile campus climate face, it is a topic that warrants further research and understanding to employ systemic change. The historical trauma experienced by BIPOCs transcends generations. It is possible that active participation in a racially hostile campus climate that has historically been violent to BIPOCs triggers this trauma. Historical trauma may make it difficult for BIPOCs to develop a sense of belonging those fits into the same racially hostile campus structure that has generationally oppressed them.

Given these associations, public universities need to address racially hostile campus climates, not only as a means of acknowledging the role that institutions play, but also to transform institutions into places more congruent with BIPOCs' sense of belonging. A concrete next step is to create and/or expand programming that educates all staff, faculty, and students, about the structures that maintain campus racial hostility (at UW, but extended across all public universities), and how efforts like OMA&D were created to combat this institutional racism. Once such educational approaches are integrated across the university, services should be provided to help BIPOC students, staff, and faculty navigate these traumas. In short, this model suggests more access to OMA&D programming and more intuitional support to combat racism outside of OMA&D supports.

To this end, it is crucial that public universities dismantle features that dishonor the collective memory of BIPOCs. Similarly correcting inaccurate histories (e.g., a public university recognizing Columbus Day, Robert E. Lee Day, and Thanksgiving), challenging negative stereotypes (e.g. culturally offensive mascots, but also statues, buildings, and names reflecting slave-holders and white supremacist leaders, such as the statue of George Washington that welcomes visitors to UW's Red Square), and stopping the public degradation of BIPOC culture (e.g. Birmingham-Southern College's Kappa Alpha Order's "Party of the Slave Owners Day" party; Gangsta and Ho's: Running across the border marathon) will help dismantle institutional racism. While these are obvious racist affronts to BIPOCs within public university, these common occurrences result from overlooking critical influential factors in the chronosystem. Privileging the chronosystem can offer BIPOCs a corrective experience within racially hostile campus climates. This cultural strengths-based approach to institutional racism that supports a racially hostile campus climate recognizes that universities invalidate BIPOC students by *not* acknowledging the ongoing influence of historic racism. This analysis suggests a need to connect racially hostile campus climates more effectively to the subsequent levels to leverage systemic change.

### ***Macrosystems***

*Macrosystems* are defined as consistencies of the microsystem, mesosystem, and exosystem that exist within a given subculture or culture, with an emphasis on lifestyles, beliefs, ideologies, customs, and opportunity structures (Fish & Syed, 2018; Bronfenbrenner, 1979). In this conceptual framework, the macrosystem represented the outermost level of the ecological systems model and was overlooked from the other systems. In my reconceptualization, the macrosystem now serves as the second level of the ecological systems model to connect a

racially hostile campus climate more effectively to the other systems. The discussion on macrosystems largely focuses on how racially hostile campus climate and public universities influence the experiences of BIPOCs.

**Racially Hostile Campus Climate.** Given the influence that a racially hostile campus climate has on BIPOCs, the features of the college environment that constitutes the macrosystem must be the center of discussions to move from racism as a normalized experience for BIPOC students. Research concerning the connection between a racially hostile campus climate and the experiences of BIPOCs has addressed how a racially hostile campus climate impacts students—limiting the scope of inquiry to the individual and promoting a deficit approach. As such, BIPOC students who possess a strong cultural identity may suggest that they are not as likely to be valued or retained if forced to integrate within a racially hostile campus climate. This attributes the likelihood of succeeding or failing in public universities to whether students possess a sense of belonging. For instance, BIPOCs who can sustain their sense of belonging on a racially hostile campus climate can more readily adapt to a PWI and be retained (Akee & Yazzie-Mintz, 2011). Again, these findings place the burden on BIPOCs to be oriented to both their cultural identity and that of a racially hostile campus climate to be successful. Adopting this perspective is setting up BIPOCs for failure, as it may be difficult to construct a sense of belonging that connects BIPOCs' ways of being within an oppressive educational system (Chandler & Lalonde, 1998). Rather than placing the burden on BIPOC students to adapt to racial hostility, it must be the responsibility of public university to accommodate a sense of belonging. Studies that adopt a cultural strengths-based approach have found that BIPOCs are most successful when public universities enable them to integrate their ways of belonging with their college experiences

(Guillory, 2009). Such an approach also shifts the burden from OMA&D and EOP programming towards the entire university community.

It is not uncommon to see findings that suggest that BIPOCs are not academically prepared for public universities and that their academic performance is poor (Johnson, Okun, Benallie, & Pennak, 2010). Findings such as these suggest that BIPOCs do not fare well academically at public universities due to lack of preparation. Conversely, if BIPOCs struggle academically, it may be due to a racially hostile campus climate incompatible with BIPOC's sense of belonging, as opposed to simply being unprepared. For example, Luedke (2016) found that BIPOC students perceive that White staff tend to focus exclusively on their academic experiences, neglecting their cultural backgrounds. Whereas the students in the study reported staff of color were more likely to value their backgrounds and prior capital; as such, the students felt that they could be their authentic selves, gain support, and further develop social capital. An example of programs that exemplify this framework include OMA&D and UW's Brotherhood Initiative. These offices and programs create places of safety within racially hostile campus climates to positively support BIPOCs integration into public universities. Given the impacts of such programs on student retention, and in theory, on strengthening cultural identities, such efforts should be expanded to the entire BIPOC community at public universities. As it is now-access to some FYP targeted SSS remains restrictive (application process, restricted by major, GPA requirement, etc.).

This study leads to a concrete programmatic application: What if every male of color at UW, specifically Black and Brown males, were granted access to the Brotherhood Initiative? Similarly, EOP programming for all BIPOC students, using a targeted universalism approach with the Brotherhood Initiative, could expand supports for males of color at UW. To be clear,

such an investment (in OMA&D and the Brotherhood Initiative), would maximize programming to offset campus racial hostility. By promoting and adhering solely to the values of the dominant culture, on the other hand, Eurocentric education frameworks sustain racially hostile campus climates wherein BIPOCs feel out of place and unwelcomed. Until institutions of higher education undergo structural transformations to foster BIPOC students' sense of belonging; retention initiatives that do not explicitly challenge institutional racism are likely to be unsuccessful, or, as findings suggests, of limited success.

### **BIPOC: Cultural Identity**

Prior to conducting my analysis, my dissertation centered BIPOCs cultural identity within a racially hostile campus climate at the center of the levels of the ecological systems model as they navigate the Microsystem and Mesosystem. After examining the results, however, I recommend cultural identity shifts to the third level of the model. This shift reflects literature that suggests cultural identity is directly related to the retention of BIPOC students, which remain a central focus of UW's FYP targeted SSS (Akee & Yazzie-Mintz, 2011; Montgomery, Miville, Winterowd, Jeffries, & Baysden, 2000; Shield, 2009).

Many BIPOCs identify needing cultural identity on an individual level to persist at PWIs. For instance, studies have found that greater levels of cultural identity are related to higher retention rates (Gloria & Kurpurius, 2001; Thompson, Johnson-Jennings, & Nitzarim, 2013). However, this places the burden on BIPOCs and FYP targeted SSS to handle the stress of racially hostile campus climates. However, based on my results, we see a cautious trend. As soon as EOP-3 students are not required to receive FYP targeted SSS, their retention rates gradually drop. Therefore, it is important to have mandatory FYP targeted SSS across the entire college experience. Programs such as Brotherhood Initiative and OMA&D at UW are prime examples of

FYP targeted SSS promoting cultural identity consistency to BIPOCs. Both programs offer personal development (dual-advising, BIPOC mentorship, academic seminars, and career exploration) for their participants that emphasize their cultural. They both utilize academic seminars to support BIPOC students' cultural growth. With OMA&D, students can attend the Kelly Ethnic Culture Center to receive culturally specific support in workshops and advising, that are offered ongoing; however, such supports are not required. With the Brotherhood Initiative, students receive mandatory cultural identity support throughout the duration of their journey at UW-Seattle via academic seminars every quarter. This extension helps decenter the student experience as a linear approach and puts more focus on addressing the racially hostile campus climate for transformative change. Importantly, however, neither of these supports are required or fully integrated into EOP-3.

### **FYP Targeted SSS**

Microsystems, the fourth level of my reconceptualized model, refers to a pattern of activities, roles, and interpersonal interactions that are experienced by a person who is developing within a particular setting with specific physical and material characteristics that invite, permit, or inhibit interaction with the immediate environment (Fish & Syed, 2018; Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Examples of microsystems that have been explored in BIPOCs include relationships with advisors. Academic advisors are significant and instrumental for BIPOC in the navigation of a racially hostile campus climate. But positive academic experiences should not be limited to those who have access to FYP targeted SSS with cultural capital. Given that relationality is an essential component of the experiences of BIPOCs, opportunities must be provided for BIPOCs to develop authentic relationships with academic advisors that are not solely focused on academic learning (Lundberg & Schreiner, 2004; Scheel, Prieto, & Biermann,

2011). This may include social, emotional, and academic support, but first, hinges on the institution–student relationship.

Academic Advisors must be able to demonstrate an understanding of BIPOCs and their sense of belonging (Bosse et al., 2011; Griese, McMahon, & Kenyon, 2017). Research has pointed to the importance of forming relationships between BIPOCs and academic advisors (Flynn et al., 2012), which may decrease feelings of isolation and can contribute to retention, as findings show. For institutions that have multiple BIPOC centers (i.e., The Instructional Center, Intellectual House, and Kelly Ethnic Culture Center) these relationships can form organically; however, for institutions that do not, mentoring programs (such as Brotherhood Initiative) may be necessary to connect BIPOCs with culturally relevant supports (Guillory, 2009).

Mesosystems—defined as the interrelations among multiple settings wherein a developing individual is an active participant, or as a system of microsystems—serve as the fifth level of the reconceptualized model (Fish & Syed, 2018; Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Not only do mesosystems inform practices for those who work directly with students, but they also highlight alternative methods for examining the environments that BIPOCs are involved in. The intent of FYP targeted SSS is to bridge the gap between family, community, and education. Gaps between these settings arise when the goals of families, communities, and schools’ conflict to impede BIPOCs’ development. FYP targeted SSS can reconcile conflict and promote learning by establishing and maintaining cultural congruities among family, community, and school.

For example, much research regarding academic affairs and student services has focused on strategies for BIPOCs retention. Strategies include programming that maintains cultural connections at college, culturally based academic seminars, and tutoring supports (Guillory, 2009). Implementing these types of programs could align the values of institutions of higher

education with BIPOC's sense of belonging, as these programs place a strong emphasis on academic engagement in conjunction with relationality. All these programs enable students to maintain cultural connections while pursuing education by providing mechanisms through which students can relate their ways of being and education to one another. Despite the promise of these retention strategies, such programs have limited availability, as they rarely confront, much less disrupt, institutional racism.

Ultimately, however, programs that aim to support students cannot eradicate these legacies of racism. A first step requires acknowledgment that racisms exist on campuses. Just because institutions have folx of color on campus does not make campus a safe place. Racism does not just exist on campus, but also off campus, and in the current anti-Black and anti-Asian context, this racism is often elevated. For example, folx of color in communities that get gunned down from selling loosies to make ends meet for their family (Eric Garner), folx of color getting gunned down in the back for jogging in a neighborhood (Ahmaud Arbery), folx of color getting gunned down stealing skittles (Trayvon Martin and Michael Brown) exacerbate on campus racism for students of color (and especially Black men, in these examples).

While the clear solution to racism is to remove racism as an institutional delivery model of higher education, I do not see that happening in my lifetime. While the larger goal should remain societal transformation through transforming racially hostile campus climates of higher education, in the meantime, expansion of FYP targeted SSS [OMA&D and Brotherhood Initiative] can dramatically expand supports for BIPOC students. This dissertation thus concludes with the call for more BIPOC-centric infrastructures to challenge anti-Blackness and anti-BIPOC campus climates. Expansion of FYP targeted SSS can shift the foundation of racially

hostile campus climates through investments in a critical mass of services, entry points, and BIPOC students

### **Conclusion**

How do higher education professionals at public universities undo the chains of slavery and legacies of racism? One foundational method is to emphasize how historical and cultural factors interact with multiple layers of context to define BIPOCs' experiences at public universities. Public universities are structured to enforce white supremacy while simultaneously devaluing the cultural values, beliefs, and traditions of BIPOCs (Fish & Syed, 2018; Brayboy, 2005). Considering BIPOC experiences and collective histories of oppression through education, it may be difficult for BIPOCs to develop a sense of belonging that includes a future where they persist in these institutions under such conditions. But recognition of the educational legacies of racism goes deeper than sense of belonging; racially hostile campus climates should lead the way in sustaining anti-racist, BIPOC welcoming campuses. By placing the impetus for change on the faculty, student support staff, and institution administrators, I see the potential for a greater and longer-lasting impact on the retention of BIPOC students. The recognition that everyone in a racially hostile campus climate context plays a role in increasing retention and satisfaction for BIPOCs may help universities to address these issues more creatively and effectively. That said, I am aware of the limitations of top-down solutions.

From my personal experiences being raised by a single mother who worked at the local lumbermill, I now represent the very experiences FYP targeted SSS are designed to address: a low-income Black male first-generation college student that navigated a private racially hostile campus climate. Being the only Black person in my economics department led to many times when I felt unwelcomed and did not know where to turn to. My institution was predominantly

white, and I had no exposure to BIPOC faculty or academic staff. If it was not for the mostly Black cafeteria, mail office, and office assistance folx, I would have left school. This point cannot be understated: I developed a sense of belonging out of the underpaid Black staff that were (and are) largely ignored by racially hostile campuses. And even then, some of my BIPOC peers did not find that community with other BIPOC non-academic folx, and the hostility of the campus climate forced them to leave college. While I began my college experience with 174 other BIPOC students, only 28 of us ultimately graduated (BSC, 2017). I carry these isolated experiences, the experiences of those 146 peers of color who left before graduation, and the experience of navigating without institutional support, with me.

Also, from my experiences as an academic advisor for the very EOP services I studied in this dissertation, I saw up and close the harm a racially hostile campus climate does to students. In my two years at UW, I grieved many suicides from BIPOCs students. The names of these students are not forgotten in my heart. I spoke to some of these students before they took their lives, and most of them said the same thing: they did not feel welcomed by UW outside of OMA&D (e.g., in core academic courses, UW events, and residence life). Is the prestige of a racially hostile campus climate worth death? Not only students are dying because of the emotional toll of a racially hostile campus climate, but my colleagues as well. I lost three folx that I worked with at UW and many of my colleagues found themselves overworked for little pay and maximum stress. Racially Hostile Campus Climates must also support the folx that are supporting BIPOC students. The day-to-day trauma EOP advisors are exposed to by EOP students experienced trauma is not healthy. One way to make the job – supporting BIPOC students on campus – easier, is to get to the root cause: the racially hostile campus climate.

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