
Research, Assessment, and Reviews

Fulfilling the Promise through Sense of Belonging:

Experiences of Norman Brown Diversity and Leadership Scholars at IUPUI

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Museus (2014) describes sense of belonging as a crucial determining factor of success for students of color. Therefore, the researchers chose to study sense of belonging within this specific population. The individual interviews reveal whether students find sense of belonging within the Norman Brown Diversity and Leadership Scholars Program (NBDLSP) or elsewhere on campus. The researchers utilize their findings to provide recommendations to the director of the NBDLSP that are centered on the experiences of the current scholars. In addition, the researchers offer implications for practice and further research for student affairs professionals involved in similar programs.

The Norman Brown Diversity and Leadership Scholars Program (NBDLSP) at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) is a scholarship program that aims to “recruit, retain, and prepare serious, academically gifted students who have demonstrated a commitment to social justice” (Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, 2017). Originating in 1988 and named after its founder Norman Brown in 2005, the program is currently made up of 94 students (D. Tate, personal communication, September 27, 2017). Although the current online communications for the NBDLSP do not advertise the scholarship as an opportunity for students of color, Danielle Tate, program coordinator of NBDLSP, stated that the program caters to minoritized students (personal communication, September 21, 2017). Additionally, the available demographics of the NBDLSP show that the program serves mainly students of color.

Students of color persist when they feel as though they belong to a group and can identify with peers within the group (Fries-Britt, 2000; Fries-Britt, 2004; Museus, 2014). However, research shows there are far fewer students of color than White students in high-achieving programs (Fries-Britt, 2004; Grissom & Redding, 2015). The implications of the available literature have led our research team to look more closely at the NBDLSP and how participating in the NBDLSP contributes to sense of belonging. In this study, the researchers measure the extent to which the NBDLSP influences on sense of belonging, according to the Culturally Engaging Campus Environments (CECE) Model (Museus, 2014). More specifically, the purpose of this study was to collect data regarding sense of belonging of students within the NBDLSP and analyze the data based on CECE indicators.

Literature Review

Sense of Belonging

Bollen and Hoyle (1990) laid the framework for cohesion and its relation to sense of belonging by determining sense of belonging to be a part of cohesion. They also included how people feel affinity and membership to a community. Hurtado and Carter (1997) defined sense of belonging as both “cognitive and affective elements in that the individual’s cognitive evaluation of his or her role in relation to the group results in an affective response” (p. 328) and “students’ overall perception of social cohesion within the campus environment” (p. 204). These definitions attribute sense of belonging to a variety of factors.

Campus Environments

Museus (2014) outlined how seminal literature failed to include a growing number of diverse students obtaining higher education degrees. The Culturally Engaging Campus Environments (CECE) Model challenged Tinto’s Theory of Student Integration by shifting from a White washed lens to a framework that encompassed the increasingly diverse racial demographic of higher education. Museus (2014) highlighted sense of belonging and how it contributes to student success for racially-diverse students.

Museus, Yi, and Saelua (2017) studied whether or not culturally engaging campus environments have an effect on sense of belonging and found the nine CECE indicators related to sense of belonging, but it is difficult to draw definite conclusions from this one study. The authors called for more work to be done on how the intricate relationship of the indicators may positively or negatively impact sense of belonging (Museus, Yi, & Saelua, 2017). Additionally, the authors yielded results which indicated that the CECE Model makes for a sufficient conceptual framework when looking to

measure sense of belonging. Further, the same study provided an explanation to varying data in terms of sense of belonging with the use of the CECE model (Museus, Yi, & Saelua, 2017).

High-Achieving Students of Color

It is important to note that there is no universally accepted definition of “students of color;” however, in the book *Sociology of Education: Emerging Perspectives*, students of color are defined as “persons of African American, Latino, Asian American, and Native American ancestry” (Torres & Mitchell, 1998, p. 221). A theme present in the literature (Fries-Britt, 2004; McGee & Martin, 2011) is that Black students, regardless of affiliation in an honors-like program, encountered racism and racialized experiences across academic and non-academic contexts. However, Fries-Britt (2004) asserted that Black students have a heightened and intense awareness of how their racial identities interact with their academic identities. Students either disassociated from their race and were accused of “acting White” or they participated in stereotype management, a preoccupation with proving stereotypes wrong. Similarly, Henfield, Woo, Lin & Rausch’s (2014) study of Asian American students in honors programs reported that their participants highly valued their cultural background and the importance it served in their lives. Asian American students also encountered racialized experiences because of the lack of diversity in the honors program and on campus in general. Although these two studies made claims for Black and Asian students, our study aims to extend this literature and highlight gaps in the experiences of other high-achieving students of color.

Impact of Student-Student and Student-Staff Relationships

The NBDLSP is organizationally structured in a cohort model that provides students with cohort mates, a graduate assistant, and a director. The research team found it necessary to review literature on student-student and student-staff relationships because of the students' membership in the program and in the larger IUPUI community. Research found that race plays a role in student-student and student-staff relationships (Luedke, 2017; Strayhorn, 2008). When White staff and administrators interacted with students of color, staff focused almost solely on academic experiences while staff and administrators of color were more likely to support students holistically by validating their whole selves and valuing their backgrounds (Luedke, 2017). Consequently, staff of color were able to establish rapport and relationships with students (Luedke, 2017).

Literature also addresses interactions between Black students at predominantly White institutions and their peers (Fries-Britt, 2004; Strayhorn, 2008). Results found that Black male students' sense of belonging at predominantly White institutions is positively related to increased interactions with peers from different racial and ethnic groups, despite some instances of concealing academic ability with fear of being accused of "acting White." Henfield et al. (2014) discussed how the "model minority stereotype" assumes that Asian American high-achieving students are well-adjusted and pressured to meet social expectations in honors programs (p.137). The study found that because of the competitive nature of the program and the perpetuation of "model minority stereotype," Asian Americans in the program struggled to find support among their peers of the same ethnicity (p.142). This study aims to reveal how organizational structures, like scholarship programs, may impact how high-achieving students of color experience sense of belonging, if at all.

Conceptual Framework

This study utilized two frameworks as the base of its inquiry: sense of belonging and the CECE Model of College Success Among Racially Diverse Student Populations (Museus, 2014). Research shows that sense of belonging has been proven to be a high indicator of success for students in Higher Education (Elkins, Braxton, & James, 2000; Friedlander, Reid, Shupak, & Cribbie, 2007; Naylor, 2017). Based on Hurtado and Carter's (1997) definition of sense of belonging, the research team expected to find that the student's perception of their place within the NBDLSP and IUPUI could result in them feeling a sense of belonging. In the CECE Framework, Museus asserted that "sense of belonging is positively associated with success among racially diverse student populations in college" and stated that the problem with many of the studies of underrepresented students in Higher Education is that they are approached from a deficit perspective (2014, p. 214). For this reason, the research team decided to include the CECE Model as a conceptual framework to inform the study.

According to Museus, not all nine indicators of the CECE Model are meant to be reached at an optimum level by a single institutional unit (personal communication, S. Museus, November 27, 2017). Rather, the indicators are meant to be examined along a spectrum. Furthermore, the CECE Model highlights the effect that the college environment has on the success of students of color. Our study takes this lens and applies it directly to the NBDLSP at IUPUI to determine its effectiveness in establishing sense of belonging among its students to create a model for other programs to follow.

Methodology

This study intended to explore the perceived experiences of students in the NBDLSP at IUPUI and determine a connection between these perceptions and the students' sense of belonging. Therefore, the researchers adopted an interpretivist/phenomenological (Mertens, 2014) paradigm. Interpretivism is based on the concept that there are multiple realities relative to one's individual experiences. As outsiders to the NBDLSP, our method of research was centered on acquiring relevant information from actual students based on their varied realities (Mertens, 2014).

Case study methodology, defined as "an approach to research that facilitates exploration of a phenomenon within its context using a variety of data sources" (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 544), provided us with the best approach to studying the behavior of students in the NBDLSP. This method was selected because the focus of the study was for participants to answer "how" and "why" questions. For example, "how are students finding a sense of belonging? And why is Norman Brown playing a role in this?" Next, the behavior of the participants could not be manipulated as it consisted of their overall experience at the university and intrinsic factors that played a role in this. Finally, while the researchers aimed to learn more about their sense of belonging, the context around the participant's experience, especially as students of color, was necessary in order to properly answer this question (Baxter & Jack, 2008). This study was conducted as a holistic descriptive case study with embedded units. The research team followed this methodology due to the importance of considering the impact of the various campus factors that might influence participants' sense of belonging, within and outside of the NBDLSP.

Recruitment and Participants

The researchers sought to establish a collaborative relationship with stakeholders of the NBDLSP in order to recruit students to participate in the study. Eligible participants included any current Norman Brown scholar. The NBDLSP accepts "academically gifted students" from historically underrepresented populations (Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, 2017). As of the 2017-2018 academic year, 94 students are enrolled in the program. Of the 94, 42 students identify as Black, 17 as Asian, 16 identify as Hispanic/Latino, 7 as White, 2 as American Indian/Alaska Native, and 10 unknown (D. Tate, personal communication, September 27, 2017; see Appendix A). Researchers used a homogenous sampling strategy to explore the variety of the experiences students with similar circumstances might have (Patton, 2005).

Upon receiving Institutional Review Board approval, the researchers were added to an online communication platform with all members of the program. Using this platform for communication, an announcement was sent to every student explaining the purpose of the study and asking those interested to participate. Students were offered an incentive to participate in the form of a program credit. Students were able to count participation in the research interview as one of the cultural events that they are required to attend throughout the semester. The research sample consisted of 10 total Norman Brown scholars. Of the 10, six were first-year students and four were second-year students. Seven students identified as female and three as male. There were seven participants who self-identified as Black, two as Hispanic, and one as Asian-American/Pacific Islander. The average GPA of participants was 3.58 on a 4.0 scale.

Data Collection

In this study, the researchers interviewed students in the Norman Brown Scholarship program to answer the following research questions:

1. Where, if at all, do Norman Brown Scholars at IUPUI find sense of belonging?
2. How does the Norman Brown Diversity and Leadership Scholars Program contribute to sense of belonging for its scholars?

The researchers then drew conclusions and implications for practice to offer to stakeholders within the NBDLSP based on participants' answers to a set of pre-established questions (Appendix C). The interview questions were formed based on indicators presented in the CECE Model (Museus, 2014). Data for this study was collected through a series of either one-on-one or two-on-one interviews. Each interview was audio recorded. This method was chosen because it establishes an environment that allows participants to share their perceptions, thoughts, and feelings about a particular topic (Krueger & Casey, 2014).

The following demographic information was collected from each participant upon completing the interview: race, class standing, GPA, and gender. As discussed in the literature review, there is a direct correlation between these factors and sense of belonging. Anonymity was preserved when presenting data and findings to stakeholders. This demographic information was collected in order to help ensure that there was parallelism between the participant demographic that the study was intended for and how the participants self-identified. In the year 2015, the NBDLSP switched to a cohort model, meaning that students in the program with different class standing could have potentially different experiences from one another, which made

class standing an important feature when determining sense of belonging.

In order to ensure goodness, trustworthiness, and rigor, which are necessary when conducting qualitative inquiry (Cooper & Shelley, 2009), the research team conducted each participant interview in pairs with the exception of two interviews. Two interviewers were used to avoid bias and maximize the dynamics of the people in the room. By doing this, multiple perspectives were considered. Furthermore, the research team coded participant responses collectively, which helped to remove interviewer subjectivity and enhance the findings.

Data Analysis

Once all individual interviews were complete, the research team transcribed the audio recordings. Each researcher reviewed all transcriptions and convened to identify themes to determine whether the ideas discussed were shared by the majority or whether they are singularly held (Schuh, Biddix, Dean, & Kinzie, 2016). Using strategies from *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*, the research team conducted a cross-case analysis in which they grouped interview responses together and focused on the varying perspectives presented on the issue (Patton, 1990). The team then connected the results to identify if participants find a sense of belonging in the NBDLSP or if that sense of belonging is found elsewhere. The research team connected their findings to theory to highlight ways in which the NBDLSP or other on campus programs impact students' sense of belonging.

Results: Connection to Conceptual Framework

The results from the study are consistent with previous research. The themes identified reinforce Museus' (2014) CECE indicators of a culturally engaging campus environment. Participant responses were consistent with seven out of nine of the indicators, thus further supporting that "undergraduates who encounter more culturally engaging campus environments are more likely to have a greater sense of belonging" (Museus, 2014, p. 210). The following CECE indicators were present in participant responses:

- Indicator #1: Cultural familiarity. Participants shared how their relationship with the program director as well as opportunities to connect at monthly meetings with scholars who look like them and have shared experiences positively impacted them. One participant shared that they "got to meet people that look like me and have same struggles and difficulties that I'm going through which is really helpful because you think you're the only one alone going through all this stuff."
- Indicator #2: Cultural Relevant Knowledge. Participants shared that attending cultural heritage month events and their involvement with cultural identity-based organizations like the African Student Association, Latino Student Association, and the Diversity Enrichment and Achievement Program (DEAP) allowed them opportunities to sustain and increase knowledge of their culture and other cultures. Participants shared "It just feels really invigorating to be surrounded by other minorities" and "For me it's fun since I'm Mexican/Mexican-American. It's fun for me to learn a

little bit more about what really is being Mexican."

- Indicator #5: Collectivist Cultural Orientations. Participants discussed how aspects of NBDLSP such as having the same t-shirts, being grouped by major, and having the opportunity to share their backgrounds and experiences with each other, contributes to a collectivist culture that helps them feel sense of belonging to the program. One participant shared "I see people wearing the t-shirts... I'm a part of something bigger... Even if I don't know the person but I know they're in Norman Brown, I'll say 'hey can I sit with you at lunch?' so I feel more welcome and know I have someone to talk to."
- Indicator #6: Culturally Validating Environments. Participants shared that the required cultural events that they attend with the NBDLSP reaffirms their cultural identities. The Multicultural Center was also shared as a space that students feel a sense of belonging. One participant also spoke about campus overall saying, "It's a very mixed campus like racially, religion-wise, there's a lot of diversity and I like that." Another stated that their major was not culturally validating, "I was like the only Black person in my class... [it] was hard because I'm not with my friends and people who look like me or understand me."
- Indicator #7: Humanized Educational Environments. Participants identified the NBDLSP staff as individuals who contribute to students' sense of belonging to the program through their commitment to the students and the relationships that they have formed. Academic

programs and student organizations are campus environments that students identified developing meaningful relationships with. One participant reflected on this perceived support during their campus tour saying, “I felt like that really sold [IUPUI] for me, knowing I was going to have people who cared about me.”

- Indicator #8: Proactive philosophies. The NBDLSP director was explicitly named by participants as an individual who advocates on their behalf, is available to help them when needed, and provides them with relevant resources. One participant reflected, “She makes me feel really good about myself and as well as that I belong to campus and to Norman Brown, so it’s a great scholar program.”
- Indicator #9: Availability of Holistic Support. Participants shared having close proximity to the NBDLSP staff who connects them to information, academic support, and cultural events on campus. Participants shared that the NBDLSP provided them ample support and also connected them with academic advisors, the Multicultural Center, DEAP, and identity-based organizations, like the African Student Association.

Findings

Below are the results gathered from the interviews with Norman Brown scholars about their experiences at IUPUI, including experiences in the NBDLSP, in order to explore sense of belonging. The list of questions can be found in Appendix C. It is important to note that the depth of participant responses varied. Many

participants went into great detail, while others simply stated their answer.

When asked why they decided to apply to IUPUI, nine out of ten participants responded that IUPUI was not their top choice, but because of financial reasons they decided to apply to IUPUI. The one other individual responded to the same question, stating that diversity was the main reason they decided to apply to IUPUI. As for why students decided to attend the school, the responses were somewhat more varied. Three participants mentioned financial compensation as their main reason. Three stated that the inclusivity and diversity of the campus drew them to IUPUI. Another three participants mentioned that academic opportunities and their major being offered made them attend IUPUI. Finally, one person mentioned the closeness to home as the main factor for attending IUPUI.

When asked why participants have decided to stay at IUPUI, three of the participants mentioned the community around them, one mentioned closeness to home, one perseverance, one money, one faculty and staff, and three mentioned a good fit with their major and academic support. The fourth question asked individuals if they felt like they belonged on campus; seven people said yes while three had mixed feelings about it. When asked about how participants engaged in the community, three participants answered through student organizations, three participants mentioned events around campus and Indianapolis, three participants mentioned the NBDLSP, and one participant mentioned volunteer opportunities. Moreover, participants pointed out that they found out about the NBDLSP through family (three participants), friends (two participants), a high school mentor (two participants), by themselves (two participants), and from the financial office (One participant). Eight participants stated

feeling a positive sense of belonging to the NBDLSP, one said that they did not, and one said maybe. Finally, when asked if there had been a time when they had not felt a sense of belonging on campus, four participants mentioned feeling like that when they first arrived on campus, one because of a difficult course during their first semester, one participant mentioned feeling like they do not belong in any environment where there is not much diversity, and the last four mentioned never feeling like they did not belong.

Themes

Connectedness to major. Participants were asked why they decided to apply to and ultimately attend IUPUI. While their responses varied based on their own diverse individual experiences, there were many common themes that related to the participants' academics. The NBDLSP intentionally clusters students by major in order to help them build relationships with one another. As mentioned by one participant, these groups also serve as an opportunity for upperclassmen students to mentor underclassmen. This informal mentorship helps students ask their more experienced peers regarding their classes, professors, career opportunities, student organizations, etc. Furthermore, these groups were mentioned several times during interviews when participants were asked if they felt a sense of belonging to the Norman Brown program.

A vast majority of participants expressed clear academic goals coming into college. Participants' majors were a common theme when they answered questions about belonging to the IUPUI community. One participant directly stated that the biggest factor in their decision to stay at IUPUI was "because the school is satisfying all my needs in terms of the academics" Another participant stated that the most important

question to ask when considering satisfaction was "Is the college giving me a worthwhile education?" Professors were also mentioned across many interviews. Two participants stated liking their professors, and therefore feeling like they had no reason to leave IUPUI. Finally, four participants mentioned that one of the main reasons for their decision to attend IUPUI was because of the vast array of opportunities that the school, and the city could offer them related to their long-term career interests.

Program structure. The following sub-themes related to the NBDLSP program structure were revealed in participant responses that positively contributed to their sense of belonging: support from the program director, monthly meetings, and cultural event requirements. Six out of ten participants specifically named the program director as a contributing factor to their sense of belonging. Some reflections on the program director's role include being "cool," "trying her best," "there to help," and "makes me feel good about myself." The NBDLSP required events are perceived positively based on the interviews. Participants stated understanding the value of these events as it helped them explore new cultures and gain skills necessary for their college success. Nine out of ten participants referred to their attendance at required cultural events as an opportunity for engagement with and sense of belonging to NBDLSP and the IUPUI community. One participant reflected that "going to that [monthly cultural events] and learning about different cultures and lifestyles and point of views and everything that has helped me in a way." Three participants specifically mentioned participation on NBDLSP's Regatta team as a positive experience. One participant stated, "I got to meet people through being on the Regatta team 'cause no one knew how to use a paddle, and so that

was a really good bonding experience.” Another present subtheme within the program structure is the monthly meeting. Three participants mentioned the monthly meeting, with one sharing that when attending the monthly meetings, knowing other scholars there helps to find sense of belonging. One participant shared that, “it just feels really invigorating to be surrounded by other minorities.”

Student organizations. A common trend throughout the interview responses was the impact various student organizations have made in shaping the college experiences of participants. Identity based organizations were common spaces in which students reported feeling sense of belonging. Organizations such as the African Student Association (ASA), the Latino Student Union, and the Diversity Enrichment and Achievement Program (DEAP) were mentioned. Answers to the questions, “How do you engage with the campus community?” and “Where in the campus community do you feel you belong to most?” illuminated these themes. One participant stated, “I got to meet people that look like me and have the same struggles and difficulties that I’m going through which is really helpful because you think you’re the only one alone going through all this stuff and DEAP really helped with that.” Not only did participants connect engagement with student organizations, but they also attributed their involvement to sense of belonging.

Storytelling. Three participants mentioned learning personal stories in relation to experiences and cultures of other scholars helped create connections and find sense of belonging within NBDLSP. When asked “Do you feel you belong to the Norman Brown Program?,” one participant shared, “once I started hearing people’s background stories I’m like – Ok, maybe I do belong in Norman Brown.” In general,

participants mentioned that knowing and hearing that other scholars have similar backgrounds and similar struggles made them feel sense of belonging to the program and feel affinity to other scholars.

Physical environments. When asked where in the campus community participants feel they belong to most, four out of ten participants identified physical environments. One participant reported feeling that they belonged most at the Informatics & Communications Technology Complex (ICTC) on campus because they spend the most time there for classes and projects. Another participant shared that they feel the most sense of belonging when they are at the Multicultural Center. The IUPUI Campus Center was also identified as a physical environment that a participant felt sense of belonging to. Finally, one participant shared that the soccer field is where they felt the most sense of belonging.

Discussion

Based on the interviews, the research team was able to answer both research questions. It was determined that sharing stories with other students that hold similar identities, connectedness to major, student organizations, and physical environments all influenced sense of belonging of participants. Participants reported feeling a sense of belonging both to the NBDLSP and to IUPUI. Throughout the ten interviews, it became clear that participants have an overwhelmingly positive disposition towards NBDLSP. As previously stated, seven of the ten participants claimed to feel a strong sense of belonging to IUPUI. Similarly, eight stated feeling a sense of belonging to the NBDLSP. These findings are particularly interesting because they illuminate a possible correlation between the two. They suggest that the NBDLSP has done a good job at addressing the racial and

academic needs of the participants, which in turn has led them to find their niche within the greater IUPUI campus community and therefore feel a sense of belonging to IUPUI. There were very few participants who shared negative experiences. Some negative remarks included the inefficiency of the peer mentor groups and the lack of non-STEM tutoring initiatives and support. Other negative experiences that participants shared that are unrelated to the program but impact their sense of belonging include the lack of representation of people of color in academic Bridge experiences and in non-identity based student organizations.

The results from this study are consistent with previous research. Specifically, the results reinforce Museus' (2014) CECE Model indicators' correlation between sense of belonging and student success. This is supported by the fact that all participants stated not feeling the need to transfer from IUPUI because, as the research team concluded, they found sense of belonging on campus in some form. Participant responses were consistent with seven out of nine of the model's indicators. Not only was the research team able to identify how IUPUI and the NBDLSP contribute to sense of belonging for participants, but also how they are doing so through these indicators. The CECE indicators can be used to address the need for students to feel supported in both their academic and racial identities as both intersect in the NBDLSP. According to Museus, the degree to which people integrate the indicators into their practice will vary (S. Museus, personal communication, November 27, 2017). When practitioners are able to focus their efforts on the indicators that most align with the mission of their program, they can then connect students to other programs on campus that may fulfill the other indicators for the students. The research team identified the most salient indicators using

the participants' frequency and depth of responses. The three indicators that appeared to be the most salient throughout the results of this study were: Culturally Relevant Knowledge, Culturally Validating Environments, and Availability of Holistic Support.

Implications and Conclusion

In order to gain a broader perspective of the experiences of this particular population and those similar, the researchers recommend that future studies aim to have a larger sample size than the one obtained in this study. Future research should aim to look at an entire program's participants to get a better understanding of the holistic support provided by an environment such as the NBDLSP.

The research encompassed the experiences and narratives of first and second year students, which could prompt researchers to look at how a program similar to Norman Brown supports students who have been at their respective university for longer than two years. This work could also lead to discovering how the role of a program like the one researched may change or develop for a student as they get closer to obtaining their degree. A closer look at the Norman Brown program can shed light on how the cohort model may or may not be fulfilling program outcomes and/or the CECE indicators, and if this new framework also has an effect on sense of belonging.

Participant responses touched upon seven of the nine CECE indicators. The two indicators not evident in the study are: Meaningful Cross-Cultural Engagement and Cultural Community Service. Participants did not mention experiences related to these two indicators. The NBDLSP might consider these as areas of improvement for the program. The NBDLSP staff should also explore whether there are opportunities

elsewhere on campus for these indicators to be met for their scholars. Practitioners who are looking to cultivate sense of belonging for students of color should be mindful of how their program's structure facilitates or discourages sense of belonging for its students. Practitioners can utilize components of the NBDLSP's structure, like the monthly meetings or cultural event requirements, and adapt them in ways that align with their program's mission while being careful to not adopt "one size fits all" approach. Practitioners must also realize the difficulty that comes with trying to have one program encompass all nine CECE indicators. By taking student-centered initiatives and analyzing which indicators are being met, student affairs professionals can optimize the indicators they demonstrate well.

This research shows the importance of cross-campus collaboration to ensure many CECE indicators are being implemented at an institution. By strengthening partnerships, practitioners at an institution can depend on other offices and programs to fortify the student experience through all nine CECE indicators. Research is needed to identify how other institutions are creating environments that support all nine indicators

in the CECE model throughout their entire campus, not just in one program or department. This research can help to reiterate the importance of an institution's initiative to improve their holistic support services and cultivate sense of belonging among students, especially students of color.

This study illuminates the importance of meaningful relationship building in a program that produces sense of belonging for its students. Participants spoke about staff openness to conversations which impacted student affinity toward the Norman Brown program. Participants also discussed how previous opportunities to build relationships among their peers positively impacted their experiences in the program. Institutions should take a look at how staff and student relationships impact the support their programs provide to students.

Taking into consideration the populations that have been historically excluded from higher education, the researchers hope that this research serves as a call to action for colleges and universities to extend current efforts and adapt strategies to meet the needs of high-achieving students of color.

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Daniel Tovar was born and raised in Orlando, FL. He completed his undergraduate work at Florida International University and will graduate from Indiana University's Higher Education and Student Affairs master's program in May 2018. When not studying, Daniel enjoys reading poetry, playing with dogs, and eating popcorn.

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Appendix A

RACE/ETHNICITY OF NBDLSP STUDENTS AND PARTICIPANTS

<i>Reported Race/Ethnicity</i>	<i>Population (n=94)</i>	<i>Sample (n=10)</i>
American Indian/Alaskan Native	2	0
Asian/Pacific Islander	17	1
Black	42	7
Hispanic/Latino	16	2
White	7	0
Unknown	10	0

(D. Tate, personal communication, September 27, 2017)

Appendix B**COMMUNICATION WITH PARTICIPANTS*****Initial Contact***

Hello!

We are students in the Higher Education and Student Affairs Master's program here at IUPUI. As a part of our program, we study how undergraduate students interact with campus environments. We would like to take a closer look at sense of belonging for students in the Norman Brown Diversity and Leadership Scholars Program at IUPUI, and we are inviting you to be a part of our research.

If you are interested in participating in this study, please sign up for an interview slot [here](https://doodle.com/poll/yansn7wgm5nsikak). Interviews will take place during the week of October 30th-November 5th. If the hyperlink does not work, please copy and paste this link into your browser:
<https://doodle.com/poll/yansn7wgm5nsikak>

Your interview will be kept confidential, and will not be associated with your name or any other identifying information. However, we will give you the option to submit your name as a part of a

list of all students who completed this study to be submitted to Danielle Tate for credit toward one of your monthly cultural/service program requirements.

Please see the attached non-disclosure agreement for more information about the nature and purpose of this study. If you have any questions, please feel free to respond to this message.

We hope that you partake in this study!
Jennifer, Sydney, Luis, Paige, & Daniel

Reminder Message

Hello [NAME],

This message serves as a reminder that you have signed up for an individual interview slot at [TIME] on [DATE]. The interview will take place in the [LOCATION]. You will be interviewing with two of the researchers. If you can no longer attend your interview slot, please respond to this message.

Best,
Jennifer, Sydney, Luis, Paige, & Daniel

Appendix C

Interview Questions

1. Why did you choose to apply to IUPUI?
2. Why did you choose to attend IUPUI?
3. Why have you chosen to stay at IUPUI?
4. Do you feel like you belong on campus? Tell us more about why or why not.
5. How do you engage with the campus community?
6. How did you find out about the Norman Brown program?
7. Do you feel you belong to the Norman Brown program? Tell us more about why or why not.
8. Tell us more about your experience in the NBDLSP.
9. Has Norman Brown helped you feel a sense of belonging to IUPUI? Tell us why or why not.
10. Where in the campus community do you feel you belong to most?
11. Can you recall a time when you felt you did not belong at IUPUI?