

"Making a Difference": Residential Learning Community Students' Trajectories Toward
Promoting Social Justice

by

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*In loving memory of Ida "Bubba" Major
Your strength, wisdom, and love of learning will always be an inspiration to me.*

Acknowledgments

I remember deciding that I wanted to pursue a PhD when I was 16 years old. It sounded like an impressive accomplishment, but I of course had no idea what kind of circuitous journey it would entail. At the time, it seemed rather straightforward. Do well in college, and go to graduate school. Instead, my pursuit of a doctoral degree has involved applying once and getting rejected, going to “college” in three different states, working in between, switching my field of study, and like many other PhD graduates, taking much longer than expected. While pursuing my PhD has had a fair share of both ups and downs, it is truly the people that have supported me in reaching this milestone that have made all of the difference.

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Abstract

Preparing students to create a more just society is an increasingly important challenge in higher education. The beginning of students' undergraduate years is often a pivotal time of transition because they may encounter a vast array of curricular, co-curricular, and informal diversity experiences for the first time. This qualitative study utilizes a multiple case study approach to explore how one residential learning community, the Michigan Community Scholars Program (MCSP), provides intentional diversity experiences both within and outside of the classroom to first-year students. Students' narratives indicated that their experiences in MCSP fostered a heightened sense of responsibility to "know" about their positionality in society, "care" about how societal inequities affect those from different social identity backgrounds, and "act" to create social change in their future lives and careers.

Five trajectories were identified based on students' top reason for joining MCSP: the Location Scouts, Service Enthusiasts, Personal Connectors, Community Seekers, and Aspiring Change Agents. Students' reasons for becoming a member of the learning community, along with their social identity backgrounds, diversity of pre-college communities, and prior social justice knowledge, influenced their engagement in MCSP diversity experiences. Students' involvement in dialogic conversations within their classes, co-curricular activities, and residential hall were particularly influential in their acquisition of social justice outcomes.

Three sets of social justice outcomes emerged in the data: *inward*, *outward*, and *forward*. Students' inward growth included acquiring *awareness of societal inequities* and demonstrating *consciousness of their positionality* (i.e., their privilege and power in society), along with *educating themselves* about social justice issues and *reducing their own biases*. Themes related their outward growth encompassed displaying *cognitive* (i.e., perspective-taking and intercultural openness), *affective* (i.e., empathetic understanding and "humanizing"), and *behavioral* empathy (i.e., gently engaging across differences), as well as *educating others* about social justice issues and "*speaking out*" *against injustice*. Their forward growth involved *creating "small-scale" change in their everyday lives*, and *incorporating social justice into their future careers*. Studying an RLC of this nature provides valuable insights about how postsecondary institutions can intentionally prepare students to become advocates and agents for social change from the moment that they arrive on campus.

Chapter One: Introduction

Statement of the Problem

Higher education has long been viewed as one of the major avenues for preparing future citizens and leaders to “know, to care, and to act in ways that will develop and foster a democratic and just society” (Banks, 2002, p. 32). Prior to entering postsecondary education, students often have limited interactions with culturally different peers, preconceptions about various social identity groups, and a lack of knowledge of social inequities in America, given that many continue to grow up in segregated areas and are not adequately exposed to multicultural issues in the K-12 curriculum (Crowder, Pais, & South, 2012; Hurtado, Engberg, Ponjuan, & Landreman, 2002; Orfield & Lee, 2006; Saenz, 2010). As a result, students’ college years may be their primary opportunity to become involved in diversity experiences such as taking diversity-related coursework, participating in community service opportunities and intergroup dialogues, and interacting students with different social identity backgrounds.

Students’ curricular, co-curricular, and informal diversity experiences have been linked to numerous social justice outcomes such as developing awareness about one’s own privilege in society, becoming more open to diverse perspectives, recognizing and speaking out against bias toward different social identity groups, and developing a commitment to challenging inequitable social structures (Bowman & Brandenberger, 2012; Denson, 2009; Hurtado, Alvarez, Guillermo-Wann, Cuellar, & Arellano, 2012; Lopez, Gurin, & Nagda, 1998; Mayhew & Fernandez, 2007;

Nagda, Kim, & Truelove, 2004; Zúñiga, Williams, & Berger, 2005). In recent years, a host of social justice issues have been brought to the forefront through activism throughout our country and on our college campuses: the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement, growing tensions between religious freedom and discrimination, prevalence of gender inequities and sexual violence, ongoing fight for equal rights for LGBT individuals, widening gap between the rich and poor, and many others. These pervasive and systemic inequities in our greater society will continue to exist without widespread social change that will require the active involvement of those from younger generations.

Although a substantial amount of literature has highlighted how higher education can prepare students to live and work in a diverse democracy (Hurtado et al., 2012), a limited number of scholars have explicitly explored whether students' diversity experiences integrate pedagogical practices that fall within the realm of social justice education (SJE) (Fuentes, Chanthongthip & Rios, 2010; Gurin, et al., 2013; Mayhew & Fernandez, 2007; Storms, 2012). Unlike some diversity experiences that allow students to construct their personal perspectives on the existence of societal inequities, those that incorporate SJE encourage students to develop a critical understanding of how systems of privilege, power, and oppression operate both in their own lives and in greater society, and the agency to create social change (Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 1997, 2007; Hackman, 2005).

At the current time, SJE remains contested, both by the academy and general public (Fuentes, et al., 2010; Lukianoff & Haidt, 2015). Proponents of SJE feel that students' acquisition of social justice-oriented outcomes should be encouraged to foster a more just society (Adams, et al., 2007; Gurin, et al., 2013), whereas, others believe that the "liberal bias" within SJE silences those with differing personal ideologies and political perspectives (Applebaum,

2009). Instead of having students reason for themselves and develop their own orientations toward social justice, those that have criticized SJE believe that its pedagogical practices prioritize a certain set of social justice-focused outcomes (Applebaum, 2009; Downs, 2012). At the current time, there has been a backlash on college campuses and across the country about the “PC” nature of SJE, and how it can “coddle” students, stifle their free speech, and thwart their personal and academic growth (Audia, 2014; Lukianoff & Haidt, 2015). At the current time, there is a lack of research that has examined how students individually experience SJE-oriented courses, co-curricular activities, and cross-cultural interactions.

Additionally, a limited number of studies have conducted longitudinal inquiries of students’ college diversity experiences (e.g., Bowman, Brandenberger, Hill, & Lapsley, 2011; Jayakumar, 2008). Although students may participate in diversity experiences throughout their college careers, students’ first year in college can be an especially pivotal time for their involvement because it is often an important period of personal and professional growth (Arnett, 2011; Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin, 2002). It can set the tone for students’ subsequent engagement in social justice issues, and lay the groundwork for whether or not they choose majors, careers, or other life and work trajectories that have the potential to promote social change (Bowman, et al., 2011; Gurin, et al., 2002). Previous research has indicated that students who became actively engaged in diversity experiences during their first year are more involved in diversity-related activities in their senior year, compared to their less engaged first-year peers (Bowman, 2012). Moreover, early involvement in diversity experiences can influence a multitude of social justice outcomes in the decade following students’ graduation from college such as living in less segregated areas, having more diverse friendships, working in more multicultural workplaces, showing an increased awareness of racism, displaying higher rates of

civic engagement, and maintaining a pluralistic orientation in their daily lives (Bowman, et al., 2011; Gurin, 1999; Jayakumar, 2008).

Although first-year students often have a variety of opportunities to participate in diversity-related residence hall programming, coursework, and extracurricular activities, much is often left up to students in terms of their own involvement. Consequently, many students may encounter haphazard and disconnected first-year diversity experiences, or in some cases, choose not to participate in these types of experiences altogether. Other first-year students, however, may encounter more intentional and integrated diversity experiences if they reside in residential learning communities (RLCs) that encourage or require participation in a variety of curricular, co-curricular, or informal diversity experiences (Rocconi, 2011).

Despite their recognition as a high-impact educational practice by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (Kuh, 2008), only a few studies have explored the important role that RLCs play in providing purposeful, interconnected diversity experiences for first-year students (i.e., Pike, 2002; Zhao & Kuh, 2004; Zúñiga, et al., 2005). However, these quantitative studies all utilized large-scale data sets, and did not take into account students' predispositions toward engaging in certain diversity experiences, or how their varying patterns of involvement can lead to different social justice outcomes. In light of the gaps in the research, this study utilizes a qualitative approach to explore students' experiences within an RLC that incorporates social justice education in order to prepare students to live and work in a diverse democracy: the Michigan Community Scholars Program (MCSP) at the University of Michigan (U-M), Ann Arbor. This particular study examines how students' reasons for joining MCSP, pre-college exposure to diversity and social justice issues, and social identity backgrounds shaped their

involvement in MCSP-affiliated diversity experiences, and the subsequent growth in their social justice outcomes during their first year in college.

Professional Interest in this Topic

During the 2012-2013 academic year, I was voluntarily involved in coordinating intergroup dialogues and other social justice education activities for MCSP. As a result of organizing a social-justice oriented simulation activity for the annual MCSP retreat, I was able to observe the first-year students develop powerful insights about social justice issues, which sparked my interest in this study. Often referred to as “Sim City,” the activity that the students participated in involved building a fictional community using construction paper, paper bowls, markers, scissors, and other assorted office supplies. Because this activity is designed to help students understand how resources are inequitably distributed in our society, and how systems of privilege, power, and oppression contribute to these disparities, the students are divided into four groups and given differing amounts of supplies and “land” to build their community. In the simulation, two groups of students have access to large amounts of land and supplies, whereas, two other groups have barely enough room to stand in their designated land, let alone supplies to create their community. Government officials, police officers, building permits, and a jail are thrown into the mix in order to enforce differential treatment among the groups, and generally some form of chaos ensues during the activity. During the retreat, the group with the fewest resources staged a riot, which promptly ended the simulation.

Despite the less than desirable outcome of the simulation, I was struck by the MCSP students’ self-reflections during the debriefing. Many of them made connections between the activity and the barriers faced by those that they served through MCSP-sponsored community service projects. Others discussed what it meant to come from a privileged racial or social class

background and reflected on the fact they have never had to face many of these systemic barriers. Despite the deeply personal nature of this conversation, the majority of the students appeared to be quite comfortable and open with one another. At the end of our conversation, each student wrote something he or she took away from the activity on a post-it note. Many powerful insights about students' own social identities and involvement in social justice activities were then posted around the room.

As a workshop facilitator for the Program on Intergroup Relations' (IGR) Common Ground program at U-M, I had previously led "Sim City" and additional SJE activities with other U-M undergraduate and graduate students; however, my observations were that they tended to be less engaged in the activities compared to the first-year MCSP students at the retreat. This experience prompted me to wonder why MCSP students appeared to be more engaged in this activity. Were they already predisposed to a heightened level of engagement in these activities due to their pre-college diversity experiences and self-selection into MCSP? Did their involvement in MCSP play a role, and if so, what types of diversity experiences had the strongest influence on their interest in and understanding of social justice issues? By listening to these first-year MCSP students and reading their post-it note insights, it appeared that many students had started to critically think not only about social inequities in society, but also their individual roles in systems of power, privilege, and oppression.

These observations and thoughts that I had after the Sim City activity have prompted me to conduct this study. My professional involvement with MCSP, IGR, and other SJE work within academic and student affairs at U-M has strongly influenced my knowledge of the field of SJE, and my affiliation as a social justice educator and researcher. As a higher education scholar with a background in counseling and social psychology, I am particularly interested in examining

MCSP's role as an educational intervention that encourages students to promote social justice, through the lens of exploring their personal experiences within this context. It is with this particular orientation that I approach this study.

Organization of the Dissertation

My dissertation focuses on students' experiences within a RLC that provides integrated curricular, co-curricular, and informal activities to create a lived social justice-focused culture. The sample's differing pre-college characteristics and engagement in RLC-affiliated diversity experiences are examined in order to uncover variations in students' self-reported growth in their awareness and actions related to promoting social justice. The overarching research question is, *“How does participation in RLC diversity experiences influence students' social justice outcomes during their first year in college?”* Moreover, this study will answer the following sub-questions:

- 1) How do students' pre-college experiences with diversity influence their perceived engagement in RLC diversity experiences?
- 2) How do students perceive that their RLC diversity experiences shaped their awareness of social justice issues, both in their own lives and in broader society?
- 3) How do students perceive that their participation in RLC diversity experiences shaped their social justice actions, and commitment to creating social change?
- 4) How do students perceive that their social justice learning in the RLC translated to their other first-year experiences at U-M?

This dissertation is comprised of nine chapters. As described above, Chapter One presented an overview of the significance of this study, and provides background information about the researcher's professional interest in the topic. Chapter Two will outline the current body of literature related to residential learning communities, college diversity experiences,

social justice outcomes, and students' pre-college characteristics. Moreover, Chapter Two will describe cognitive and affective processes that may occur during and after students' participation in diversity experiences, and present the conceptual model for this study. Chapter Three details the methodology, which includes the multiple case study research design, data sources, data analysis approach, and the limitations of the study. Chapter Four outlines the history, mission, and goals of MCSP to provide further context for the study. Chapter Five presents an overview of the sample's pre-college characteristics, in the form of their reasons for joining the RLC, social identity backgrounds, prior exposure to diverse communities, and preexisting knowledge of social justice issues. Chapter Six involves a thematic analysis of the sample's inward growth during their time in MCSP, whereas Chapter Seven considers themes as it relates to students' outward and forward growth of social justice outcomes. Chapter Eight presents an overview of students' trajectories and individual case study analyses of six students in order to explore the variations in students' experiences within MCSP and their social justice outcomes. Chapter Nine summarizes the findings of the study, presents implications for practice and future research, and offers concluding thoughts. I will now review the existing literature in order to establish the empirical and theoretical foundation for this study.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

The following chapter describes the various ways that the current body of higher education, psychology, sociology, and social work literature has conceptualized the experiences, mechanisms, and outcomes associated with students' capacity to create a more socially just society. I will first define the key concepts, and then describe how students' college environments can foster social justice outcomes, including the context of this study, residential learning communities (RLCs). I will then explore the literature related to the interconnected diversity experiences that students may encounter during their time in RLCs, along with how their participation in coursework, co-curricular activities, and informal interactions have been associated with a variety of democratic outcomes. Some of these diversity experiences may explicitly or implicitly utilize pedagogical orientations associated with social justice education (SJE). As explored in this chapter, SJE has been linked to a range of social justice outcomes, which include students' development of intercultural competence and their ability to act as social justice allies.

Given that much of the literature has generally focused on large-scale assessments or group-level themes of students' democratic and social justice outcomes, it has often failed to account for students' individual experiences within their college environments, such as their different ways of thinking, feeling, and acting during these diversity experiences. Hence, this

study will also review previous research on how students' varying pre-college characteristics can influence their engagement in diversity experiences, and the multiple cognitive and affective processes that can affect their social justice outcomes. In order to create a more holistic picture of students' differing social justice trajectories over the course of their first year in college, I will then present the conceptual model that will frame this study.

Definitions of Key Concepts

Although the term, *social justice*, is widely used among researchers, practitioners, and the general public, it is often not explicitly defined, and therefore carries a host of meanings (Bell, 1997; Buckley & Quaye, 2014; Gewirtz, 1998; North, 2006; Rawls, 1971; Reason & Davis, 2005; Reisch, 2002; Torres-Harding, Siers, & Olson, 2012). While much of the political science and philosophy literature has historically conceptualized social justice in terms of the equitable distribution of resources, which Rawls (1971) and others have defined as distributive justice, (North, 2006; Reisch, 2002), scholars in applied fields such as education and social work have more recently utilized definitions that include relational aspects of social justice and place a focus on collaboration, advocacy, and empowerment in order to create social change (Gewirtz, 1998; Torres-Harding, et al., 2012). In light of the varying definitions of social justice, this study utilizes Bell's (2007) definition of *social justice* as "a vision of society in which the distribution of resources is equitable and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure" (p. 1). This conceptualization is commonly used within the SJE literature, and will serve as a guide for my study as I explore how MCSP influenced students' ways of thinking, feeling, and acting in regards to themselves, their fellow peers, and the world around them.

Several key additional concepts are utilized within the SJE literature, such as social identities, privilege, and oppression to discuss the existence of social structures and power

imbalances that lead to inequitable access to resources and opportunities (Adams, et al., 2007). *Oppression* refers to “the pervasive nature of social inequality woven throughout social institutions as well as embedded in individual consciousness” (Bell, 1997, p. 4). It exists at the individual, institutional, and structural levels, and manifests itself through interconnected “-isms” such as racism, sexism, and classism (Adams, et al., 2007; Pincus, 1996). On the other hand, *privilege* is often defined as unearned advantages given to select members of society, along with “conferred dominance” or power over others (Johnson, 2005, p. 23; McIntosh, 1988). *Positionality* is another key concept in the SJE literature that refers to how people are situated in relation to one another with respect to their power and privilege in society (Hackman, 2005; Takacs, 2002). *Social identities* involve social group memberships, or socially constructed “categories,” such as race, gender, and social class, that can be self-claimed or ascribed by society. The concept of *intersectionality*, which originated from feminist and critical race theorists, signifies the fact that many individuals have a combination of identities that exist within interlocking systems of privilege, power, and oppression (Cole, 2009; Collins, 1990; Crenshaw, 1994).

Within the student development literature, the definitions provided by Sanford (1971) and Rodgers (1990) are often utilized by higher education scholars when describing students' progressions during their time in college (Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton, & Renn, 2009). In his book, *Self & Society: Social Change and Individual Development*, Sanford (1971) distinguished between change, growth, and development. He defined change as “an altered condition that may be positive or negative, progressive, or regressive” and growth as “expansion but may be either favorable or unfavorable to overall functioning” (p. 47). Sanford described development in terms of a “positive growth process where an individual becomes increasingly able to integrate and act

on many different experiences and influences” (Evans, et al., 2009, p. 6). Rodgers (1990) also discussed students’ growth in his definition of student development as “the ways that a student grows, progresses, or increases his or her developmental capabilities as a result of enrollment in an institution of higher education” (p. 27). Based on Sanford's (1971) and Rodgers’ (1990) definitions, I will define students’ *growth* broadly as students’ progressive movement and positive changes toward outcomes that revolve around the goals of SJE, such as developing an awareness of systems of privilege, power, and oppression in their own lives and society, along with actions that contribute to creating social change (Adams, et al., 1999, 2007; Gurin, et al., 2013; Hackman, 2005; Storms, 2012). The term, *trajectories*, will be used to denote students’ patterns as it relates to how they engaged in various diversity experiences within MCSP based on their pre-college characteristics, and their progressions toward promoting social justice both during and after their time in MCSP.

Residential Learning Communities (RLCs)

A substantial body of literature has highlighted how RLCs can provide a more integrated first-year experience, and positively influence students’ academic, social, and civic engagement (Gabelnick, Macgregor, Matthews, & Smith, 1990; Meiklejohn, 1932; Rocconi, 2011; Ryan, 2001; Schoem, 2004; Shapiro and Levine, 1999; Tinto, 1996; Wunsch, 1966). RLCs often involve an “intentional structuring of the students’ time, credit, and learning experiences to build community, and to foster more explicit connections among students, faculty, and disciplines” (Gabelnick, et al., 1990, p. 5). Even though RLCs come in a variety of different formats, they typically revolve around a common theme and involve shared living-learning experiences (e.g., participating in linked-courses and residing within the same dormitory) (Rocconi, 2011; Shapiro and Levine, 1999).

Rooted in the Oxford and Cambridge models of a scholarly community, RLCs began in the United States in the 1920s when Meiklejohn (1932) created the "Experimental College" at the University of Wisconsin, Madison (Ryan, 2001; Schoem, 2001; Stassen, 2003). RLCs were created in order to bridge students' learning experiences within their classrooms with those in their residence halls, which has been a long-standing challenge within higher education (Meiklejohn, 1932; Tinto, 1996; Rocconi, 2011; Rong, 1998; Schoem, 2004; Shapiro and Levine, 1999; Wunsch, 1966). The Pilot Program—the first RLC at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor—was created in the 1960s in order to dismantle the separation between the academic, residential, and social aspects of the lives of undergraduates (Hatch, 1972). As Wunsch (1966) highlighted in the rationale for developing the Pilot Program, students could find themselves “in classrooms with acquaintances from [their] residence halls, and ideally a part of this shared intellectual experience is carried back and continued in the hall” (p. 3). By taking courses and living together, as well as participating in other structured curricular, co-curricular, and informal activities, students in RLCs often have access to more interconnected college environments than students residing in traditional residential halls (Rocconi, 2011).

RLCs can also create a more holistic in- and out-of-class experience for students that occurs around the clock during their time in college:

By virtue of the fact that students who study together in classes also live together in the same residence halls, they provided a natural setting for students to take ideas and concepts from the classroom out into the world. The residence hall environment becomes a twenty-four-hour-a-day setting for intellectual engagement. Students continue stimulating discussions from their small classes into the cafeteria, along the hallway corridors late at night, [and] out into community service project sites (Schoem, 2004, p. 132).

As Schoem (2004) described, this “twenty-four-hour-a-day” lived experience within RLCs can help students feel a stronger sense of community as they engage with their peers during classes,

meals, study sessions, service projects, and late-night discussions. Moreover, this more intimate environment often allows students to develop a network of social connections to students, faculty, and staff within their RLC (Rocconi, 2011; Ryan, 2001; Schoem & Pasque, 2004). Ryan (2001) explained that “the intimacy of ties by students, and between students and faculty, intensified by residence, has long been seen as promoting the students’ personal as well as intellectual development” (p. 64). The sense of shared community, participatory involvement, and emphasis on democratic education within RLCs can also “contribute to the development of good citizenship among students, while investing in the long term welfare of society” (Schoem & Pasque, 2004, p. 23). Consequently, RLCs are considered a highly effective educational practice by the American Association of Colleges & Universities (AAC&U) because in addition to bridging the “academic-social” divide, they can provide critical academic and social support, and promote civic engagement in a diverse democracy, during students’ first year in college—a particularly important transition in their lives (Kuh, 2008; Ryan, 2001; Schoem, 2001; Schoem & Pasque, 2004; Tinto, 1996).

Studies focused on RLCs have highlighted a wide range of educational outcomes, which include a more successful transition to college (Inkelas, et al., 2004, 2007; Knight, 2003), and higher persistence and graduation rates (Johnson, Johnson, & Smith, 1998). RLCs have been found to increase students’ problem-solving, higher-order thinking, and other cognitive skills (Pasque & Murphy, 2005; Pike, 1999). Students who reside in RLCs are more likely than non-participants to have heightened perceptions of a supportive campus climate (Inkelas, et al., 2004, 2007; Zhao & Kuh, 2004), and more frequent interactions with faculty and peers (Pike, 1999; Pike, Schroeder, & Berry, 1997; Rocconi, 2011; Terenzini, Pascarella, & Blimling, 1996).

Only a few studies have explored the influence of RLCs on students' diversity and social justice-related outcomes (e.g., Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980; Pike, 2002; Zhao & Kuh, 2004). By utilizing a longitudinal quasi-experimental design with a sample of 767 first-year students, Pascarella and Terenzini (1980) found that students that lived in an experimental RLC developed a deeper understanding of themselves compared to students that lived in a traditional residence hall. In his quantitative study of 502 first-time college students, Pike (2002) surveyed students residing in a freshman interest group (i.e., students that lived on the same floor in residence hall, took several courses together, and attended a seminar that discussed multicultural issues), and found they exhibited a greater openness to diversity than students living off-campus, in a traditional residential hall, or a themed-related RLC that did not have a focus on multicultural issues. Zhao and Kuh's (2004) study of first and fourth-year students from 365 four-year universities that participated in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) found that students residing in RLCs engaged in more diversity-related experiences.

Given that many of these prior studies utilized quantitative methodologies, less is known about how students' predispositions toward joining RLCs and their varying levels of participation in these programs may have contributed to these outcomes. Moreover, because the literature on RLCs has primarily involved large-scale studies, limited attention has been given to students' individual experiences within these programs. As highlighted in this section, first-year students in RLCs can have a higher likelihood of encountering a range of diversity experiences that bridge both their academic and social environments, which will be described below.

College Diversity Experiences

In the past few decades, there has been a growing body of empirical research on the benefits of diversity experiences for college students, which have largely been in response to

important Supreme Court affirmative action cases (i.e., *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke*, *Gratz v. Bollinger*, *Grutter v. Bollinger*) (Chang, Denson, Saenz, & Misa, 2006). The literature has generally defined college diversity experiences as: structural diversity, formal diversity experiences, and informal cross-cultural interactions (Hurtado, et al., 1999). Structural diversity typically refers to the proportion of students with different social identity backgrounds on campus, often with an emphasis placed on the representation of students of color (Bowman 2010, 2012). Although there is a lack of evidence about the direct benefits of structural diversity on students' outcomes, it has been associated with more frequent opportunities for students to interact with diverse peers (Chang, Astin, & Kim, 2004; Gurin, 1999). Formal diversity experiences can include both curricular and co-curricular involvement such as diversity-related courses, service-learning opportunities, and other multicultural events, activities, and workshops on campus (Denson, 2009; Gurin, et al., 2002; Hurtado, et al., 2012). Informal diversity interactions refer to the “the frequency and quality of interactions with diverse peers that occur outside of a formal curricular or co-curricular context” (Bowman, 2012, p. 3).

Students' participation in diversity experiences have been associated with a variety of outcomes, many of which are linked to knowledge, awareness, skills, and behaviors that influence students' ability to participate as citizens and leaders of a diverse democracy (Gurin, et al., 2002; Hurtado, et al., 2003, 2012). As Hurtado, et al. (2012) explained, acquiring democratic outcomes are necessary in order to “interact with individuals from different social identity groups, and to make ethical decisions in a society marked by inequality and conflict” (p. 52-53).

In terms of students' curricular experiences, the inclusion of diversity-related content in first-year courses has been linked to increases in students' awareness of social justice issues (Engberg & Mayhew, 2007). Students' participation in diversity coursework has been associated

with increased perspective-taking (Gurin, et al. 2002), reductions in racial bias (Chang, 2002; Denson, 2009; Denson & Chang, 2009), greater understanding and acceptance of others from diverse backgrounds (Hurtado, 2012; Gurin, et al. 2002), and increased engagement in social action (Bowman, 2011; Hurtado, Nelson-Laird, Landreman, Engberg, & Fernandez, 2002; Lopez, et al., 1998).

In regards to co-curricular diversity experiences, previous studies have linked service-learning with students' intercultural understanding and the ability to find commonalities with individuals from other cultures (Astin & Sax, 1998; Astin, Sax, & Avalos, 1999; Hosapple, 2012; Rice & Brown, 1998). Participation in service-learning is also related to decreased intergroup bias (Hosapple, 2012; Myers-Lipton, 1996), and a greater understanding of social inequalities in society (Einfeld & Collins, 2008; Espino & Lee, 2011; Everett, 1998). However, mixed findings were found in regards to the association between engaging in service-learning and developing a stronger commitment to promoting social justice (Bowman, Brandenberger, Mick, & Smedley, 2010; Einfeld & Collins, 2008; Espino & Lee, 2011). Other co-curricular activities such as participation in diversity workshops and events are connected to a variety of democratic outcomes, including perspective-taking (Gurin et al., 2002), intercultural understanding (Antony, 1993; Milem, 1994), openness to diversity (Pascarella, Edison, Nora, Hagedorn, & Terenzini, 1996; Whitt, Edison, Pascarella, Terenzini, & Nora, 2001), and social action engagement (Hurtado, et al., 2003; Zuniga, et al., 2005).

Informal cross-cultural interactions have been linked to democratic outcomes such as openness to diversity (Chang, et al., 2006; Pascarella, et al., 1996; Whitt, et al., 2001), racial understanding (Antonio, 2001; Astin, 1993; Milem, 1994), tolerance and acceptance of individuals from other cultures (Hurtado, 2001), and a more racially integrated post-college

lifestyle (Jayakumar, 2008). Several meta-analyses have confirmed that interacting with racially diverse peers is more effective at promoting civic engagement (Bowman, 2010) and decreasing racial bias (Denson, 2009) than curricular and co-curricular diversity experiences. Informal interactions with diverse peers, as well as diversity-related curricular and co-curricular activities, were found to positively influence students' pluralistic orientation, or "their ability to see the world from someone else's perspective, tolerance of others with different beliefs, openness to having one's views challenged, ability to work cooperatively with diverse people, and ability to discuss and negotiate controversial issues" (Engberg & Hurtado, 2011, p. 418) across different educational trajectories and racial/ethnic backgrounds, both during and after college (Bowman, et al., 2011; Chang, et al., 2006; Hurtado, et al., 2012; Engberg, 2004, 2007). A small body of research on diversity experiences in traditional residence halls also found that living with a racially different roommate can reduce prejudice (Van Laar, Levin, Sinclair, & Sidanius, 2005), and contact with diverse peers within dormitories can increase awareness of societal inequities (Lopez, 2004). Although these prior studies did not take into account whether students were affiliated with RLCs, first-year students may participate in similar diversity-related curricular, co-curricular, and informal activities within these programs (Zhao & Kuh, 2004).

Because most of the previous research on students' college diversity experiences has utilized quantitative methodologies such as regression analyses and structural equation modeling, they have been unable to capture the variations in students' individual experiences within these curricular, co-curricular, and informal settings. While past literature has presented ample evidence of how colleges can prepare students to live and work in a diverse democracy (Hurtado, et al., 2012), there is less clarity about whether the diversity experiences they studied placed an intentional focus on helping students acquire knowledge, skills, and behaviors that promote

social change, which is a particular goal of social justice education (SJE) (Adams, et al., 1997, 2007; Hackman, 2005; Storms, 2012).

Social Justice and Intercultural Competence Literature

Social Justice Education. It is important to acknowledge that the conceptualizations of social justice outcomes in this study are heavily influenced by the emerging field of social justice education (SJE) (Adams, et al., 1997, 2007; Hackman, 2005). Although the terms, diversity, multicultural, and intercultural education, are sometimes used to describe educational practices with similar goals as SJE (Cabrera, 2012; Gurin, et al., 2013; King, Perez & Shim, 2013; Pittman, 2009), SJE has a distinct pedagogical orientation. Bell (2007) defines SJE as “both an interdisciplinary conceptual framework for analyzing multiple forms of oppression and a set of interactive, experiential pedagogical principles to help learners understand the meaning of social difference and oppression both in the social system and in their personal lives” (p. 2). SJE incorporates an interdisciplinary approach, which draws upon social identity development (Hardiman & Jackson, 2007), cognitive development (Perry, 1970), intergroup dialogue (Gurin, et al., 2002; Schoem & Hurtado, 2001), and multicultural education (Banks, 2002; Nieto, 2000) frameworks, along with feminist, Freirean, and critical race pedagogies (Freire, 1970; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

SJE’s pedagogical practices are rooted in Freire’s (1970) conceptualization of praxis by intertwining theory and practice to explore historical and current causes of oppression and approaches to challenging social injustices (Bell, 1997). It places an emphasis on helping students develop awareness of how they personally play a role in maintaining and perpetuating societal inequities, while also learning more about the injustices in the world around them (Mayhew & Fernandez, 2007). According to Hackman (2005), there are five main components

of SJE pedagogy: content mastery of historical and current roots of oppression, tools for critical analysis, tools for social change, tools for personal reflection, and an understanding of multicultural group dynamics. Discussions about diversity and social justice issues, self-reflection about one's own identities, hearing about others' lived experiences, and collaborating with diverse peers have been identified as key pedagogical practices within SJE (Fuentes, et al., 2010; Gurin, et al., 2013; Mayhew & Fernandez, 2007; Storms, 2012).

Within the current body of SJE-related literature, students' experiences in intergroup dialogue courses (IGD) have been the most extensively researched by Gurin and her colleagues (e.g., Gurin, et al., 2004, 2013; Gurin-Sands, Gurin, Nagda, & Osuna, 2012; Nagda & Zuniga, 2003; Nagda, Gurin, Sorensen, and Zuniga, 2009; Sorensen, Nagda, Gurin, and Maxwell, 2009). Using of a mixed-methods experimental design, Gurin et al., (2013) studied a total of 1,437 students in 52 pairings of IGD participant groups and control groups, along with a social science comparison group. Their results indicated that participation in IGD had a significant impact on three sets of outcomes: intergroup relationships, intergroup understanding, and intergroup collaboration and action. The intergroup relationships outcomes included intergroup empathy, motivation to bridge differences through mutually sharing knowledge about one's own social identities, and learning more about the lived experiences of others. Intergroup understanding encompassed an awareness of the prevalence of societal inequalities and attitudes toward promoting diversity. Gurin, et al. referred to intergroup collaboration and action as students' involvement in educating themselves and those in their lives about social justice issues, along with collaborating with others and joining organizations to address societal inequities.

Several other studies (e.g., Fuentes, et al., 2010; Mayhew & Fernandez, 2007; Nagda, et al., 2004; Storms, et al., 2005) have utilized a variety of quantitative and qualitative methods to

assess how SJE-focused courses influenced students' social justice outcomes. In their quantitative study of 175 students enrolled in a "Cultural Diversity and Justice" course that incorporated IGD, Nagda, et al. (2004) administered pre- and post-test surveys to determine if students' participation in the course influenced their self-directed actions to reduce prejudice, and behaviors that interrupted others' offensive language and promoted diversity. They determined that the course increased students' motivation to engage in intergroup learning, and heightened their sense of confidence and importance for engaging in both types of actions. Storms (2012) studied how a SJE-focused course influenced students' engagement in social action. By interviewing six students enrolled in the course, she found that hearing others' lived experiences helped the participants gain more awareness of how systems of oppression operated in their own lives and society. The participants displayed more empathy toward others from oppressed groups, and increased self-confidence and tools to promote social change. As the studies of both Nagda, et al. (2004) and Storms (2012) indicate, students' involvement in courses that explicitly integrate SJE helped them develop awareness and actions that could strengthen their capacity to foster a more just society.

Mayhew and Fernandez (2007) and Fuentes, et al. (2010) highlighted social justice outcomes associated with student's participation in SJE-focused courses, along with key SJE pedagogical practices within the classroom. Mayhew and Fernandez (2007) utilized survey data to determine how five courses that incorporated SJE-related content influenced students' social justice learning. They conceptualized "social justice learning" as a set of knowledge, awareness, and skills that included: "learned to think critically about issues related to diversity" "became aware of my own power and position in society," and "gained understanding of my own forms of prejudice, expressions of discrimination" (Mayhew & Fernandez, 2007, p. 69). The courses that

simultaneously integrated a focus on individual and societal roles in systems of privilege, power, and oppression, along with pedagogical practices such as discussions about diversity and opportunities for reflection, significantly contributed to students' social justice learning. Fuentes, et al. (2010) also examined the SJE-oriented curriculum within a "Education for Social Justice" course using survey and observational data for 19 students, 16 of whom were first-year students. They highlighted several key themes related to effective pedagogical practices in the course including using "real stories" of social justice issues, engaging in role-playing activities, sharing opinions during class discussions, and acquiring pragmatic tools to engage in social action. Fuentes, et al. reported that participants developed a greater awareness of social justice issues and sense of personal agency, but still struggled with translating their newfound awareness into actions promoting social justice, especially in regards to creating institutional-level change.

Despite the empirical evidence regarding the integration of SJE into students' diversity experiences, the current body of research has primarily focused on exploring how students' coursework influences their social justice outcomes (Fuentes, et al., 2010; Gurin, et al. 2013; Mayhew & Fernandez, 200; Nagda, et al., 2004; Storms, 2012;). In this way, it fails to paint a holistic picture of how SJE principles may be incorporated into other aspects of students' experiences during college, such as their co-curricular activities and cross-cultural interactions. Although the pedagogical practices of SJE remain distinct, its outcomes have been described in other bodies of literature, including models of intercultural competence.

Intercultural Competence. Acquiring knowledge about oneself and others, and developing the skills to engage across differences, also align with the goals of developing intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2004, 2006; King & Baxter Magolda, 2005; King, Perez, & Shim, 2013). In a study of 23 intercultural scholars, Deardorff (2006) indicated that they

preferred to define intercultural competence as “knowledge of others; knowledge of self; skills to interpret and relate; skills to discover and/or to interact; valuing others’ values, beliefs, and behaviors; and relativizing one’s self” (p. 247). In her process models of intercultural competence, Deardorff (2004) highlighted both individual and interpersonal levels of intercultural competence. Within the individual level, she conceptualized displaying respect, openness, and curiosity toward other cultural groups as attitudes, both self-awareness and an understanding of other cultures as knowledge, and the ability to listen, observe, interpret, and relate as skills. Her models assumed a linear movement from the individual level to interpersonal level, which is comprised of internal outcomes including adaptability, flexibility, and empathy, along with external outcomes that encompass effectively communicating across cultures.

Similar to Deardorff’s (2004, 2006) distinction between individual and interpersonal levels, King and Baxter Magolda (2005) highlighted three dimensions—cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal—in their developmental model of intercultural maturity that draws upon the multicultural education literature (Bennett, 2001) and lifespan development models (Kegan, 1994). Students’ cognitive development encompasses their awareness and acceptance of multiple perspectives, whereas their intrapersonal development relates to students’ self-awareness of how their values and beliefs intersect with their social identities. While students’ cognitive and intrapersonal development are more internally focused, their interpersonal development involves building relationships with diverse others that are respectful and accepting of their lived experiences and perspectives. Moreover, King and Baxter Magolda asserted that students’ interpersonal development is also connected to developing an “understanding of ways individual and community practices affect social systems” and being “willing to work for the rights of others” as a social justice advocate or ally (p. 576). There are interrelations between these three

dimensions, and some cases where they may precede others (i.e., a cognitive understanding of privilege may be needed before students can understand how it applies to their own lives).

Another body of literature, social justice allyhood development, explores students' cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal development as it relates to cultivating awareness and actions that promote social change, as described below.

Social Justice Allyhood Development. As explained by Broido (2000), social justice allies are “members of dominant social groups (e.g., men, Whites, heterosexuals) who are working to end systems of oppression that give them greater privilege and power based upon their social group membership” (p. 3). Much of the current body of literature on social justice allies incorporates a developmental framework to explain how students' self-awareness and understanding of social justice issues are translated into actions that challenge the current status quo (Alimo, 2012; Bishop, 2002; Broido, 2000; Cabrera, 2012; Edwards, 2006; Reason, Roosa Millar, & Scales, 2005).

Bishop (2002) outlines five steps that individuals may take during their journey toward becoming social justice allies. As the first step in Bishop's framework, individuals must develop an understanding of the origins of oppression in society, how it continues to exist, and why individuals and institutions in our society are currently reinforcing it. The second step in Bishop's model involves recognizing the interconnected nature of various systems of oppression. As she explains, “All oppressions are interdependent, they all come from the same worldview, and none can be solved in isolation” (Bishop, 2002, p. 20). The third step includes developing an understanding about one's own role in the cycle of oppression, and healing the pain associated with learning how one contributes to the inequities that others face. Bishop's fourth step involves recognizing that we are all affected by oppression, and engaging in behaviors that promote social

change. In the final step in Bishop's model, individuals develop a new set of skills as allies, including "listening to and supporting members of oppressed groups rather than leading (or co-opting) their own social change" (p. 23). As shown in Bishop's five step framework for social justice ally development, individuals must first learn about social inequities, and their own roles in systems of power, privilege, and oppression, in order to effectively engage in actions to create social change, which is very much in line with the key premise of SJE (Adams, et al., 2007).

While Bishop (2002) highlights a process by which individuals can become social justice allies, Edwards (2006) identifies three types of allies: Allies for Self-Interest, Allies for Altruism, and Allies for Social Justice. Allies for Self-Interest are often motivated to intervene on behalf of specific individuals they care about and may not personally identify with the word "ally," but rather as a good sibling or friend. Because they may take actions on behalf of their families or friends without consulting them, or acknowledging how they personally contribute to systems of oppression, they may ultimately reinforce the system of oppression that harmed their loved ones. Allies for Altruism may engage in ally behavior as a way to cope with the guilt associated with their growing awareness of the privilege and power that they hold in society. One way of dealing with their guilt is to assume the role of a "rescuer" or "hero" for members of oppressed groups. Allies for Social Justice recognize the interconnected nature of systems of privilege, power, and oppression, and work alongside those from different social identity groups to challenge injustice. Although it is not intended to be linear or chronological, Edwards' model of social justice allyhood development assumes that students may have varying motivations and intentions for their involvement in creating social change. Especially in the case of Allies for Self-Interest and Altruism, despite being well-intentioned, some individuals may actually perpetuate the systems of oppression that they are attempting to dismantle. In the light of the fact that Bishop's (2002)

and Edwards's (2006) conceptualizations of allyhood are not empirically based, other studies on this topic (e.g., Alimo, 2012; Broido, 2000; Cabrera, 2012; Reason, et al., 2005) have utilized primarily qualitative methodologies to explore how students have developed awareness and actions associated with becoming social justice allies.

Broido (2000) developed a model of social ally identity development based on her phenomenological study of six White, heterosexual students who acted as social justice allies during college. The knowledge that they gained from both within and outside of the classroom helped them to learn about “the impact and continued existence of oppression, the experiences of target group members, their own privilege as dominant group members, the connections among various forms of oppression, and the benefits of a more diverse and socially just society” (Broido, 2000, p. 7). Students' self-confidence, which included comfort with their own identities, was a critical factor in their development as social justice allies. The participants in Broido's study used three strategies to make meaning of their diversity experiences: discussion, self-reflection, and perspective-taking. Even though developing social-justice related knowledge, attitudes, and skills were antecedents to social justice allyhood development, Broido found that ally behavior generally only occurred when individuals were invited or recruited to participate in social justice efforts. Broido's study highlights the role of diversity experiences in helping students to obtain knowledge of both themselves and other social identity groups, which Bishop (2002) mentioned is often a precursor to engaging in action. Similar to the pedagogical principles of SJE (Mayhew & Fernandez, 2007; Storms, 2010), Broido highlights the importance of engaging in discussion and self-reflection as parts of the process of developing social justice-oriented outcomes.

Reason, et al. (2005) conducted two qualitative studies that explored how 11 White first-year students, and 15 upperclassmen that were identified as “allies” during their participation in on-campus activities, engaged in behaviors that promoted racial justice. First-year students that were involved in race relations coursework often developed a more “privilege-cognizant” understanding of what it meant to be White, whereas those that did not enroll in these types of courses rarely reflected on their Whiteness. While the upperclassmen were involved in “campus-level” actions, such as leading campus groups focused on racial equity, the first-year students generally did not move beyond engaging in “individual-level” and “safe” behaviors of discussing social justice issues with their friends and family, and felt the need to be invited to participate in “campus-level” actions. Similar to Broido’s (2000) findings, Reason, et al. explained that students’ confidence and understanding of their Whiteness were often catalysts to engaging in social justice behaviors, which was especially relevant for first-year students who were just becoming aware of their privilege and power in society.

In his study, Alimo (2012) utilized an experimental design to determine whether 365 White students that participated in a Race & Ethnicity intergroup dialogue (IGD) course or matched control waitlist group showed differences in their frequency of and confidence in engaging in self-directed and outward behaviors that align with acting as White racial allies. Participation in IGD was only associated with a higher frequency of engaging in these action-oriented outcomes. Alimo asserted that a temporal sequence may have taken place where students’ frequencies of taking action precedes their confidence, which conflicts with both Broido’s (2000) and Reason et al.’s (2005) findings.

In his qualitative study, Cabrera (2012) interviewed 15 White male undergraduates about their development as racial justice allies. Four main themes appeared in their narratives: racial

cognizance, critiquing White privilege, racial justice actions, and “work still to be done” (p. 384). The participants indicated that they were able to develop awareness of their White racial identities through their cross-racial interactions and race-related courses that incorporated a “humanizing pedagogy,” which allowed them to develop a personal connection to racism. Students’ White racial allyhood development was also influenced by possessing a marginalized social identity, such as their religion or sexual orientation, that allowed them to empathize with the experiences of racial minorities. Cabrera’s findings emphasize the importance of incorporating personal experiences and opportunities to develop intergroup empathy into SJE-related curriculum (Fuentes, et al., 2010; Gurin, et al., 2013; Storms, 2012).

Although Broido (2000), Reason, et al. (2005), Alimo (2012), and Cabrera (2012) highlight important intersections between students’ pre-college characteristics, college diversity experiences, and their sense of confidence when describing their development as social justice allies, it is important to note that these studies only focused on the experiences of White students. In this way, less is known how students with other racial identities can demonstrate awareness and actions associated with other forms of allyhood. Moreover, because their samples primarily included students that exhibited acts of allyhood, there is a gap in the current body of literature in regards to students that did not necessarily develop these outcomes despite being exposed to similar diversity experiences. The following section explores how students’ entering characteristics can shape their engagement in diversity experiences, which may subsequently influence their social justice outcomes.

Students’ Pre-College Characteristics

Many students currently grow up in pre-college communities that are segregated by both race and social class (Crowder, Pais, & South, 2012). As a result, their time in college is often

one of their first opportunities to interact with peers with different social identity backgrounds (Gurin, 1999; Saenz, 2010). Although limited, an existing body of research has explored how students' pre-college communities and demographics shape their predispositions toward engaging in diversity experiences during college (Bowman & Denson, 2012; Hurtado, et al., 2002; Jayakumar, 2008; Saenz, 2010). Much of the previous literature has highlighted Braddock's (1980, 1985) "perpetuation hypothesis" which asserted that students from segregated pre-college environments often gravitate toward joining homogeneous communities both during and after college. Several studies (e.g., Saenz, Ngai, & Hurtado; 2007; Saenz, 2010; Bowman & Denson, 2012; Jayakumar, 2008) found that college diversity experiences can break the "cycle of segregation" by positively influencing the cross-cultural interactions and democratic outcomes of students from different racial backgrounds. However, the gains tended to be larger for White students, most of whom grow up with less exposure to diversity than students of color (Milem & Umbach, 2003; Orfield & Lee, 2006).

Drawing upon Gurin's (2002) theory of the impact of diversity, scholars such as Jayakumar (2008) and Bowman and Denson (2012) found that students from racially homogeneous pre-college communities are more likely to experience cognitive growth when interacting with diverse peers. When encountering new people and perspectives, students with less previous exposure to diversity may undergo cognitive disequilibrium, which as explored in the following section, can influence them to rethink their pre-existing understandings of systems of power, privilege, and oppression (Adams, et al., 2007; Gurin, et al., 2002; Milem & Umbach, 2003). However, encountering more diverse peers for the first time can lead to discomfort, anxiety, or other forms of resistance during diversity experiences (Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Bowman & Denson, 2012; Dovidio, et al., 2004; Gallagher, 2009; Goodman, 2011). On the other hand,

students from more diverse pre-college communities tend to be more comfortable when engaging in cross-cultural interactions during college, and thus may not experience as much resistance, or growth, when participating in diversity experiences (Bowman & Denson, 2012; Jayakumar, 2008; Milem, Umbach, & Liang, 2004)

In addition to the diversity of students' pre-college communities, their social identities have been linked to differing social justice-related outcomes. White students and those from wealthier backgrounds reported more gains in their comfort with engaging across differences and making contact with diverse peers after taking diversity-related courses than their counterparts with other racial and social class identities (Bowman, 2010). Despite their greater likelihood of benefitting from diversity experiences, White students in particular may display greater resistance than their fellow peers because they sometimes view diversity-related courses as having an "anti-White" agenda (Gallagher, 2009). Females' gains in social justice-related outcomes also tend to remain higher than men throughout their time in college (Hurtado, et al., 2002; Pratto, Stallworth, & Sidanius, 1997; Saenz, et al. 2007), which may relate males' higher displays of resistance when participating in diversity experiences (Bowman, 2010; Goodman, 2011). While social class has received less attention in the literature, both gender and race often moderate students' engagement in college diversity experiences and their social justice-oriented outcomes (Bowman, 2011).

Of particular relevance to this study, Zuniga, et al. (2005) analyzed the pre- and post-test survey data of 597 students, 25% of whom were in their first-year of college, that participated in a diversity initiative within three residential halls. They assessed how students' involvement in diversity-related courses, co-curricular cultural activities, residential hall diversity awareness events, and cross-cultural interactions influenced their self-directed actions to reduce their

prejudice and outward actions to promote diversity and inclusion. Their findings indicated that students' pre-existing inclinations to engage in these self-directed and outward behaviors, along with their gender, primarily accounted for their higher post-test scores on these action-oriented outcomes. Students with these predispositions were also the most likely to be involved in diversity-related activities. Although Zuniga, et al.'s (2005) sample did not include students affiliated with a RLC, their study highlights the important role that students' entering characteristics can have on their engagement in a variety of diversity experiences within and outside of residence halls. Along with the variations in students' social identity backgrounds and prior exposure to diversity and social justice issues, different cognitive and affective processes can affect their social justice outcomes, as explored in the next section.

Cognitive and Affective Processes

Intergroup Contact Theory. Much of the literature that has explored how students' cross-cultural interactions influence social justice outcomes have been rooted in Allport's (1954) intergroup contact theory (e.g., Alimo, 2012; Antonio, 2011; Bowman, 2011; Denson, 2009; Gurin, et al., 2004; Hurtado, et al., 2012; Van Laar, et al., 2003; Mayhew & Fernandez, 2007; Nelson Laird, 2005; Saenz, et al., 2007; Tropp & Pettigrew, 2005). According to Allport, students can develop more tolerant attitudes toward others from different social identity groups if certain conditions are met. These conditions include maintaining equal status in a particular situation, getting to know each other on a personal level, collaborating on common goals, and receiving support from authority figures to maintain intergroup contact.

Although Allport's work has been influential in highlighting the positive role that intergroup contact can play in students' social justice outcomes, several scholars including Pettigrew (1998) and Dovidio, et al. (2004) have critiqued Allport's theory for its lack of

emphasis on the mediating cognitive and affective processes that contribute to the positive effects of intergroup contact. In his work, Pettigrew (1998) identified four processes that occur through intergroup contact: learning about the outgroup, changing intergroup behavior, developing affective ties, and reappraising the ingroup. Pettigrew explained that having repeated contact with the outgroup can lead to the acquisition of cognitive information about them, and new insights about one's ingroup, both of which can reduce prejudice. He also viewed emotion as a critical component of intergroup contact because intergroup anxiety can occur when different groups encounter each other for the first time. Continued contact can not only reduce this anxiety, but foster more positive emotions toward the outgroup, including the development of empathy.

Dovidio, et al. (2004) also built upon Allport's theory by developing a more detailed description of the underlying cognitive and affective processes of intergroup contact. Dovidio, et al. defined cognitive processes as how students perceive, categorize, and develop knowledge about others. Dovidio et al. identified several ways cognitive processes could reduce students' intergroup biases. By decategorizing or recategorizing others from different identity groups, students could learn to view them as separate individuals or members of the ingroup, which could decrease their stereotypes or prejudicial thoughts about these groups. Moreover, by gaining information about different identity groups, including their past histories and current situations, students could learn to interact with them in more individualized or personal ways, feel more comfortable in their intergroup interactions, and develop increased intercultural sensitivity. According to Dovidio, et al., students' increased intercultural knowledge and sensitivity may lead to a deeper recognition of social injustice.

Additionally, Dovidio, et al. identified emotional processes that could serve as mediators in reducing bias. By developing empathy toward other social identity groups, students may begin to feel positive emotions and become motivated to engage in supportive behaviors toward members of those groups. Reducing negative feelings, including anxiety, fear, and guilt, that is either self-directed, or directed at another social identity may also help to reduce intergroup bias. In the case of self-directed negative affect, some students may in fact value social justice, but come to the realization that their attitudes or behaviors may involve imbedded intergroup bias. In this way, they may experience cognitive dissonance—inconsistencies in their feelings, thoughts, and actions toward new people, ideas, or topics—that eventually may lead them to change their attitudes and behaviors so that they are more favorable toward other groups. Dovidio, et al. highlighted two main interventions, enlightenment-oriented and intergroup contact efforts, which could be used to reduce intergroup bias. Enlightenment-oriented efforts assume bias results from limited cognitive knowledge about different social identity groups, which can include positive and/or negative information. Broadening their knowledge base can reduce students' negative emotional responses to contact with social identity groups such as fear, anxiety, and ignorance. Intergroup contact efforts involve creating opportunities for structured cross-cultural interactions, which can result in more direct personal experiences with other groups, and more positive emotional ties with them. Like intergroup contact theory, Gurin, et al.'s (2002) theoretical framework of the impact of diversity explores the cognitive processes associated with students' social justice outcomes, which relate closely to Dovidio, et al.'s definition of cognitive dissonance.

Theory of the Impact of Diversity. Rooted in the work of developmental and social psychology theorists such as Erikson (1956) and Piaget (1985), Gurin, et al. (2002) developed a

theoretical framework to explain how students' curricular, co-curricular, and informal college diversity experiences could influence their cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal development. Gurin, et al. utilized Erikson's stages of psychosocial development (1956) to explain that college students are often in a crucial developmental stage—young adulthood—where they are still forming and exploring their personal, social, political, and professional identities. According to Erikson, an individual's identity can often develop best through a psychosocial moratorium where they are given the freedom to explore various social roles before making social, political, and occupational commitments. Gurin, et al. stated that if students' psychosocial moratorium during college involves a “confrontation with diversity and complexity,” they can make decisions about their commitments based on “new and more complex perspectives and relationships” rather than their prior worldviews and experiences (p. 334).

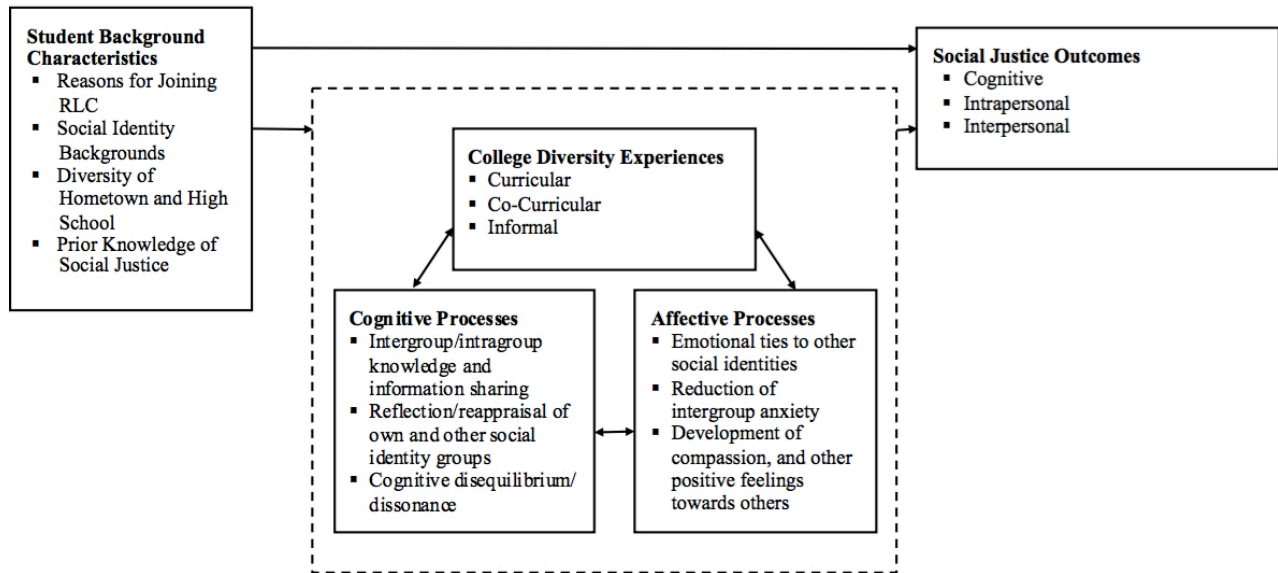
Gurin, et al. explained that participating in diversity experiences that challenge their existing worldviews can lead students to experience cognitive disequilibrium which, in turn, may lead to new understandings of their sense of self and perspectives about social justice issues. Because students who possess power and privilege in society may have not previously examined or explored their social identities prior to college, they may undergo a significant amount of cognitive disequilibrium as a result of their college diversity experiences (Gurin, et al., 2002; Johnson, 2005). For example, White students may not have previously recognized the advantages they hold in society as a result of their privileged racial identities. Their participation in diversity experiences may lead to a newfound awareness of their social status, and a shift in how they view their roles in systems of power, privilege, and oppression. Although some students may not shift their commitment to creating social change during their time in college,

either due to their preexisting social justice orientations or various forms of resistance, (Gallagher, 2009; Goodman, 2011), others who experience cognitive dissonance may resolve the imbalance by altering their beliefs and behaviors toward those that promote social justice. Based on how these cognitive and affective processes are described in the literature by intergroup contact theory (Allport, 1954; Dovidio, et al., 2004; Pettigrew, 1998) and Gurin, et al.'s (2002) theory of the impact of diversity, I will now present a conceptual model for this study in order to create a more holistic picture of the variations in the participants' social justice trajectories.

Conceptual Model for Study

As shown in Figure 2.1 below, the conceptual model I created depicts my understanding of how the current literature explains the relationships among students' pre-college characteristics, college diversity experiences, cognitive and affective processes, and social justice outcomes. This conceptual model assumes that students' pre-college characteristics — their reasons for joining MCSP, social identity backgrounds, previous exposure to diverse communities, and preexisting knowledge of social justice issues—can predispose them to become involved in certain curricular, co-curricular, and informal aspects of their college environment (Gurin, et al., 2002; Hurtado, et al., 2003). Students' engagement in different types of diversity experiences may facilitate cognitive and affective processes, such as acquiring information about their own and others' social identity groups, cognitive dissonance or disequilibrium, and developing empathy with diverse peers (Dovidio, et al., 2004; Gurin, et al., 2002).

Figure 2.1. Conceptual Model for Study



Students' varying cognitive and affective processes, in turn, can influence a range of social justice outcomes that have been identified in the diverse democracy, social justice education, and social justice allyhood literature (e.g., Adams, et al., 2007; Broido, 2000; Gurin, et al., 2013; Hurtado, et al., 2012; Reason, et al., 2005). As highlighted in the intercultural competence literature, students' outcomes encompass cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal dimensions (Deardorff, 2006; King & Baxter Magolda, 2005). Consequently, this study explores how students within the same RLC may develop different social justice outcomes, based on the variations in their pre-college characteristics and engagement in curricular, co-curricular, and informal diversity experiences. Chapter Three will now present an overview of the research design I implemented to explore the interconnections among students' pre-college characteristics, MCSP-affiliated diversity experiences, and social justice outcomes.

Chapter Three: Methodology

The primary purpose of this study is to explore how students' pre-college characteristics and engagement in MCSP diversity experiences during their first year in college influenced their social justice outcomes. Exploring students' differing experiences in a SJE-focused RLC can have important implications for how higher education institutions can prepare students to become advocates and agents for social change from the moment that they arrive on campus.

Research Questions

My overarching research question for this study is, "*How does participation in RLC diversity experiences influence students' social justice outcomes during their first year in college?*" This study will also be guided by the following sub-questions:

- 1) How do students' pre-college experiences with diversity influence their perceived engagement in RLC diversity experiences?
- 2) How do students perceive that their RLC diversity experiences shaped their awareness of social justice issues, both in their own lives and in broader society?
- 3) How do students perceive that their participation in RLC diversity experiences shaped their social justice actions, and commitment to creating social change?
- 4) How do students perceive that their social justice learning in the RLC translated to their other first-year experiences at U-M?

For the purposes of this case study, I have chosen to identify the RLC and the university where it is located. By naming the context, I will better be able to “emphasize connections among people, places, and events” and fully uncover the experiences of students in this RLC (Nespor, 2000, p. 55). While pseudonyms will still be used to protect the identities of the participants, being transparent about the context will allow the reader to gain a deeper understanding of the nuances associated with this particular RLC, and how the findings of this study may inform the practices of other RLCs and college diversity initiatives.

The Michigan Community Scholars Program

The context for this study is the Michigan Community Scholars Program (MCSP), an RLC at the University of Michigan (U-M), Ann Arbor. MCSP’s mission statement states:

Students, faculty, community partners, and staff think critically about issues of community, seek to model a just, diverse, and democratic community, and wish to make a difference throughout their lives as participants and leaders involved in local, national and global communities (MCSP website, 2016).

This RLC has an intentional focus on involving first-year students in interconnected curricular, co-curricular, and informal diversity experiences, and it has a commitment to preparing students to live and work in a diverse democracy.

MCSP was among the first RLCs across the nation to purposefully incorporate a focus on social justice into its mission, and it remains one of only a handful of RLCs in the country to do so. In addition to its strong commitment to encouraging students to create social change, MCSP boasts very high retention and graduation rates among its students. These rates included a nearly 100% retention rate for first-year students and 98% graduation rate among MCSP peer leaders during its first ten years (MCSP website, 2016). Consequently, studying an RLC of this nature can have important implications for how other colleges can engage first-year students in more intentional ways around social justice issues, while promoting their academic success.

As a result of being such a unique RLC, MCSP has received nationwide recognition through CNN's Anderson Cooper 360° show, Newsweek, The Princeton Review, PEW National Learning Communities Fellows, various Michigan media sources, and several academic and professional conferences (MCSP Internal History Document, 2014). It has also received numerous awards at U-M including the Rosalie Ginsberg Outstanding Award for Community Service and Social Action, and the National Center for Institutional Diversity (NCID)'s Exemplary Diversity Engagement and Scholarship Award.

Rationale for Methodology

I utilized a qualitative research methodology to develop an in-depth understanding of how first-year students' experiences within MCSP influenced their social justice outcomes. While quantitative research can shed some light on this topic, it cannot fully uncover how MCSP students individually experience the current phenomenon in different ways. Utilizing a qualitative methodology will allow me to triangulate a variety of data sources so that I can capture the nuances associated with how students' pre-college characteristics and their engagement in MCSP-affiliated courses, service-learning opportunities, in- and out-of-class intergroup dialogues, and informal interactions shaped their social justice outcomes. The findings of this study can aid in the development of quantitative evaluations of MCSP and other college diversity initiatives, and help to strengthen future social justice education programming for first-year students both within and outside of MCSP (Creswell, 2007; Ortiz, 2003).

Research Design

Case study designs often consist of "how" and "why" questions, and collect data from multiple sources in order to explore the phenomenon within a bounded, real-life context (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Yin, 2003). A multiple case study design is appropriate for this study because I am

exploring how students engage in various diversity experiences within the context of MCSP. Because I am specifically studying the first-year MCSP student cohort, who resided in the East Quadrangle Residence Hall at the University of Michigan during the 2013-2014 academic year, there is a bounded participant sample, setting, and timeframe for this study. Given that MCSP has yet to be evaluated, my case study design is descriptive and exploratory in nature so that I can describe and explore the interrelationships between the phenomenon (i.e., students' social justice outcomes) and context as it relates to students' engagement in diversity experiences within MCSP (Yin, 2003).

Case study designs often analyze data from multiple sources in conjunction with one another rather than individually (Baxter & Jack, 2008). In this way, I intend to develop a rich description of the phenomenon through a variety of qualitative data sources, including open-ended survey responses, interviews, observations, class papers, applications, and marketing materials (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Each data source will “represent one piece of the ‘puzzle,’” and by bringing them together, I can develop a richer understanding of the phenomenon as a whole (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 554).

Participants

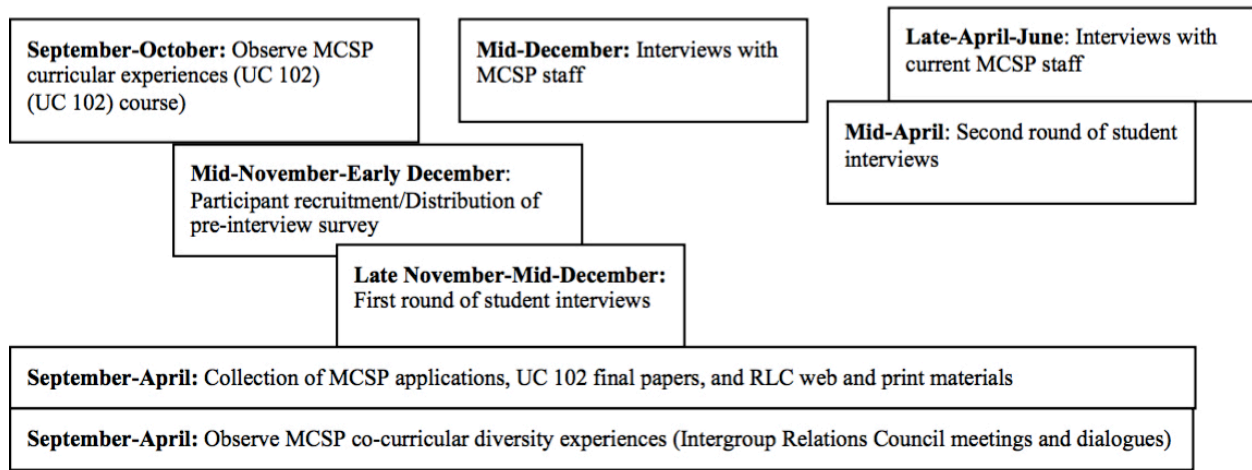
The sample for this study is a diverse sub-section of the 2013-2014 first-year MCSP student cohort. The participants (n=22) were recruited via targeted individual emails, which included information about the purpose of the study and the incentives offered. In order to obtain multiple perspectives on my research questions, I used purposeful maximal sampling (Creswell, 2007) to select a group of interview participants that are diverse in terms of their social identities (e.g., students' self-identified racial, gender, and social class backgrounds), pre-college communities, and reasons for joining the RLC. I also intentionally included a higher proportion

of students that are White, male, and/or from homogeneous communities (i.e., neighborhoods and high schools that were primarily comprised of individuals with the same racial background), because they may undergo the greatest amount of change and/or resistance as a result of participation in diversity experiences (Bowman & Denson, 2012; Cabrera, 2012; Goodman, 2011). The sample is comprised of fourteen males and eight females, which is reflective of the overrepresentation of males in the MCSP first-year cohort (i.e., 60% male, 40% female), along with 50% White students and 50% Students of Color. The students vary in terms of their social class, religious, and residency (i.e., in-state, out-of-state, international) backgrounds, as well as their engagement in MCSP and pre-existing interest in promoting social justice. For more information about the demographics of the sample, please refer to Table 5.2 on page 88, and Table 5.3 on page 96.

Data Collection Timeline

As described previously, the data collection for this study took place during one academic year. It commenced during Fall 2013 semester, and concluded at the end of Winter 2014 semester. Figure 3.1 outlines when the data collection occurred for the multiple data sources in this study.

Figure 3.1. Timeline for Data Collection



Data Sources

I collected multiple sources of data—surveys, interviews, observations, and documents—in order to provide a rich description of MCSP. I will further describe each of these data sources in the following section.

Pre-interview survey. I provided a link to the pre-interview Qualtrics survey in the confirmation email to my interview participants, and followed-up with each student as necessary to ensure that it was completed. The survey included questions about students’ background characteristics, pre-college diversity experiences, reasons for joining MCSP, and expected and actual involvement in MCSP. Students self-reported their age, race, religion, social class, residency status, intended/declared major, and long-term career goals. They also rated the diversity of the neighborhood they grew up in, the high school they graduated from, and their place of worship. To gauge their intentions for joining MCSP, the participants ranked the reasons that they wanted to participate in the learning community. Additionally, they indicated which types of MCSP and U-M activities they were engaged in during Fall 2013 semester. The

responses from the survey were used to provide background information for the interviews, and as part of the data analysis process in order to identify how students' pre-college characteristics and MCSP diversity experiences influenced their social justice outcomes.

Interviews.

Participant interviews. I interviewed each participant at the end of Fall 2013 semester (Late November-Mid December 2013), and at the closing of the academic year (April 2014). The interviews were conducted at these specific time points so that the participants could retrospectively reflect on their involvement in MCSP during each semester. Informed consent was obtained from the participants at the beginning of the interview, and they were given a copy of the signed consent form for their records. Prior to beginning each interview, I asked them for their permission to audiorecord the interview, and to pick a pseudonym that is not their real name so that their identity is kept confidential. If they did not have a preference for a name, I informed them that I would choose one for them. The semi-structured interviews lasted approximately 60 to 90 minutes, and the participants received a \$25 Amazon gift card via email after each interview. The interview audiorecordings were sent to a professional transcriptionist without the student's identifying information, and were transcribed verbatim.

Staff interviews. Two MCSP staff members were interviewed at the end of Fall 2013 and Winter 2014 semesters in order to collect background information on the first-year student cohort and the mission, goals, and history of MCSP. During the first interview, they were asked to reflect on their goals for social justice programming, what they did to encourage these goals, and what challenges were associated with achieving these goals. At the end of the academic year, the staff members reflected on their experiences with the first-year student cohort, and whether they felt they achieved their goals for social justice programming. To triangulate the data, I also

conducted an interview with the Director of MCSP in February 2015 to confirm the themes reported among the staff members.

Observations.

Curricular diversity experiences. All MCSP first-year students are required to take the UC 102 “Student in the University” course during their first semester. UC 102 is a weekly 2-hour one-credit course that meets for seven weeks during Fall semester. The course lectures are taught by MCSP staff members, and often include MCSP-affiliated faculty and student guest speakers. In addition, there are weekly discussion sessions, which are facilitated by Resident Assistants (RAs) that are affiliated with MCSP. UC 102 is focused on topics such as “the transition from high school to college, access to faculty, identity issues, critical thinking, social justice, and community service learning” (MCSP Course Guide, Fall 2013). I observed all of the UC 102 course sessions, and took detailed field notes to document the content of the lectures. These field notes included the focus of each session, which guest speakers were present, the main “messages” and topics of discussion, specific mentions of social justice-related themes, and general observations about students’ engagement levels.

Co-curricular diversity experiences. I engaged in participant-observations of the meetings of the MCSP Intergroup Relations Council (IRC), and their associated hot topics, which were dialogic conversations about a variety of social justice issues. I assumed this role because I collaborated with the Coordinator of Diversity Initiatives to plan the IRC’s dialogic experiences during the 2013-2014 academic year, which involved attending meetings, coordinating the hot topics, and coaching the students who served as facilitators. Although I did not take field notes during these meetings, I collected the IRC meeting agendas and hot topic flyers that occurred during that year. This information was used to inform my analyses of

students' participation in the IRC hot topics, especially as it related to having knowledge of the content of the specific dialogic conversations that they mentioned during their interviews.

Document Analysis.

MCSP application. I was granted permission to access the admitted MCSP students' applications from the Director and Associate Director of MCSP, and I requested students' consent to read their MCSP housing application via the pre-interview survey. On the survey, I informed the participants of the information that I would be analyzing on their housing application, and gave them the option of checking a box in order to give their consent. I primarily focused my document analyses on the short essay that students wrote that captured the contributions they planned to make to the MCSP community, and what they hoped to gain from their involvement during their first year in college.

UC 102 final paper. After our first interview, I asked each participant to send me their UC 102 final course papers. In their papers, students reflected on their main-takeaways from the UC 102 course readings, and their civic engagement experiences that were required as part of the course. Their final UC 102 paper added another data point in regards to the interview participants' social justice outcomes over their first semester in college.

MCSP web and print materials. Over the 2013-2014 academic year, I collected MCSP print materials in the form of informational brochures, marketing materials, and course guides. Additionally, I gathered background information on the program from their public University of Michigan-affiliated website in order to capture how MCSP discusses its focus on social justice.

Data Analysis

In order to incorporate a multiple case study methodology that would allow for "multiple facets of the phenomenon to be revealed and understood," (Baxter & Jack, 2006, p. 544), this

study used utilized deductive and inductive analysis to identify categories, themes, and patterns in the data (Creswell, 2007; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003). In regards to my inductive analysis, I used methods that drew upon a grounded theory framework (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, 2008; Glaser, 1965; Glaser & Strauss, 1967) to explore patterns both within and between the cases. I also integrated a constant comparison approach, which Corbin and Strauss (1990) describe as once “an incident is noted, it should be compared against other incidents for similarities and differences” (p. 9). The data analysis procedure for this study incorporated Corbin and Strauss’s (1990) conceptualizations of opening, axial, and selective coding, and included memo-writing to capture emerging themes and interpretations across the various data sources. My coding structure and memos were created and compiled in QSR International’s NVivo 10 qualitative data analysis software, and expanded upon and refined during later stages of the data analysis process.

My open coding approach took place in multiple phases, as described below. I first read students’ pre-interview surveys, and then checked the transcripts of their first interviews for errors, while simultaneously identifying reoccurring themes in the data. Afterwards, I reviewed their UC 102 papers to note any confirming or contrasting themes with the other documents. After analyzing their first semester data, I examined their MCSP applications to gain additional information about their pre-college characteristics. I then checked and reviewed their second semester interview transcripts to determine preliminary themes in the data. Because the majority of the initial codes were derived from students’ interview transcripts, I will now provide further detail about the open coding process of these documents.

Open coding interview transcripts. This stage of analysis was consistent with open coding, an “interpretive process by which data are broken down analytically” (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 12). Many of my initial codes consisted of broad categories and themes based on my

review of the previous literature (e.g., pre-college characteristics and social justice outcomes). In particular, I identified themes related to students' prior exposure to diversity and social justice issues, which diversity experiences they participated in, and what they reported "learning" and "gaining" through their involvement in MCSP and U-M-affiliated diversity experiences. Students' cognitive and affective processes were also noted. By utilizing the constant comparative method, I looked for similar themes in participants' transcripts (Creswell, 2007), and created preliminary categories or sub-categories. After completing the open coding process for students' first round of interviews, I wrote a memo about each student to document the main themes that emerged in their narratives. This memo consisted of the key themes that were noted in their transcripts, along with examples of quotes that matched these initial codes. I utilized a similar open coding process for students' second interviews, and another participant memo was created afterward.

Open coding documents. In order to triangulate the data sources for each participant, I analyzed students' MCSP applications, pre-interview surveys, and UC 102 final papers to compare and contrast the initial themes that were identified in their interview transcripts. I coded students' social identity backgrounds based on their pre-survey responses about their race, gender, religion, and social class, and this data was compared to corresponding questions about their social identities in their interviews. Additionally, I contrasted students' ratings of the diversity of their neighborhoods and high schools with their interview responses about their pre-college communities. I also compared students' reasons for joining MCSP across their pre-interview surveys, MCSP applications, and interview responses. As highlighted in Chapter Eight, students' rankings of their top reason for joining MCSP in their pre-interview survey served as the primary data point for which trajectory they belonged to. I conducted additional coding and

memo-writing to explore the other reasons that they listed in their MCSP applications and interviews. The discrepancies between students' self-reported reasons for joining MCSP are highlighted in Table 5.1 on page 77. Although students were less candid about their MCSP-affiliated experiences in their UC 102 papers than they were in their interviews, both data sources were incorporated into the open coding process to capture what they gained from their MCSP diversity experiences. Throughout this first round of coding the documents, I wrote thematic memos to capture emerging themes in the data, along with reflective memos to record my interpretations of the data and challenges that I was experiencing during the data analysis.

Axial coding. As part of the axial coding process, I explored how “categories are related to their sub-categories, and the relationships tested against data” (Corbin & Strauss, p. 13). I took a second look at the interview transcripts and other documents, along with the initial themes to refine my coding scheme and determine the interconnections between my codes (Creswell, 2007). I created new sub-themes to account for my new interpretations of students' processes and outcomes (e.g., different forms of empathy, personal and professional commitment to promoting social justice), and re-conceptualized and combined some of my preexisting themes (e.g., students' awareness of their social identities and privilege were integrated into students' consciousness of their positionality). I then revised the nodes in NVivo to reflect my refinements to the coding scheme, and continued to write memos to further explore the relationships between my various categories and themes.

Selective coding. As the final step in my analysis of the participants' data sources, my categories were “filled-in with descriptive detail,” which is otherwise known as selective coding (Strauss & Corbin, p. 14). In order to develop a narrative around the cases, I created a “meta-memo” for each participant. Each “meta-memo” contained the memos about participants' pre-

college characteristics, first semester, and second semester, along with an overall summary of their trajectories during their time in MCSP. Through analyzing students' trajectories in their meta-memos, I was able to further explore which pre-existing beliefs and values they held prior to joining MCSP, the various ways that they engaged in diversity experiences within the learning community, and their self-reported growth in their social justice outcomes. These meta-memos and my finalized coding structure in NVivo became the basis of the cross-case analyses of students' pre-college characteristics in Chapter Five, and social justice outcomes in Chapters Six and Seven. Selective coding was also used to create an additional memo that captured the "stories" of the five trajectories, and the individual case studies of six students in Chapter Eight (Stake, 1995; Yin, 1998). Through this deductive and inductive approach to analyzing the participants' five data sources, I was able to develop a more holistic understanding of the students' experiences and their social justice outcomes, both as a whole and individually, during their time in MCSP.

Additional data analyses. It is important to note that several other pieces of data were analyzed as a way to gain a deeper understanding of MCSP and its components, and to "sensitize" my interpretations of the participant data. The field notes of the UC 102 course sessions that I attended helped to inform my understanding of various aspects of the UC 102 lectures that students brought up during their interviews. Similarly, my participant-observations of the IRC meetings and events allowed me to develop knowledge of the content of the hot topics that they spoke about during their interviews, and the underlying goals of these dialogic conversations. The staff interviews, and MCSP web and print marketing materials provided me with a more in-depth comprehension of the mission and goals of MCSP, especially in relation to their incorporation of SJE and their focus on encouraging their students to "make a difference" in

their future lives and careers. These additional data sources were instrumental in describing “MCSP in Context,” which is the focus of Chapter Four. I will now describe other important considerations that were incorporated into my research methodology.

Ethical Considerations

In compliance with the regulations and policies of the University of Michigan Health Sciences and Behavioral Sciences Institutional Review Board (IRB), I filed an Application for Human Subjects Research, and it was approved as an exempt study on September 3, 2013 (University of Michigan IRB Study # HUM00079071). I also developed an online consent form for the pre-interview surveys and a participant consent to interview form. All of these documents informed students of their rights in regards to participating in the study and notified them that I would take several steps in order protect their identities. These steps involved assigning each participant a pseudonym, and keeping their interview and survey responses confidential. I kept all data for this study, including the pre-interview survey results, interview audio files, interview transcripts, UC 102 papers, and MCSP applications, on a secured, password-protected computer in my office. A large portion of the data is reported in aggregate form, which makes it very difficult to trace the data to specific individuals.

Role of the Researcher

I consider the study I conducted to be participatory research because I attended the IRC meetings, coordinated the hot topics, and coached the student dialogue facilitators during the 2013-2014 academic year. Consequently, there is a possibility that I may have contributed to participants’ changes in their social justice outcomes due to my role with overseeing the IRC hot topics. I was involved with MCSP for over a year once the data collection began in Fall 2013 to coordinate a newly-formed student committee that would later become the IRC and develop its

dialogue-related programming, and have spent the subsequent two years serving as the Program Associate for Dialogue Conversations as part of my graduate student assistantship. In this way, I possess insider knowledge of this RLC which has been very useful for gaining buy-in from the MCSP staff to conduct this study, establishing access to participants, framing the study, developing the interview and survey protocols, and having background knowledge of the dynamics within MCSP. However, I may also possess biases that positively skew my perceptions of MCSP, the participants, and the activities that I observed as a result of my personal connections to MCSP. For this reason, I utilized purposeful maximal sampling as a way to ensure that the participants had a range of experiences within MCSP, some of which they perceived as negative. In addition to my work with MCSP, I have been involved with other SJE programs during my time at U-M, including the IGR CommonGround program, IGR dialogue courses, and the Understanding Race Project. My involvement in these programs may also lead to preconceived notions about how social justice can be conceptualized, and how students may engage in social justice-related activities.

In addition to acknowledging how my involvement in MCSP and other SJE activities may affect my interpretations as a researcher, it is important to take into account how sensitizing concepts, or “preconceptions that emanate from such standpoints as class, race, gender, age, embodiment, and historical era (and) may permeate an analysis without the researcher’s awareness” may influence how I analyze the data and report the findings of my study (Charmaz, 2006, p. 67). As a result of my social identities, which include being White, female, upper-middle class, and Jewish, I may possess preexisting biases that can affect how I interpret participants’ experiences in MCSP as it relates to their race, gender, SES, and religion. In order to remain cognizant of these sensitizing concepts, I engaged in memo-writing so that I could

reflect on my preconceptions during the data analysis process. In light of my role as a researcher, I have provided more detail about the validity and reliability procedures in this study.

Validation and Reliability Procedures

I utilized four procedures to establish credibility and validity in my study. As the first method, I triangulated my data sources by utilizing surveys, interviews, observations, and documents. In this way, I included multiple forms of evidence to uncover important themes and patterns that emerged in the data (Stake, 1995). Secondly, I provided a rich description of MCSP in order to help “transport the reader to the setting” (Creswell, 2003, p. 196) by including detailed case studies both within and across cases in order to illuminate each participant’s experiences within MCSP. As the third validation procedure, my study incorporates member checking because two members of my committee are affiliated with MCSP. One is a MCSP-affiliated faculty member, and the other is the current Director and founder of the RLC. As insiders, they have knowledge of the various components of MCSP and the trajectories of its students. Their involvement in this study helped to ensure that I am portraying the RLC and its students in ways that are both authentic and accurate (Creswell, 2007). Finally, this study is considered participant research because my involvement with MCSP for the past four years allowed me to acquire insider knowledge of the context and students’ experiences. This in-depth understanding of MCSP strengthened my rapport with the participant and staff members, and the credibility of my interpretations of the data.

Generalizability

My study is bound by its particular context. It is not possible to generalize the findings of my study to RLCs at other postsecondary institutions because MCSP only exists at U-M, and is uniquely situated within U-M’s historical and present focus on social justice education.

Moreover, due to its specific mission and goals related to fostering a diverse democracy among its students, the results of this study cannot be generalized to other RLCs at U-M. My study is also time bound. By collecting data only during the 2013-2014 academic year, I interacted with a particular group of MCSP students and staff members, who experienced the program in the context of a specific campus and national climate during that year. Students in MCSP during another year might have developed differently. MCSP social justice-related programming also changes from year to year. For example, this is the first year that the IRC has been in existence, and as a result, additional social justice programming took place within MCSP that was not offered in past years. Moreover, the location of MCSP has changed over the years. As of the 2015-2016 academic year, MCSP is now located in another residence hall.

Limitations of Study

This study possesses several potential limitations. In terms of the sample, this study is limited to only first-year students within MCSP. In this way, I cannot capture how MCSP students that were involved beyond their first year, as well as alumni of the program, developed social justice outcomes during their time in the learning community, which may have also shed additional light on the phenomenon. Although my sample includes a variety of racial, social class, and gender identities, it is important to note that my sample of twenty-two students is not representative of the entire 2013-2014 first-year cohort, especially in light of the fact that there were no Latino(a) participants in the study.

Because I only collected data during the participants' first year in college, I will just be able to draw short-term conclusions about changes in their social justice outcomes, rather than long-term, or longitudinal conclusions that reflect additional growth that occurred during their subsequent years in college. Moreover, because I first captured students' social justice outcomes

at the end of their first semester, I was only able to use their MCSP statement of interest as a pre-test. Since I asked them to reflect retrospectively on their experiences throughout the semester, there is a risk that their reflections may not accurately or completely capture all that occurred during Fall 2013 and Winter 2014 semesters, given that some of the “treatment” had already occurred.

With these limitations in mind, I will now turn to discussing the study’s findings. First, I provide further context in Chapter Four about the RLC that is featured in this study, including its history, mission, and goals, as well as other situational factors that occurred during the 2013-2014 academic year. I will then present the main themes that emerged among the sample as a whole in Chapters Six, Seven, and Eight. Finally, I outline several individual cases in detail in Chapter Eight, as examples of students’ various trajectories within MCSP.

Chapter Four: MCSP in Context

Creation and Vision of MCSP

The creation of MCSP was overseen by the founding Faculty Director, Dr. David Schoem, and Program Director, Dr. Penny Pasque, along with the collaboration and partnership of various faculty, administrators, and staff members at U-M. During the early 1980s, Dr. Schoem was the Director of the Pilot Program at U-M, and sought to develop possibilities for dialogic experiences both within a formal classroom setting and in a lived out-of-class environment. He helped to establish curricular dialogic experiences as one of the founders of IGR, and developed MCSP with the vision of designing an experimental model of a dialogic and engaged multicultural community of people who lived together 24/7. In addition to creating lived opportunities for students to participate in dialogic experiences within their residential environment, MCSP was originally envisioned with the goal of creating “an ideal, diverse, small college community with learning at its center” (Schoem, 2005, p. 19). At the core of this vision was the notion that MCSP was designed to model what America would be like if it were truly diverse and democratic.

MCSP welcomed its first cohort of students in Fall 1999 in the Mary Markley residence hall at U-M. Following the closure of the 21st Century program, an RLC that integrated Claude Steele’s (1997) research on stereotype threat to promote the academic success of racial minority

students, it was determined that a new RLC would take its place in the same dormitory. The Interim Dean of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts (LSA) met with 21st Century program students in Spring 1999, and determined that this new RLC would honor the 21st Century program's commitment to promoting academic success, while also integrating a focus on community service. This RLC eventually became what is currently the Michigan Community Scholars Program (MCSP).

Given that the founding directors and administrative assistant were hired during Summer 1999, MCSP was still very much a work in progress when the first cohort of students arrived in Fall 1999. As a result, the structure and components of MCSP were created during its first year in operation, and this “spirit of innovation, experimentation, and creation” still continues today (Schoem & Pasque, 2004, p. 45). Schoem and his colleagues focused on four steps during the creation of MCSP: (1) conceptualizing the vision, (2) acting with intentionality, (3) leading as boundary crossers and collaborators, and (4) taking responsibility for the whole of the curriculum and co-curriculum and having a degree of control over it” (Schoem, 2005, p. 19).

Related to these four goals, an important component of the vision for MCSP was to break away from the silos within U-M, and instead intentionally integrate a variety of high-impact educational practices—learning communities, first year seminars and experiences, collaborative projects, close faculty-student interaction, writing-intensive courses, common intellectual experiences, service learning, and diversity/global learning—identified by the Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U) (Kuh, 2008; MCSP website, 2016). In his interview, the Director further articulated the driving force behind his desire to integrate various higher education best practices based on the resources that he had available at U-M:

It just seemed that in this kind of program, working within our limited resources, we didn't need to spend our time being critical of the larger university in terms of diversity

and learning; we could just try to create what we believed were the best practices in higher education and in creating an educational climate beneficial to learning for all students. What does a program look like that truly embraces these values and really takes it seriously to build a diverse democracy, or even just a healthy climate for all students. What does that look like and what can we do to achieve that vision given our resources? That was sort of the driving goal for me. The university is going to do some things well, and some things not so well. What are the best practices around the country that can be incorporated in this program and in things that we had control of, and that we could make happen?

In addition to integrating the literature from the AAC&U and other higher education scholars, the Director spoke about how the national discussion about transforming campuses during the 1990s influenced his vision for MCSP: “It was about caring for each other. It was a student [focused] approach--It was creating structures for groups of people to have intentional dialogues, having faculty who cared about these issues too, and bringing them into our students’ classrooms.” In this way, MCSP was designed to interweave both higher education scholarship and practice to create a community of students, faculty, staff, and community partners that worked together to promote social change in their communities.

The focus on collaborating across various units and departments throughout the U-M campus has also become a cornerstone of the RLC. MCSP currently bridges both academic affairs and student affairs because the RLC’s budget comes from LSA, the liberal arts college, as well as the university housing department at U-M. In order to foster a diversity of perspectives within MCSP-affiliated first-year seminars, the faculty that teach these courses represent a wide variety of departments and colleges, including African American and African Studies, American Culture, Asian Languages and Literature, Economics, Education, Engineering, English, History, Information, Medicine, Music, Natural Resources, Psychology, Romance Languages, Sociology, and Women’s Studies (Schoem, 2005). While these first-year seminars are taught within the faculty members’ home departments, several of the professors teach their courses in classrooms

and hold office hours within the residence hall. Some faculty members also engage with students by inviting them to dinners at their homes, accompanying them to cultural events on campus, and integrating community service projects into their courses. As part of MCSP's curricular requirements, students take courses focused on service learning and intergroup dialogue through partnerships with LSA, the Ginsberg Center for Community Service and Learning, and the Program for Intergroup Relations (IGR). MCSP has strived to maintain long-term and sustained partnerships with a variety of community partners such as the Brightmoor Youth Gardens and Freedom House in Detroit.

As described by Schoem (2008), "MCSP takes seriously the vision of the American dream, that of a just, well-educated, diverse, civically engaged, democratic society, and it has created an academic program and a learning environment that model those values" (p. 101). Consequently, MCSP has developed its curriculum and co-curriculum to intentionally prepare students to be active citizens and leaders in a diverse democracy. In order to "interrupt the cycle of racial segregation," MCSP provides opportunities for students to engage with diverse peers both in their academic and social environments, and encourages them to respect, listen to, and learn from each other's diverse perspectives and life experiences (MCSP website, 2016).

Given the strong focus on community service within the RLC, the Director discussed how service-learning could be used to build common ground among students and the communities they work with to "break through these walls of separation of the homogenous lives they had come from." They are taught to approach community service as "partnering with equals rather than helping from a position of privilege and superiority" (MCSP Internal History Document, 2014). Moreover, they are instructed to be aware of the existing structural inequalities, but also the assets of the community, prior to entering the context where they will be

performing service work. After engaging in community service, they are asked to reflect on their experiences working with the community, as well as what they have learned from and contributed to the community (MCSP Internal History Document, 2014). In this way, the goals of MCSP are centered upon encouraging students to “make a difference” and lead “lives of commitment” so they can promote social change in their local, national, and global communities (Schoem, 2008, p. 101).

Goals of MCSP

MCSP is currently focused on the following four goals: 1) deep learning, 2) engaged community, 3) meaningful civic engagement/community service, and 4) diverse democracy, intercultural understanding, and dialogue (MCSP website, 2016).

Deep Learning. MCSP stresses the importance of engaging with diverse ideas and perspectives so that students can become critical thinkers and active learners, and develop a love for life-long learning. In particular, MCSP challenges its students develop a complex understanding of their social identities, and their associated power and privilege. Moreover, students in MCSP are encouraged to be well-informed about social justice issues at the local, national, and global levels. In her interview, the Associate Director explained that she encourages students be informed about important current local and global events:

We want to make sure that students know about what’s happening in the wider community. You know it is kind of sad when there is some big [campus] event going on, and then you talk to a student and they’re like, “I haven’t heard anything about it.” And you’re thinking with all this technology [laughter], how did you miss that?...So I sometimes will go on the halls or talk to students or when I’m in the cafeteria just having a conversation with them, I get a good feel about that you know. Recently, there are a number of students that I just said, “Have you heard about Nelson Mandela?” Many were able to talk about that, or they said, “No, I haven’t heard. I’m going to go look it up” or that kind of thing.

Connected to its goal of encouraging deep learning, MCSP is strongly committed to supporting its students' academic success. The Associate Director discussed that one of her primary goals was to assist students with successfully transitioning to U-M during her MCSP first-year seminar course, so that she could "have them get some success under their belt so that they feel more confident, and that they know how to access all of the libraries or other things here on campus."

One of the MCSP Coordinators spoke about supporting underrepresented MCSP first-year students in particular, given that they may face additional challenges in their transition to college, such as encountering the "imposter syndrome" (Clance & Imes, 1978), or feeling like they do not fit in on campus:

What we really try to do is just show the students that they are special and that they did come here for a reason, and that they can do the same work that the rest of the students are doing. They just need that extra help sometimes. Because for other students, they walk around on campus and they feel immediately comfortable and happy and are loving their experiences. But for other people, they need to have mentorship or they need a community. They need other things in order for them to feel that way.

The Coordinator alluded to helping students feel part of a "community" of those that cared about them, was another goal of MCSP, as described below. By boosting their students' confidence, and showing them that they were "special," MCSP strived to create a space on campus where students from diverse backgrounds could feel supported as they pursued their undergraduate education at U-M.

Engaged Community. Another goal of MCSP centered upon building an engaged community. In this way, the RLC places an emphasis on caring about each person as an individual, while also fostering an accepting and supportive climate within the community. As described by Schoem and Pasque (2004), "Many of the students in the program speak of MCSP as the place where they personally feel connected to a diverse group of peers; our faculty often report that MCSP is a more welcoming intellectual and interdisciplinary scholarly community

than their home department” (p. 35). Both the Associate Director and Coordinator echoed their goals of having MCSP serve as an inclusive space for students. The Coordinator stressed that she wanted MCSP to be a place that “they can feel comfortable, a place where they know their voice is heard, and that we’re very inclusive and care about them.” She described an incident during one of the MCSP courses where a visiting U-M staff member made a comment that equated Detroit schools with prisons when describing the Prison Creative Arts Project. The Coordinator noted that she and a few of the RAs met personally with students that had been offended by the presentation for several hours. As a response to the incident, the Director of MCSP invited students from Detroit to a dinner at his house in order to provide them with continued support.

The MCSP staff members also connected their goal of supporting students with building a sense of community for first-year students. The Associate Director commented, “I also wanted them to have a sense of community that here they have found people who care about them, who look out for them, who notice if they’re not there or if they seem to be lost or that sort of thing. So that they don’t feel like they’re just little fish in this giant sea and no one cares. If they don’t show up, no one would notice.” The Coordinator also explained, “The main thing is we try to stress to them about finding a good community, finding whatever that may be; it doesn’t necessarily have to be with people with a shared identity. It doesn’t necessarily have to be something that is just very fixed; it can be from your classmates. It can be people in your hall. It can be with your RA.” As both staff members explained, MCSP’s goals were to create a support system for students so that they could feel heard and included, which was especially important at a university of over 40,000 students. As part of their “close-knit” community, both staff and students playfully utilized the “P” in their name in a variety of ways including MCSPeers, MCSPhamily, and MCSPhantastic. Although students’ community within the RLC could include

a variety of different people, it was the staff's hope that students would all be able to find a "home" during their time in MCSP.

Meaningful Civic Engagement and Community Service Learning. MCSP strives to provide high quality service-learning experiences and partnerships that are meaningful and mutually beneficial to both the students and community partners. Moreover, as described previously, reflection before and after engaging in community service activities is an essential element in MCSP, so that students are learning about how to be active citizens and leaders in democratic processes and civic life.

It is MCSP's expectation that students develop a life-long commitment to civic engagement, and that they disseminate what they have learned in MCSP to the broader society. The Director highlighted several complexities associated with students' differing motivations for serving the community and understandings of what it meant to perform community service work prior to joining the RLC. He explained:

They have entirely different notions of what community service means. Some have been doing it in order to beef up their resume for their college applications. Some have been doing it out of high sense of privilege. For others, it is deeply rooted in who they are and what they believe, sometimes coming from their faith tradition.

The Associate Director explained that MCSP encouraged students to think more critically about their purpose for interacting with community members, and how that relates to the impact they are making in their local communities:

Doing community service is a tangible way for them to really begin to think not only about volunteering, but really -- why are they volunteering? And as they're doing that -- how they're making a difference perhaps in the lives of people that they're coming in contact with.

The critical thinking that MCSP students engage in when reflecting on their roles in the community is strongly connected to preparing them to work and live in a diverse democracy, which is another core goal of MCSP.

Diverse Democracy, Intercultural Understanding, and Dialogue. MCSP's fourth goal of "diverse democracy, intercultural understanding, and dialogue," involves a commitment to working with a diverse community of students, staff, faculty, and community members both within and outside of MCSP. MCSP expects students to actively engage with their peers in order to gain a deeper intercultural understanding across social identity groups, and to broaden their social and intellectual "comfort zones" so that they can break away from the homogeneous groups and educational experiences that they often encounter both before and during college. In light of the homogeneous communities MCSP students often grow up in, the Director discussed how second-year peer leaders in particular can act as role models help first-year students break out of their comfort zones and previous patterns of self-segregation, and socialize them to adopt behaviors that are more inclusive of their peers' diverse backgrounds:

The first year students are coming in to the program, and they've never met people from different backgrounds. They have all these pre-conceived ideas and stereotypes. And the student leaders say to them, "Hey, you're in college now; this is how we act in college." The first year students are just eager to fit in at college, and they know no better, so they just say okay; that's how we're going to act, too. So it just sort of breaks down those barriers of separation and ignorance, since it is, in fact, going to be different in this program with a new set of norms for most students. And then everything in the program reinforces these new norms.

Moreover, through UC 102 and other MCSP-affiliated courses, MCSP encourages students to make connections between the concepts of diversity and democracy, and to reflect critically on issues related to social justice and equality, as well as injustice and inequality. Both the Associate Director and Coordinator commented that engaging MCSP students in SJE often involved "starting very small" by introducing students to social justice topics, and cultivating a

desire to continue to learn about social justice and engaging in behaviors that promote social change. The Associate Director explained her philosophy on MCSP, and how it serves as a stepping stone for engaging students in social justice work:

Social justice is an array of things but we're starting very small with the individual and the impacts they have on others. I think after that they'll be able to see a more overarching theme of kind of like maybe -- educating others and doing other things in their community or how their class is and their major can be related to social justice. But we don't want to go too far in the beginning so just kind of taking it step-by-step. That's also what MCSP is based on -- kind of starting the foundation, a stepping stone to getting to that part where you can better understand social justice.

She discussed how UC 102 served as "the tip of the iceberg" to expose them to jargon related to social justice and privilege, but also told students, "We are only able to tell you a little bit and we're hoping that this will encourage you to take other courses that will go into greater depth about this."

MCSP demonstrates a commitment to teaching students about democratic practices so that they can "develop their individual vision of a just, diverse democracy, and model practices in their lives at MCSP that can be replicated in the short-term and their lives beyond college" (Schoem and Pasque, 2004, p. 48). While the Associate Director considered students' experiences in MCSP to be a first exposure to social justice topics, she hoped that it would influence future actions they would take in regards to their major and career path:

I think we also want to make sure what we're doing -- we're tying it into their academic programs. For example, if they came in thinking they want to go to Business School, which a good number of them want to do...I'm hoping that they will have thought about some social justice issues, which come up as you are either starting your own business or innovating with other people or the fact that you're now working on teams with a diverse group of people.

In relation to MCSP's goal of promoting students' short and long-term commitment to social justice, the RLC has been structured to engage students in a variety of curricular, co-curricular, and informal diversity experiences, as highlighted in the next section.

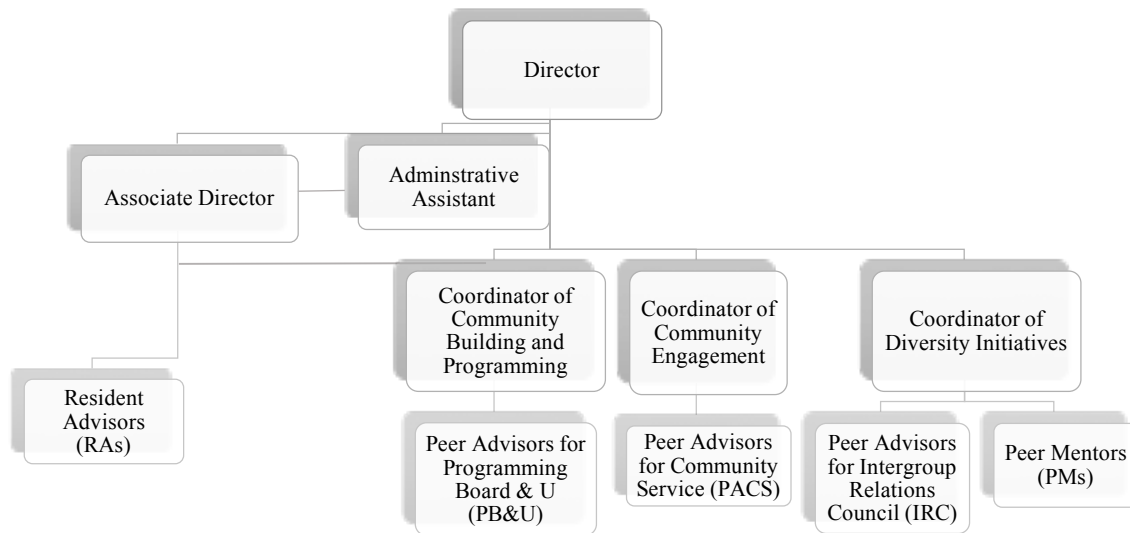
Overview of MCSP Structure and Components

In 2013-2014, the organizational structure of MCSP included three full-time staff members: the Director, Associate Director, and Administrative Assistant, as well as three part-time staff members: the Coordinator of Community Engagement, Coordinator of Community Building and Programming, and Coordinator of Diversity Initiatives. Each of the Coordinators oversaw a board comprised of six second-year MCSP student leaders who served as peer advisors for a particular area of MCSP. The Peer Advisors for Community Service (PACS), supervised by the Coordinator of Community Engagement, helped to plan the community service and service-learning activities for the MCSP community. The Peer Advisors for the Programming Board (PB&U), with the assistance of the Coordinator of Community Building and Programming, planned social gatherings and activities both inside and outside of the residence hall to promote a sense of community within MCSP.

In 2013, MCSP received three years of funding from the Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs to enhance and strengthen their diversity efforts. As a result, they created a new part-time staff position, the Coordinator of Diversity Initiatives, to provide support for the following areas of MCSP: mentoring and advocacy, dialogues and climate issues, programming for diversity and learning, and student recruitment. This staff member was also in charge of the Peers Advisors for the Intergroup Relations Council (IRC), which was a newly established board within MCSP. The mission of the IRC involved coordinating dialogue-style conversations with MCSP students on a range of “hot topics,” and supporting students from various social identity groups within MCSP. The Coordinator of Diversity Initiatives also supervised approximately 20 Peer Mentors, who are second-year and upperclassman peer leaders that assisted their first-year mentees with their transition from high school to college, and feeling more connected to the

MCSP community and U-M as a whole. Especially at the beginning of the year, many of the Peer Mentors organized group dinners for their mentees in the dining hall, or planned various community-building activities within or outside of the dorm. First-year students, and past student leaders in some cases, who were interested in returning to MCSP applied to be a peer leader for the upcoming year in December 2013, and were notified of their selection in January 2014. If chosen, they were required to live in the residence hall with their fellow MCSP students during their time as a peer leader. They received a small stipend for their involvement. Approximately seven Resident Advisors (RAs) are generally selected each year to be specifically affiliated with MCSP, and live on the same floor as their MCSP residents.

Figure 4.1. Organizational Structure of MCSP



In order to become a member of MCSP, first-year students indicated their preferences for joining the RLC their housing application and submitted a statement expressing their interest in the program in May, after they are accepted into U-M. Approximately 50% of first-year students that apply to MCSP are accepted each year. When selecting students, MCSP staff members take into

account their gender, high school that they attended, their MCSP statement of interest, and whether they ranked MCSP as their most preferred RLC. In 2013, MCSP received approximately 270 applications, and initially admitted 120 students, with ten students on the waitlist.

Historically, MCSP has served 120-170 students each year, with first-year students comprising approximately 70-75% of the MCSP student population. Over the course of the 2013-2014 academic year, 166 students were members of MCSP, 116 of whom were first-year students and 50 were student leaders and RAs in their second, third, or fourth years at U-M.

Table 4.1. Demographics of 2013-2014 MCSP Student Community

	Entire Community	First-Year Students	Peer Leaders ¹
Total	166	116 (70%)	50 (30%)
Gender			
Male	85 (51%)	70 (60%)	15 (30%)
Female	81 (49%)	46 (40%)	35 (70%)
Race/Citizenship			
White	94 (56%)	69 (59%)	25 (50%)
Intl. & Students of Color	72 (44%)	47 (41%)	25 (50%)
Students of Color	58 (36%)	36 (31%)	22 (44%)
Black	25 (15%)	18 (16%)	7 (14%)
Asian	19 (11%)	10 (9%)	9 (18%)
Latino(a)	10 (5%)	8 (7%)	2 (4%)
Native American	4 (2%)	0 (0%)	4 (8%)
International	14 (8%)	11 (9%)	3 (6%)

¹ The Peer Leaders included PACS, PB&U, and IRC Peer Advisors, Peer Mentors, and MCSP-affiliated RAs.

Due to the high proportion of females among the student leaders (i.e., 70%), 60% of MCSP first-year students were males, which brought the total gender ratio within MCSP to 51% males and 49% females. The overall racial representation of MCSP was 56% White students and 44% students of color and/or international students. In regards to their academic disciplines, 87% of MCSP students were enrolled in the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, 10% in the College of Engineering, and the remainder in the Kinesiology, Nursing, Music, and Business

departments. While many MCSP students were residents of Michigan, a significant number of students hailed from other areas of the United States as well as other countries.

As part of their engagement in MCSP, first-year students are required to take at least three MCSP courses. These course requirements include the UC 102 “The Student in the University” course that all first-year MCSP students take during the first half of the Fall semester. The MCSP Director and Associate Director co-teach the UC 102 lectures and often bring in guest speakers, whereas the UC 102 discussion sections are facilitated by MCSP Resident Advisors (RAs). MCSP students must also take a MCSP-linked first-year seminar (SEM) The SEMs are taught by 10-15 faculty members affiliated with the MCSP program and each generally enrolls a maximum of twenty students. The Director teaches UC 151, which is a SEM called “Social Justice, Identity, Diversity, and Community.” Additional faculty from a wide variety of disciplines including African American Studies, English, and the Program in the Environment teach other SEMs including “Nonviolence: From Montgomery to the World,” “Creative Arts and Community” and “Environment, Religions, Spirituality, & Sustainability,” respectively (MCSP Course Guide, Fall 2013). MCSP students must also take a “Civic Engagement: Learning in Community” (CIVIC) course, which can include an intergroup dialogue course offered through the Program on Intergroup Relations (IGR) or “Project Community” and “Project Outreach” courses that allow them to receive credit for engaging in community services activities. Some first-year students who have been selected as peer leaders for the following year are also strongly encouraged to enroll in UC 103 during winter semester, which is a leadership development course that is taught by the Associate Director.

In terms of co-curricular diversity experiences, first-year students engage in service trips as part of the required UC 102 course. These service projects included volunteering with Ronald

McDonald House, Greening of Detroit, Great Lakes Rabbit Sanctuary, AIDS Walk, Leslie Nature and Science Center, Huron River Trick-or-Treat Paddle, and Fuller Park Pool Clean-Up. In addition to the community service opportunities offered through UC 102, PACS also coordinates additional trips to these sites as well as other non-profits and community agencies throughout the year. However, these trips are optional, as there is not a community service requirement during students' second semester in MCSP.

First-year students can also join a community service action team, which involves participating in weekly meetings and on- and off-campus activities to raise awareness and gain a deeper understanding of a particular social justice issue. The action teams during 2013-2014 were focused on environmental issues, rural and urban poverty, gender and sexuality, financial literacy, human rights, and borders and immigration, and were generally facilitated by peer leaders in PACS. Several MCSP student-led initiatives have developed as a result of past action teams and community service opportunities, which include partnering with the refugee assistance organization, Freedom House, and the Brightmoor Community Garden in Detroit. Additionally, SHOCK (Students Helping Others Choose Knowledgeably), performs skits in fifth grade classrooms in order to encourage students to remain drug-free, and Smile Bringer Singers, which is now recognized as a U-M student organization, performs cheerful and uplifting songs at nursing homes, homeless shelters, and hospitals.

MCSP hosts a monthly social and environmental justice film series in partnership with the Ann Arbor library that many first-year MCSP students attend, and sometimes receive credit as a part of their MCSP SEM courses. In 2013-2014, these films were "Where Soldiers Come From," "We Can't Eat Gold," and "The Island President," and included a question and answer session with the director after the film. Additionally, first-year students can participate in the

monthly IRC-sponsored hot topics, which are dialogic conversations about important social justice issues. The IRC hot topics during the 2013-2014 academic year focused on: offensive language on campus, cultural appropriation and Halloween costumes, unpacking perceptions of Detroit, social class inequities, relationships and hook-up culture, and microaggressions and the campus climate.

To encourage more informal interactions, MCSP intentionally tries to build a sense of community among students during Welcome Week by hosting a mandatory MCSP community-wide day of service, as well as a trip to a low ropes course in a nearby town. In Fall 2013, the community service activity included removing invasive plant species in nature areas near the Huron River. As mentioned previously, PB&U plans a variety of social events throughout the year to promote community building among students, which included the MCSProm, a tour of the U-M football stadium, a trip to the Cedar Point amusement park, game nights, and other outings to local entertainment venues, restaurants, and sporting events. As an annual community-building event and a tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., MCSP hosts a “Circle of Unity” event on MLK Day in January, which is generally held outdoors in the middle of campus and incorporates music, spoken word, and other performances that reflect on MLK’s vision for a more just society.

On each MCSP-designated floor in the residence hall, there is a mix of first-year students, student leaders, and RAs, along with other residents of the dorm. On some floors, there were often late night talks about social justice issues in the lounges or a MCSP student’s room, referred to in this study as “SJ talks.” As the next section explains, students’ informal interactions were very much influenced by the context during that year, which included shifts in their physical location, demographics, and student activism on campus.

Table 4.2. Overview of Diversity Experiences within MCSP¹

Curricular	Co-Curricular	Informal
“The Student in the University” course (UC 102)	Welcome Week day of service and low ropes course activities	Social events hosted by PB&U
MCSP-Linked First-Year Seminars (SEM)	UC 102 community service trip	Social justice (“SJ”) talks in halls
Civic Engagement: Learning in Community courses (CIVIC)	Community service trips/activities hosted by PACS	Cross-cultural interactions with roommates and MCSP peers
Leadership course for incoming Peer Leaders (UC 103)	Action teams	
	Hot topics hosted by the IRC	
	Social justice and environmental film series	

¹ Required MCSP diversity experiences are in **bold**

2013-2014 Academic Year Context

As will be discussed in later chapters, a significant number of incoming MCSP students were aware that they would be living in a newly renovated dorm in a central location on campus if they joined MCSP during the 2013-2014 academic year. This consideration weighed heavily on some of their decisions to apply, and in some cases, was a stronger factor in their motivation to join MCSP than its mission and goals. Because MCSP has been located in several different residential halls since 1999, the Director discussed how the desirability of the physical location of MCSP had long been a point of contention in terms of the students that it attracts: “Couzens was not as prime a property as Markley. East Quad used to not be a fraternity place, because the [Residential College] doesn’t really attract that group so much. But it was a newly renovated building...[and] we worry about that with West Quad too.” As the Director indicated, students’ residence in East Quad was a specific moment in time because they would be moving yet again in 2015-2016 to West Quad once it was also renovated.

The 2013-2014 student cohort was the first group of MCSP students to live in East Quad after it had been renovated, which included an extensive \$116 million update to the lounges,

theater, classrooms, dining hall, and student rooms. When first entering East Quad, the recent renovations are very apparent. At first glance, it resembles a stylish, modern hotel, rather than the historic building that was constructed during the 1930s and 1940s. The first level features several lounges with chic lounge chairs, couches, and coffee tables, as well as an art gallery, small library, performing arts theater, and community center. Students can choose from two dining options: The Java Blue Café, which offers more of a trendy coffee shop atmosphere, or the 340-seat dining hall that features seven distinct restaurant-like stations, with names that include “Wild Fire,” “Finale,” “Signature,” “Farmers Table,” “Pizziti,” and “Church Street Deli.” The dining hall also includes the station, “24 Carrots,” which is exclusively vegetarian and vegan. Classrooms, seminar spaces, art and photography studios, and music practice spaces occupy the ground level, along with game rooms, a computer lab, and a multicultural lounge.

As is evident by the spaces for art, music, and performance, the Residential College (RC), a four-year RLC that focuses on languages, writing, and the arts, has a prominent presence in East Quad. Founded in 1967, the RC has exclusively called East Quad its home, and RC students make up a large number of the 800 total residents in the dormitory. Although the RC and MCSP were the two residential learning communities that occupied East Quad during 2013-2014, there was a third student community, the Gender Inclusive Living Experience (GILE), which provides a cluster of gender-inclusive rooms and bathrooms for U-M students that identify as transgender or gender non-conforming. In this way, it is important to take into account that MCSP students are often intermingling and cohabitating with the other residents of East Quad.

For many of the MCSP students, East Quad was the hub for the majority of their involvement within MCSP. Although their UC 102 course was taught in another campus building, many of the MCSP first-year seminar courses were in classrooms within East Quad,

along with other MCSP meetings and events. While they occupied several floors within the residence hall, the MCSP students' rooms were often in close proximity to one another and there are central lounges throughout the building. Consequently, there were many opportunities for informal interactions to occur throughout their time in the program.

Along with the physical location of MCSP, the student demographics shaped the experiences of the MCSP 2013-2014 student cohort. Although MCSP has historically been 50% White students and 50% students of color and international students (MCSP History, 2013), the proportion of White MCSP students increased significantly after the *Gratz v. Bollinger* and *Grutter v. Bollinger* affirmative action cases involving U-M in 2003, along with the subsequent passage of Proposal 2 in 2006, which led to a state-wide ban on affirmation action. The Director further explained the demographic changes he has witnessed over the past ten years since the U-M affirmation action cases:

I think the campus has changed a lot. So those first years of the program, in terms of demographics, the program was really diverse. And the campus was more diverse. I think there was more agency among students of color in terms of their ownership of the campus and their place at the university. Today, we deal more with issues of our students in the campus feeling marginalized. You know I've always wanted this to be a different place in the university community. It is a model, a little island, and even more so maybe today. But the disparities that exist in the wider university are evident in the program, too. The wealthy students are much wealthier than they used to be. There was always a cohort of wealthier students, but now there is a bigger divide across economic classes. And there are just way more White students on campus, even though in the last couple years our program has been more diverse.

As the Director alluded to, the percentage of students of color and international students in MCSP rose to 41% during the 2013-2014 year, partially due to the recruitment efforts of one student leader who encouraged students from her predominantly Black high school to apply to MCSP once they had been accepted to U-M. During the 2013-2014 year, MCSP welcomed back a record number of student leaders, the majority of whom were female, which led to an increase

in the number of first-year males that were accepted, so that the overall MCSP gender ratio could be more balanced. As a result of these shifting demographics, the Director highlighted the importance of the diversity initiatives had been launched in MCSP during that year:

Getting our diversity initiative funded is a big tipping point to really step up what we hope to be able to do. Administratively, we're doing more intentional work around diversity. Whereas I think sometimes in the past, students, rather than staff, were initiating more diversity programs just because there was much more of a critical mass of underrepresented students.

As it so happened, the establishment of this new diversity initiative within MCSP coincided with an increased engagement in social justice issues among the U-M student body during that particular year.

Over the course of the 2013-2014 year, there was proliferation of student protests and other forms of activism in response to concerns about racial, religious, socioeconomic, and other inequities that existed both within the campus climate, and on a national level. As highlighted in the Appendix, several student movements occurred, which included #BBUM, #UMDivest, a "freeze-out" in the middle of campus, and an overnight "speak-out" in the undergraduate library. Although several students reported talking about these events during their "SJ talks," there were mixed reactions among the MCSP community. As the Director explained, "I think it was definitely a unique year with all the activism on campus. And that probably moved some people to engage more deeply and, at the same time, moved others to pull away more who were scared of it, or disagreed, or just found it frightening." Even though the prevalence of activism during the 2013-2014 year heightened many of the first-years students' awareness and engagement in social justice issues, others remained detached from the inequities that their fellow peers were facing on campus.

Despite the differences in the MCSP students' physical location, demographics, and engagement in diversity and social justice issues during the 2013-2014 academic year, it is important to note that many of the MCSP components remained the same. As the Director explained: "I think for living-learning purposes, place is really important, but it is significant that this program can sustain itself without a location... It is the values of the community and diversity that sustain the program. The values of the program extended beyond the location." Chapter Five will further explore the ways in which participants were drawn to MCSP's core values, and how their other pre-college characteristics influenced the ways in which they interacted within this context over the course of their time in MCSP.

Chapter Five: Pre-College Characteristics of the Sample

Students often enter college with pre-existing beliefs, values, and knowledge about social justice issues based on their personal experiences with diversity (Hurtado, et al., 2002; Milem & Umbach, 2003). These pre-college characteristics can predispose them to engage in curricular experiences, co-curricular activities, and cross-cultural interactions to a greater or lesser degree, which can in turn, shape their involvement in promoting social justice both during and after college (Bowman & Denson, 2012; Jayakumar, 2008; Saenz, 2010). This chapter describes four pre-college characteristics of the interview sample—their reasons for joining MCSP, social identity backgrounds, exposure to diverse communities, and knowledge of social justice issues—and how these factors influenced their engagement in MCSP diversity experiences.

In this chapter, I integrate several types of data including the sample's MCSP applications, pre-interview surveys, and interviews in order to provide a rich narrative of their varying motivations for joining the RLC and prior exposure to diversity and social justice issues. By uncovering students' differing motivations and backgrounds, this chapter lays the foundation for exploring how their pre-college characteristics intermingled with their MCSP curricular, co-curricular, and informal diversity experiences to influence their social justice outcomes over the course of their first year in college. This chapter is organized based on students' rankings of their top reasons in their pre-interview surveys.

Reasons for Joining MCSP

As shown in Table 5.1, nearly every student listed multiple reasons in their MCSP applications, pre-interview surveys, and interviews.

Table 5.1. Sample's Self-Reported Reasons for Joining MCSP (n=22)¹

	Focus on Community Service	Desirable Physical Location	Recommended by Someone I Know	Seeking a Sense of Community	Focus on Social Justice
Top Reason	n=6	n=6	n=4	n=4	n=2
Aisha	S I A			I	A
Ashley	S I A			I	I
Austin	A		S I	A	I
Brandon		I	I	S	I
Bryan	A	S		I	A
Cynthia				I A	S I A
Dylan	A		I A	S I A	I
Ethan	I A	I		S I A	
Garrett	S I A				A
Jason	A	S I	I	A	A
Jenna	S I			I	
Joshua	S I A		I	A	A
Megan	I A	S	I A		A
Nate	I A	S I A			
Olivia	A			A	S A
Owen	A	I	S I	A	
Peter	I A		I	S	I
Stephanie	A		S I A	A	A
Tanya	I A	S I		I	A
Tim	S I A				
Tyler	A		S I		
Zachary	I A	S I		I	A

A=Top Reason Listed in Housing Application S=Pre-Interview Survey I=Interview

¹ Jenna and Brandon's MCSP applications were missing among the available files in the MCSP office.

Although there were inconsistencies among these three data sources, the following section highlights the five most frequently cited reasons that prompted students to apply to become a member of MCSP.

Focus on Community Service. Overall, MCSP's focus on community service was the most frequently cited reason for students' desire to join the RLC. Six of the students in the interview sample, or 27%, rated it as their top reason for joining MCSP in their pre-interview surveys. Within their applications, 95% of the students mentioned possessing values related to helping others, or having a "giving spirit" as Olivia described. In his application, Garrett wrote about his passion for "helping others" during his community service experiences in high school: "The simple joys from helping others were more profound than what money could ever buy, and that we all possessed the amazing ability to touch the lives of others through even the simplest words and deeds." For many of the students, the opportunity to live and learn alongside peers who were also passionate about serving their communities was an attractive aspect of joining this particular RLC.

Drawing from their pre-college experiences, several of the students expressed an interest in continuing to participate in positive and enjoyable community service activities during their time in MCSP. For instance, Owen mentioned in his MCSP application that he had "caught the volunteering bug" as a result of serving breakfast at a local church during high school and that he expected to "gain the opportunity to work with other like-minded students to help improve our community and learn new ways to give back" through his involvement in MCSP. During his interview, Tim positively described his volunteer experiences with a peer mentor program during high school, and discussed wanting to expand his involvement in the community during college:

“I definitely enjoy it now, and I think that was a big factor to learn more about what it is like to actually go out and do community work.”

Even though the majority of the participants expressed an interest in serving communities during their time in MCSP, they had differing opinions about the “benefits” of these experiences. Some students discussed wanting to “give back” to those in need, whereas, others focused on what they personally gained from performing community service. Nate in particular showed quite a few contradictions in serving the community’s needs versus his own, which was illustrated in his comment that, “Our selfless actions and social interactions have the power to positively influence the community, while simultaneously improving ourselves.” Although he used the word “selfless,” much of his essay revolved around the personal satisfaction he gained from community service, and how it gave him a “sense of goodness, self-growth, and accomplishment.” Austin named his curiosity, as well as uncertainty, around his involvement in community service by asking, “Who is it that benefits from service, the giver or receiver?” In contrast, Bryan focused on primarily serving the community in his statement about wanting to “expand my awareness of community strengths and needs.” As the narratives of Nate, Austin, and Bryan indicate, students varied in their motivations for performing community service. Although many of their intentions mirrored MCSP’s goal of “providing service fitting the needs of the community” (MCSP website, 2016), students like Nate, who were particularly focused on their own personal fulfillment, entered MCSP with pre-college motivations that were not always reflective of MCSP’s mission.

Desirable Physical Location. Along with its focus on community service, MCSP’s physical location was a top reason for joining the RLC. 6 out of 22 students reported that living on Central Campus, or specifically in East Quad, was their primary reason for applying to MCSP

in their pre-interview surveys. However, only one student mentioned in his application that MCSP's location on campus played prominently into his decision to join the RLC. In this instance, Nate connected MCSP's physical location with assisting with this transition to college:

Another critical component that draws me to MCSP is the residential housing in East Quad. Hoping to make the jump from high school to college as smooth as possible, the comfortable and cohesive environment serves as an effective transition that is necessary to adjust to my freshman year of college.

Several students, including Owen, Tanya, Zachary, Bryan, Ethan, Brandon, and Bryan, mentioned in their interviews that they were drawn to MCSP because of its desirable location on campus. In quite a few of these cases, people that they knew, such as friends that also attended U-M, encouraged them to apply to a learning community so that they would be guaranteed to live on Central Campus, rather than North Campus which is a 20-minute bus ride away. Zachary, who was an out-of-state student, explained how his experiences with visiting a friend on North Campus influenced his decision to apply to MCSP:

When I was a senior, and I was deciding I wanted to come here, he lived in the Northwood apartments on North Campus. That was dreadful and I didn't like it at all. I said if I come to this school, there is no way I'm going to be on North Campus, so what are the options for being on Central Campus? So that's how I knew about it; I knew I didn't want to be on North Campus. I didn't apply to MCSP for East Quad, but I knew if I wanted to do one of these learning communities -- which ones? They all are on Central Campus. This is just like a way for me to ensure myself on Central Campus and also do something I'm interested in doing. When I visited over the summer I saw this is East Quad; this is where MCSP is and I saw them doing construction, so I figured they were doing it.

As Zachary hinted by mentioning the construction, MCSP's physical location was also appealing to students based on the fact that East Quad was being renovated the summer prior to their arrival. As described in Chapter Four, this renovation involved over a hundred million dollars in updates, which led to a much-improved living environment for students that were accepted to MCSP during the 2013-2014 school year. Through the interviews with students, it became

apparent that individuals with strong U-M connections and information networks were more aware of these renovations and sometimes chose to apply to MCSP based on this inside information. For example, even though Bryan mentioned that “the first thing that made me notice MCSP was the fact that it is in East Quad and new and everything,” it was actually his mother that pointed it out to him: “My mom was going crazy with my college stuff. She said you can sign up for this.” Because he grew up in a community that was in close proximity to U-M, his mother was well-aware of the current developments on campus.

Although the desirable location factored into several students’ decisions to join this particular RLC, the discrepancies between what was mentioned in their applications, pre-interview surveys, and interviews is noteworthy. Given that only one student mentioned his interest in living in East Quad within his application, it appeared that students might have concealed this motivation while applying to MCSP. As will be discussed in later sections, choosing to become a member of MCSP based on its location was often synonymous with joining for the “wrong reasons,” which could have been one possible explanation for why some students were not as forthcoming. While “playing the system” in order to live in a more desirable residence hall could certainly be seen as problematic, it also alludes to the fact that not everyone joined MCSP due to their passion for community service and social justice.

Recommended by Someone I Know. Overall, four students, or 18% of the sample, indicated in their surveys that they primarily joined MCSP because it was recommended by someone they knew. During their interviews, all of these students, along with six others, discussed being encouraged to apply by their hometown friends and family members that were familiar with U-M and MCSP. However, among these ten students, only three mentioned that they joined MCSP for this reason in their applications.

Three students, Stephanie, Megan, and Owen, commented that because their older siblings had joined MCSP during their first year at U-M, they had also decided to apply to join the RLC. In her interview, Stephanie discussed observing her older brother's experiences in MCSP in a positive light: "When he was a freshman in MCSP, I visited him a couple of times...When I would visit him on overnight stays, the whole community even in his hall seemed like a really fun environment." Other students including Tyler, Joshua, Austin, Dylan, and Jason, spoke in their interviews about knowing older friends from their high school who recommended the RLC as a result of enjoying their time in it. While most of these friends had been in MCSP themselves, Austin mentioned in his interview that a friend encouraged him to apply due to its positive reputation in her dorm:

A friend of mine who is two years older than me; she lived in East Quad her freshman year, and she wasn't in MCSP. And she was like, "You should apply to MCSP. They're really nice people and you get to live in East Quad. And it is about community service." So I was like I'll check it out. I looked at it and I trusted her. I like nice people. I was looking for something like my student council, because my student council was a bunch of nice people who really cared and wanted to make a difference. I don't like people who are apathetic to the world. So that's why I applied.

As was the case with Austin, some students had prior information about the perks of joining MCSP, including its physical location. The discrepancies in the number of students who revealed their personal connections in their applications, compared to their surveys or interviews, suggests that knowing someone that was familiar with MCSP was a larger motivating factor for joining the RLC than what students had initially presented.

Seeking a Sense of Community. In their pre-interview surveys, 18% of the students rated being a member of a close-knit community as their top reason for joining MCSP. However, in 41% of their applications and interviews, students spoke about the community within MCSP

in terms of encountering a smaller college environment, having a support system, or being surrounded by liked-minded peers.

As is in its namesake, the sample discussed joining MCSP for its sense of community in a variety of ways in their interviews and applications. In several cases, students commented that they wished to experience the same type of close-knit community that they encountered in their smaller hometown or high school. Others wanted to join MCSP in order to feel a part of a smaller community within U-M, while also taking advantage of the resources and opportunities provided by attending a large, public university. Bryan commented on both themes in his interview when explaining what attracted him to MCSP:

With close-knit communities, my high school was really small and I personally thrived in it, because I enjoyed the smaller classes and the more personal level with teachers and getting to know people a lot... With this, it was really good because it was the best of both worlds. It is a big university, but then a smaller group of people, so I could still have that closer tight group of people, and still have a lot of other people to meet.

For some out-of-state and international students, a draw of MCSP was that it was “home away from home” especially if they did not know other students from their hometown that were attending U-M. Jenna, who was from the East Coast, explained in her interview: “I didn’t know anyone coming here actually. There wasn’t anyone from my school or anyone older, so I was a little bit nervous. I knew a living-learning community was a good thing to join because I’d be able to meet a lot of new people.” As described by Bryan and Jenna, many of the students hoped to meet new friends once they arrived at U-M, and felt that being a part of the smaller MCSP community would help foster those personal connections.

Dylan, Ashley, and Jason, and Garrett, commented on the “family-like” environment of MCSP and the emotional support that it could provide. Dylan mentioned in his application that he was attracted to MCSP because he noticed a "spirit of warmth and welcoming that was unique

compared to other communities” that he visited during Campus Day. He greatly valued this “spirit” due to his involvement with a very supportive theater community during high school where he felt “welcomed, loved, and safe.” Ashley connected her high school experiences of playing sports to her desire to be part of a community that felt “like a family” in her interview: “I played three sports all throughout high school, so I’m very used to the team aspect and having that kind of family through them. I was hoping to gain that through MCSP.”

Olivia, Garrett, and Joshua spoke about being supported by a community of peers with similar interests who could help them further their goals around community and social justice. In her application, Olivia discussed the benefits of being in a supportive community as it related to her goals of “aiding communities in need.” She wrote that “being in a community of students and mentors that are passionate about community service will provide constant encouragement, and will also provide me with a place to get constant feedback.” Motivated by the desire to experience the closeness of the community that he had while growing up in a small town, Joshua connected the themes of living in a close-knit community, interacting with like-minded peers, and personal growth together in his application: “I believe that by working and living with a relatively small and closely tied group of individuals with common goals and interests that I’ll be able to grow and mature into a community service focused adult.”

Similar to their varying interpretations of community service, the sample ascribed different meanings to why the “C” in MCSP appealed to them. However, in many cases, it appeared they were looking for a home within the broader U-M campus that offered a supportive group of peers who shared their values related to community service and social justice.

Focus on Social Justice. Of particular interest to this study, only 9%, or 2 out of the 22 students in the sample, rated the focus on social justice as their top reason for joining MCSP in

their surveys. However, an additional four students mentioned being drawn to the RLC due to their interest in social justice issues during their interviews and 50% of the students' applications mentioned a commitment to promoting social change, either on a large- or small-scale.

Among the students who did mention social justice in their interviews or applications, Cynthia highlighted her "idealism" and passion for social justice in both data sources: "My passion for people is my biggest asset and my idealism regarding the power of people to see injustice and strive to solve it by showing a glimpse of the future is a tool I would like to share with the Michigan Community Scholars Program." On the other hand, Ashley included no references to social justice in her MCSP application, but passionately discussed wanting to create change in her interview: "When I came to college, I was like I'm going to change the world. I'm at Michigan; how can I not change the world? I thought MCSP was a perfect place to do that because it was very -- do it, be that change type of thing, and that's what I was really looking at."

It is noteworthy that 45% of the sample gave MCSP's focus on social justice one of their two lowest ratings (i.e., 5 or 6). When considering why students may not have prioritized social justice as a reason for joining this RLC in their surveys compared to their applications, there are several possibilities. Some students may have highlighted MCSP's focus on social justice in their applications because it is featured prominently on the RLC's website and marketing materials. Moreover, based on the interview data, it appeared that some students did not understand what social justice entailed. For example, Ethan explained that his application to MCSP was happenstance, and that he wasn't familiar with the concept of social justice prior to applying to MCSP:

Obviously I was very involved in community service, and this sounded like a perfect fit for me. I didn't really give much thought to learning communities. When I came to campus day, I talked to some of the other ones. I actually didn't talk to MCSP at that. But I talked to some other ones, and I was like this is cool, but this isn't really my interest.

And then I looked it up online and this one fits more with me. But I really didn't know what social justice was.

Although Ethan felt that MCSP was the best “fit,” it is interesting to consider whether students were fully aware of MCSP’s intentional focus on social justice, or if they only had a cursory understanding of what the RLC entailed before applying. Because Austin had primarily learned about MCSP through a friend, he also mentioned being surprised by the focus on social justice in his pre-interview survey and first interview: “I applied to MCSP upon hearing that it was filled with really friendly people. I also expected to engage in a lot of community service. I had no idea of what social justice meant before starting here.” Austin and Ethan’s comments suggest they may have been drawn to MCSP for reasons outside of its social justice mission, and came into the program with a rather “blank slate” when it came to their understanding of social justice issues.

The eleven students who did mention MCSP’s focus on social justice in their MCSP applications offered very different accounts of how they saw themselves “making a difference” or creating change in the world. Some students, like Tanya, provided a broad description of their ideology about promoting social justice by using words like becoming a “world leader” and working for the “common good.” Other students, including Garrett, discussed “making a difference” on a smaller scale:

I hope to incorporate my values and renewed commitment to social justice into my daily actions - that my concerns for the community will not stop at projects or initiatives alone, but that these values that I gain through the MCSP experience will be ones that I will truly live by in my personal life, relationships, and career.

While Tanya and Garrett spoke about promoting social justice in general terms, others were quite specific with the types of injustice that they hoped to address. Joshua, for example, wanted to

“take the notion of sustainability seriously and to begin to assimilate that into our everyday activities.”

The fact that many of the incoming MCSP students had different definitions of what social justice meant, and were not familiar with the concept in some cases, may have influenced their subsequent engagement in social justice-related MCSP experiences. Moreover, while some students may have embraced the opportunity to learn more about social justice issues and strengthen their commitment to promoting social change during their time in MCSP, others did not see it as something they were particularly interested in, as will be explored in the subsequent chapters.

The triangulation of the MCSP applications, pre-interview surveys, and staff interviews revealed a number of possible connections among students’ social identities, their reasons for joining MCSP, and how they engaged with the RLC’s focus on social justice. The following section outlines how students’ gender, racial, and social class differences—the primary social identities used to select students for this study— along with their pre-college exposure to diversity experiences and prior social justice knowledge played roles in their participation in MCSP-affiliated diversity experiences.

Social Identity Backgrounds

As described in Chapter Three, this study involved purposeful maximal sampling in order to obtain a cross-section of students in the 2013-2014 MCSP first-year cohort that represented a diverse array of gender, racial, SES, and religious backgrounds². As shown below in Table 5.2, the demographics of the twenty-two students in the interview sample included a higher proportion of White males (i.e., 36%), given that they have been found to be the most

² Students self-identified their race, gender, social class, and religion in their pre-interview surveys. They were also asked about the salience of these identities in both their surveys and interviews.

resistant to social justice education (Goodman, 2011), as well as an intentional balance of half White students and half students of color. Despite the intentionality behind the social identity backgrounds of the sample, 60% of the participants were male, from an upper-middle or upper socioeconomic class, and affiliated with a Christian-based faith, which was reflective of the MCSP first-year cohort’s higher proportion of privileged racial, gender, social class, and religious identities.

Table 5.2. Social Identity Backgrounds of the Sample

Participants	Gender	Race	SES	Religion
Aisha	Female	Asian	Middle Class	Sikh
Ashley	Female	White	Middle/Lower-Middle Class	Christian
Austin	Male	White	Upper-Middle Class	Spiritual with values of Christianity
Brandon	Male	Multiracial	Lower-Middle Class	Catholic
Bryan	Male	Biracial	Upper-Middle Class	None
Cynthia	Female	White	Upper-Middle Class	Episcopalian
Dylan	Male	White	Upper-Middle Class	Christian
Ethan	Male	White	Upper-Middle Class	Catholic
Garrett	Male	Asian	Middle Class	Christian
Jason	Male	White	Upper-Middle Class	Agnostic
Jenna	Female	Asian	Upper-Middle Class	Catholic
Joshua	Male	Biracial	Middle Class	None
Megan	Female	White	Middle Class	Methodist
Nate	Male	White	Middle Class	Jewish
Olivia	Female	Black	Middle Class	Christian
Owen	Male	White	Upper Class/Wealthy	“Just celebrates Christmas”
Peter	Male	Multiracial	Middle/Lower-Middle Class	“Non Denominational Protestant Christian”
Stephanie	Female	Black	Upper-Middle Class	Christian
Tanya	Female	Asian	Lower/Working Class	None
Tim	Male	Asian	Upper-Middle Class	Hindu
Tyler	Male	White	Upper-Middle Class	None
Zachary	Male	White	Upper Class/Wealthy	“N/A”

Gender: “Gendered Involvement Within MCSP.” As mentioned in Chapter Four, there were a higher number of second-year female students during the 2013-2014 academic year,

and more first-year males, in order to achieve a 50/50 gender ratio in MCSP. The Coordinator explained that the RLC's "admissions process" had unintended consequences: "We had to turn away a lot of 'good' females in order to take in 'mediocre' males." She commented that these "mediocre" males had MCSP applications that showed a weaker fit with the mission of MCSP, which sometimes led to lower levels of engagement in MCSP because they often pursued outside interests such as Greek life, professional student organizations, and other extracurricular activities. The Director commented on the gender differences he saw in students' engagement in community service activities within and outside of MCSP:

There are some privileged high school students who do community service activities to build their resumes -- and there are some other students who really know the Housing system at Michigan, and both groups understand that they have an opportunity to get into a renovated dorm by applying to our program. And among the men we admit, there is a higher proportion of those people. With the women, we don't have 100% success, but I think their commitment to community service -- even if they join sororities and disengage from the community, their commitment to these issues stays strong regardless while they are in the program.

The Director's statement about the association between the gender of students and a higher likelihood of joining MCSP for the "wrong reasons" was also reflected in the larger number of males in the sample who ranked MCSP's physical location as their top reason for joining the RLC in their surveys.

In connection with students' "gendered" engagement patterns, Tyler and Joshua noted that students' involvement social justice issues could sometimes be perceived as a more "feminine" interest. Tyler explained his impressions of why his fellow male MCSP peers sometimes disengaged from social justice-related activities within MCSP:

It seems to be more prevalent among the guys that I know, um -- to bash MCSP stuff or try to avoid being associated with it. 'Cause from what I can tell, they associate it with being like [sighs] -- I don't know like feminist or activist or unmanly kind of. I could be reading this wrong but from what I can tell the guys who tend to be very hyper-masculine are the same guys who are hesitant to do anything with MCSP.

When providing an explanation for his lack of involvement in “SJ talks” and other social justice-focused experiences within MCSP, Joshua mentioned: “There is like a dialogue or something about women’s health. It’s called the Vagina Monologues. It has a picture of a vagina... That was one thing, so just like -- things like that I guess.” Joshua’s use of the “Vagina Monologues” example suggested that he, too, equated engaging in social justice issues with “feminist” activities. As described in this section, how males and females engaged in MCSP diversity experiences could be reflective of larger gender dynamics, which may have affected their involvement in the community service and social justice aspects of MCSP.

Race: “Racial Education for Myself or Others.” Although many of the incoming students were attracted to MCSP’s diverse community, the Director explained that their conceptualizations of engaging with their peers often “had very different meanings if you were a student of color or a White student -- For some white students, it was to have a little bit of contact. And for some students of color, it was really being integrated and engaged.” Due to their larger numbers within MCSP their privilege in society, it is interesting to note that White students had “choices” in terms of how they wished to interact with their diverse peers, whereas, many students of color did not possess the same options because they often represented the “diversity” both within and outside of the RLC.

Another dynamic that appeared within the sample’s MCSP applications was a contrast between the students who wanted to be “educators” versus those that wished to be “educated” about social justice issues. Although seven of the students mentioned that they could contribute to MCSP through their diverse backgrounds, they were primarily students of color. For example, due to her African heritage, Stephanie mentioned that “being able to share my unique experience will give others a different perspective of the global community and hopefully add to their

understanding of the world." Aisha discussed being a member of the Sikh community, and explained that because she had experienced and witnessed prejudice by those that were not as familiar with her faith, she wanted to "educate people, and hopefully spread tolerance" about her religious background. While Stephanie and Aisha, both females of color, expressed an interest in educating others about their social identities, several of the White students spoke more often of educating themselves about different social groups. Tyler, a White male, discussed that due to growing up in a primarily White community in Michigan, he had a "thirst to learn from and understand people beyond those from [his hometown]." In her role as a staff member, the Coordinator described the tension between the "education" that occurred between students from privileged and marginalized racial backgrounds:

Probably within MCSP, a challenge that they mentioned to me that they face is just kind of the other students maybe not understanding where they come from and making kind of assumptions about their background. I don't think it was intentional on the part of the students, it is just people are intrigued and they maybe have never been in these types of spaces and want to know more about these different students. And maybe they didn't go about the best way of inquiring.

Her comments implied that although many MCSP students positively benefitted from cross-racial interactions, students of color sometimes experienced negative encounters with their peers. These interactions, in the form of microaggressions or serving as the "spokesperson" for their race, occurred both within and outside of MCSP.

Olivia explained that within her first few weeks at U-M, she encountered a situation when she was walking through the center of campus at night with a friend: "A white male came up to us and said, 'Hi, chocolate ladies, I've never talked to a Black woman before.'" She reported that this incident confirmed what others had said about there being "some race issues" on campus, even though she "didn't believe them" when she had first heard about the problematic racial climate. Brandon discussed that he "didn't know that a lot of these racial

issues were a big thing until I actually got here,” and mentioned that he and other students of color now dealt with discrimination on “daily basis”:

A lot of experiences are stuff we all experience on a daily basis. Whether it be something small like nobody will sit next to you on the bus, even though everybody is standing. Or maybe somebody might have a comment toward what you know or your level of intelligence in the class. There are a lot of things, but you can't let them discourage you. You kind have to work through them.

In reference to serving as a “spokesperson” for his race when these microaggressions or other problematic cross-racial interactions occurred, Brandon commented that “sometimes, I’ll refrain from trying to interject the minority opinion because I don’t want to speak on behalf of all Black people. I just don’t want to be that person.” However, Olivia had a more positive outlook on her role as a “spokesperson” which she attributed to her personality, and her prior experiences at a predominately White high school. While Olivia enjoyed sharing her perspectives as a Black woman, she was careful about speaking on behalf of others that shared her social identities:

In my English class...I’m the only Black in my class. Being Black and a woman, I always have to talk about the gender issues as well as the Black perspective. It is almost like my professor relies on me for a perspective. That’s not really a negative for me. For some people who aren’t -- like as outspoken as I am -- I enjoy speaking in class, and sharing my opinion. It is a positive thing for me to have the opportunity to do so, even though I don’t like to view it as the perspective for the whole female community of Black women.

As the narratives of Aisha, Stephanie, Olivia, and Brandon indicate, many of the students of color were often serving in dual roles of the “educator” while being “educated” during their time in MCSP. Although White students such as Nate and Ashley mentioned educating others about their more marginalized religious and social class identities, respectively, this was often a voluntary choice, rather than being called upon to act as a “spokesperson” for these identities. Thus, although a variety of racial identities were represented within the MCSP community,

students perceived their involvement in these cross-racial interactions very differently, and varied in the “choices” they were able to make while engaging in MCSP diversity experiences.

SES: “The Class ‘Privilege’ of Serving Others.” In relation to their socioeconomic backgrounds, upper-middle class and upper class students generally used more distanced language to describe their interactions with the communities they served. In his application, Zachary, who identified as upper class, conveyed his conflicting feelings about community service by admitting that he used to volunteer at a food bank because “service seemed like part of a balanced lifestyle.” Even though he mentioned that his motives had recently changed after learning more about the food inequities that existed in his hometown, he referred to community service as “donating my time.” Similarly, Owen, who also reported that he was from an upper class background, spoke about how his experiences on the youth council of a community foundation in his hometown had “piqued my interest in philanthropy, a broad strokes approach to helping other people.” In his MCSP application, Nate, who identified as upper-middle class, spoke about several MCSP community service opportunities he hoped to get involved in and reported that the “vast list of deserving and charitable causes encapsulates the essence of giving and will stimulate an ebullient community service effort for the betterment of myself, my peers, and the community.” In comparison, Tanya, who came from a lower/working class background, discussed her personal connection to those from lower social classes and her desire to improve their lives: “I come from a family of immigrants, parents who work for minimum wages. I understand those underprivileged minorities who are overlooked every day. The feelings of helplessness and confusions have fuel[ed] my determination to change the [fate] of others.” As highlighted in Zachary, Owen, and Nate’s word choices of “donating,” “charity,” and “philanthropy” in their applications, all three students conveyed more of a divide between

themselves and the communities they were serving compared to Tanya. The possible class-based connection between viewing community service in more of a philanthropic sense and viewing underprivileged communities as the “other” is an interesting thread to consider in relation to students’ participation in co-curricular diversity experiences.

Students’ time and financial constraints emerged in the data as another socioeconomic factor that influenced their ability to engage in social justice-focused activities. As the Associate Director explained, “Sometimes being an activist or being involved with environmental issues is sometimes viewed as some kind of luxury or privilege. Like you got the time to go to meetings; you got the time to worry about that.” In this way, she noted that some students had to place a higher priority on supporting themselves during college or focusing on their academics, rather than engaging in social justice-related activities. The Associate Director also explained, “They care about environmental issues, but their father told them I’m paying money for you to get a degree so focus on that, and don’t worry about that other stuff.” The Associate Director’s comments illustrate that certain students may have had more financial “freedom” to engage in social justice issues within and outside of MCSP. Although it could certainly be the case that lower SES students may face more pressure to balance their time, financial, and familial constraints, a few students from higher SES backgrounds expressed the same concerns. Despite his upper class background, Zachary discussed the tensions he felt in regards to balancing his interests related to social justice with the financial pressure he felt from his father, as well as himself:

I was pretty interested in having an impact on climate change just because I think it is such a huge problem. Since I got here, um, I’ve sort of had conflicting ideas. MCSP has definitely promoted that but I’ve also realized that I’m going to have to start making money for myself. My dad -- I said I’m well off, but my dad doesn’t give me any money at all. He really wants me to work for myself, so I had a job last summer, and I’m kind of

running low on the funds from that. I realize that like, wow, I'm going to have to actually make money in order to live.

As shown from Zachary's statement, conflicts between engaging in social justice activities in light of students' financial responsibilities or pressures could have factored into their ability to invest time into participating in the array of diversity experiences provided by MCSP.

Diversity of Hometowns and High Schools³

As reported in Chapter Three, the majority of students in the sample (77%) grew up in racially homogeneous neighborhoods, as shown below in Table 5.3. However, half of the students attended a somewhat diverse or diverse high school. Many of those that grew up in homogeneous communities commented that there were 90% or more students of their race, and only a few students of other races in their neighborhood and/or high school. Megan described the diversity of her high school in her small, rural predominantly White hometown in Western Michigan as, "I think in our whole school, there are two Black people. One moved there my senior year, and one was like half [Black]. And then one Asian person, and I honestly think that was it." In contrast, Tim, an international student, explained that the diversity of his hometown was half White and half students of color due to the large immigrant population in his city: "The city is actually predominantly -- it is not predominantly; it is half White and half colored, but the high school had a little more. I wouldn't say it was more than 65 to 70%, but it was definitely colored... We had African Americans and Asians, a lot of Asians." As Tim described, there were

³ The diversity of the sample's pre-college communities was determined based on a question in their pre-interview surveys that had them rate the racial composition of their neighborhood and high school along a 7-point scale (i.e., "All White," "Nearly All White," "Mostly White," "Half White & Half People of Color (POC)," "Mostly People of Color," "Nearly All People of Color," and "All People of Color"). Questions about their pre-college communities were also asked during their first interview to triangulate the data. Students from "All White/People of Color (POC)" or "Nearly All White/POC" neighborhoods and/or high schools were coded as living in homogeneous communities, whereas, "Mostly All White or POC" settings were considered somewhat diverse communities. Diverse neighborhoods and high schools were defined as approximately "Half White & Half POC."

a few students that encountered a more diverse hometown or high school, however, the majority of those students still experienced racial segregation in their pre-college communities.

5.3. Diversity of Sample’s Pre-College Communities

Participants	Residency Status	Diversity of Neighborhood	Diversity of High School
Aisha	In State	Diverse	Diverse
Ashley	In State	Homogeneous	Diverse
Austin	In State	Homogeneous	Homogeneous
Brandon	In State	Homogeneous (POC)	Diverse
Bryan	In State	Homogeneous	Homogeneous
Cynthia	Out of State	Homogeneous	Diverse
Dylan	In State	Homogeneous	Somewhat Diverse
Ethan	In State	Homogeneous	Somewhat Diverse
Garrett	International	Diverse	Diverse
Jason	In State	Homogeneous	Homogeneous
Jenna	Out of State	Homogeneous	Diverse
Joshua	In State	Homogeneous	Homogeneous
Megan	In State	Homogeneous	Homogeneous
Nate	In State	Homogeneous	Homogeneous
Olivia	In State	Homogeneous (POC)	Diverse
Owen	In State	Homogeneous	Homogeneous
Peter	In State	Diverse	Diverse
Stephanie	In State	Somewhat Diverse	Homogeneous
Tanya	In State	Homogeneous	Somewhat Diverse
Tim	International	Diverse	Diverse
Tyler	In State	Homogeneous	Homogeneous
Zachary	Out of State	Homogeneous	Homogeneous

In addition to the diversity, or a lack thereof, within their neighborhoods or high schools, several students noted their pre-college exposure to diversity through the community service activities they participated in prior to entering U-M. Owen discussed the diversity of the youth council that he was involved in compared to his mostly White neighborhood and high school:

“Growing up [my hometown], it is supposedly a diverse place but I found a lot of it isn’t. It is not

segregated; it is just separated a little bit. It was really interesting to see all the different perspectives from different social classes or different races or religions come together.”

Although some students from racially homogenous neighborhoods and high schools, such as Owen, were able to encounter more diversity through their extracurricular involvement outside of their pre-college communities, many of their cross-racial friendships were limited prior to joining MCSP. Moreover, while those that grew up in more diverse pre-college communities often interacted with peers from different racial backgrounds, several mentioned that their close friends in high school had similar racial backgrounds as themselves.

Many of the students explained that they were attracted to the diversity within MCSP either because it was their first exposure to a more diverse environment, or because they wished to be surrounded by the same level of diversity that they encountered in their home communities or the high schools they attended. Jason, who came from a predominately White pre-college neighborhood and high school, commented that the diversity of MCSP was attractive to him because, “having been raised in a fairly homogeneous environment, I hope to expand my views and understanding of the world and the people around me.” Jenna, who identified as Asian, grew up in an all-White neighborhood, but attended a private high school with students from a variety of ethnic backgrounds. She said, “I just really enjoyed the diversity in my high school and I wanted to bring that to college also. I thought MCSP was a good place to find that.” As shown in these students’ narratives, there was a great deal of diversity within the sample’s pre-college experiences and this often shaped their desire to become part of a diverse community during their time at U-M.

Prior Social Justice Knowledge

As described previously in this chapter, students varied greatly in their understandings of what social justice meant, and in their interpretations of how they saw themselves promoting social change. Not surprisingly, students' awareness of social justice issues was influenced by the diversity of their hometowns and high schools. As the Associate Director mentioned, "The students are coming from a lot of different home environments as well as school environments. Some are more familiar with the whole idea of social justice than others." Those that grew up in more homogeneous pre-college communities often had less prior knowledge about social justice. In his pre-interview survey, when asked if social justice was discussed at his predominantly White high school, Tyler mentioned, "I don't really think I -- not in depth but I heard the term. I didn't really know what it was necessarily." A lack of familiarity with what social justice entailed appeared to be the case in non-White pre-college communities as well. Although Brandon grew up in a predominantly Black neighborhood and attended a more racially diverse high school, he did not recall discussing social justice in much detail prior to college: "In high school, it may have not been as looked at because we didn't come from -- We didn't come from really diverse backgrounds. Even though we were of different races, we still came from [the same city] so it was kind of -- we had no reason to." Despite their varied racial backgrounds, there was a sense of shared identity among Brandon and his fellow low-income and minority peers that did not lend itself to exploring their differences.

Some students from more racially homogeneous neighborhoods recalled secondary school experiences that contributed to their social justice knowledge. Two students in particular, Bryan and Cynthia, described the integration of SJE into their pre-college curriculum, which was pivotal in helping them acquire a deeper understanding of social justice issues. In his interview

and application, Bryan discussed participating in a newly developed social justice class throughout his senior year in high school: “It was a group of 20 kids and most of the time we’d do some readings and talk about them. Or we’d talk about certain issues. It was just like something new, so it would be going from sexuality to race to socioeconomic class to just talking about stereotypes and whatnot.” As a result of taking this course, along with his biracial identity and father’s low SES background, Bryan wrote in his application that he had a deep passion for social justice, and “a sensitivity to socioeconomic and race concerns.” Cynthia also encountered SJE-focused curriculum during seventh grade, which caused her to reflect on her privilege and power in society: “We had a social identity workshop. I remember having to make a poster where you stuck on your characteristics. If you were a girl, what race you were, where your parents are from, and where you live.” Although Bryan and Cynthia’s pre-college experiences with SJE were rather unique within the sample, they highlight that social justice knowledge was not always connected to the racial and socioeconomic composition of students’ communities.

While some students had gained an understanding of social justice issues through their formal education, other students’ knowledge about societal inequities was derived from the media, their parents, or personal experiences with their social identities. Stephanie, who identified as Black, mentioned that her parents had shielded her from learning about social justice issues while growing up, which factored into her decision to apply to MCSP. In her application, she wrote that she hoped “to attain a deeper understanding of the world. There are many issues, movements, and social injustices occurring around the world, but living under the protection of my parents, I am guarded from these real world issues.” On the other hand, during his interview, Peter discussed how both his multiracial background and parents played a role in his prior knowledge of injustices in the world:

When I've got people in my family in the last 200 years from pretty much every continent except the poles so whether it is religious separation -- I think my immediate family believes everything under the sun. And you know racial separation like I said; I guess I can claim the oppressors and the oppressed as we stand descendants. It is something that is sort of ingrained in you. It was also ingrained from my parent's idea of -- you stay in touch. It was kind of -- I guess you were taught these social justice causes as I was growing up.

In sum, students in the sample entered MCSP at differing "starting places" in terms of their understanding of social justice issues. Even though a few students entered MCSP with pre-existing knowledge, the majority were largely unfamiliar with the concept of "social justice." The fact that students with varying degrees of social justice knowledge joined a RLC with this particular focus has interesting implications for students' engagement in SJE-related experiences.

Conclusion

The open coding of students' MCSP applications, pre-surveys, and interviews revealed five main reasons for joining the RLC: (1) Focus on Community Service; (2) Desirable Physical Location; (3) Recommended by Someone I Know; (4) Seeking a Sense of Community; and (5) Focus on Social Justice. Overall, students ranked MCSP's focus on community service and its desirable location as their top reasons for becoming a member of MCSP in their pre-interview surveys. Although 95% of the sample commented in their MCSP applications that its focus on community service had been particularly attractive, only one student mentioned MCSP's location in his essay. The fact that only two students in the sample ranked MCSP's focus on social justice as their top reason for joining the RLC in their pre-interview surveys, and that it was only mentioned in 50% of the applications, is significant. This finding raises questions about whether students were just not as familiar with the concept of the social justice, or if this reason for joining the RLC was less "attractive" than the four others that students mentioned. Among the applications that highlighted MCSP's social justice focus, there was variation in terms of

whether social justice was discussed as a particular ideology, reflected in daily actions, or referred to a certain set of issues.

Given that students often reported several different reasons for joining MCSP, it is worth taking into account how their various motivations for becoming a member of the RLC might have intermingled. While some students may have already made connections among MCSP's goals related to engaged community, service-learning, and social justice prior to attending U-M, others may have viewed these aspects of MCSP as distinct, which will be further discussed in Chapter Eight. Moreover, their pre-college understandings of what it truly meant to be part of a close-knit and diverse group of students, staff, and faculty that strives to be a model of a just, civically-engaged community (Schoem, 2001, 2005) may have also evolved as they became more immersed in the culture of MCSP. In light of the discrepancies in students' applications, pre-interview surveys, and interviews, it is worth considering whether students who applied to MCSP based primarily on the recommendation of others or its desirable physical location "hid" certain information in their applications because of social desirability bias, or possibly "knowing the system," so that they would have a better chance of being accepted into the RLC. If this is indeed the case, students' values that aligned less closely with MCSP's goals may have affected their engagement patterns, a topic that is explored in Chapter Eight.

The RLC staff and participants commented on how MCSP students' pre-college characteristics could potentially affect their engagement within the RLC. In particular, they asserted that male students might be more likely to join for the "wrong reasons" and avoid more social justice-oriented MCSP activities due to its perceived connection with femininity (Gallagher, 2009). White students might also enact their privilege by "choosing" to engage with their diverse peers and "learning" from them, whereas students of color sometimes could find

themselves in the role of an educator, whether or not it was a role they had personally chosen (Gallaway, 2013). Both the staff and participants alluded to the fact that students' social class backgrounds were a possible factor in how closely they interacted with communities different from their own (Dunlap, Scoggin, Green, & Davi, 2007) and how much time they devoted to social justice causes within and outside of MCSP.

Like most individuals in America, most of the students in the sample grew up in racially homogenous pre-college communities (Orfield & Lee, 2006), although a few students attended more diverse high schools. As a result, the majority of the sample encountered their first exposure to more diverse living-learning environment during their time in MCSP (Gurin, 1999), or were attracted to the RLC to that they could continue to live within a multicultural setting (Milem & Umbach, 2003). Even though some students were familiar with social justice issues prior to college due to their secondary education experiences, families, or the media, several commented that they were not familiar with the term, "social justice," before they entered MCSP. Although past studies have assessed the impact of students' social identity backgrounds and pre-college communities on their engagement in diversity experiences (e.g., Hurtado, et al, 2002; Milem & Umbach, 2003; Saenz, 2010), less research has considered how students' differing "starting points" in terms of their motivations for engaging in SJE and prior social justice knowledge shape their involvement in these curricular, co-curricular, and informal settings. The following chapter will explore how students' pre-college characteristics interacted with their diversity experiences within MCSP to influence their understanding of themselves and the world around them.

Chapter Six: Students' Inward Growth

By looking for emerging themes—along with social justice outcomes that had already been mentioned in the diverse democracy, social justice education, and social justice allyhood development literature (Adams, et al., 2007; Broido, 2000; Gurin, et al., 2002; Hurtado, et al., 2012; Reason, et al., 2005)—to inform my analyses, I utilized open and axial coding to identify a set of categories related to the sample's social justice outcomes. Several types of outcomes were embedded in students' narratives that centered upon their thoughts, feelings, and actions toward themselves, others, and society during their time in MCSP. Although previous literature has used terms such as “self-directed,” “other-directed,” and “social action engagement” to describe students' outcomes that promote social justice (Alimo, 2012; Gurin, et al., 2013; Nagda, et al., 2004; Nelson Laird, et al., 2005), the concepts of “inward,” “outward,” and “forward” growth are used in this study to highlight the main themes that emerged in the data. Students' *inward* growth encompasses obtaining an understanding of how systems of power, privilege, and oppression operated in their own lives and broader society, along with engaging in self-directed behaviors that strengthened their ability to promote social justice. On the other hand, their *outward* growth involves acquiring thought-processes, emotions, and communication patterns that promote inclusive relations across different social identity backgrounds. *Forward* growth refers to establishing a commitment to create social change in their future lives and careers. This

chapter will specifically explore students' inward growth, and Chapter Seven will provide an overview of their outward and forward growth over the course of their first year in college.

To further explore the cognitive and affective processes that influenced students' inward, outward, and forward growth, I drew upon the intercultural competence literature (Deardorff, 2006; King and Baxter Magolda, 2005) to conceptualize their social justice outcomes across three dimensions: cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal. The *cognitive* dimension relates to students' content knowledge about societal inequities, and their ability to hold multiple cultural frames. *The intrapersonal* dimension involves integrating an awareness of their social identities into their sense of self, and becoming cognizant of how their beliefs, values, and worldviews promote social justice. *The interpersonal* dimension refers to the capacity to engage in accepting, nonjudgmental, and respectful interactions with diverse others, along with advocating for those that are oppressed.

This chapter will first provide an overview of the two awareness-oriented outcomes, *consciousness of own positionality* and *awareness of societal inequities*, and two action-based outcomes, *educating myself* and *reducing own biases*, followed by a description of how engaging in interconnected diversity experiences within MCSP influenced the sample's inward growth. Because students' MCSP experiences did not exist in a vacuum, examples of other U-M-affiliated courses, extracurricular experiences, and personal interactions they engaged in during their first year are mentioned. As will be highlighted below, every student in the sample exhibited inward growth in their social justice outcomes during their time in MCSP. However, how their pre-college characteristics and MCSP diversity experiences influenced their newfound understandings of systems of privilege, power, and oppression varied.

Becoming “Aware” of Societal Inequities

All twenty-two students in the sample discussed developing a heightened awareness of societal inequities during their first year in MCSP. Because this outcome was closely associated with students’ heightened knowledge about social justice issues, and shifts in their worldviews about “equality” in America, it was connected to students’ inward growth across both the cognitive and intrapersonal dimensions (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005). The sample most frequently discussed becoming more “aware” of class-based inequities, followed by systems of oppression related to gender and race. As Tyler explained, “I didn’t realize how drastic the inequality was in America, and how we have the least amount of equality of opportunity in terms of moving between social classes of most of the Western world. We’re so counter to our American dream message. It was kind of eye opening to me.” Many students also discussed becoming more conscious of how others’ social identities intersected with their inequitable treatment within particular institutional structures, such as the education, criminal justice, and healthcare systems.

Though many students entered MCSP with prior knowledge about a range of societal inequities, including racism, economic disparities, gender inequities, and discrimination against the LGBTQ community, there were noticeable shifts in their perceptions of individuals’ access to opportunities and resources in society. Zachary, a White male from an upper-class background, explained that his participation in UC 151—which was titled “Social Justice, Identity, Diversity, and Community”—caused him to realize that the American society was more “unequal” than he had thought prior to attending U-M:

I: What are your thoughts about the current state of equality and inequality in our society?

Zachary: I think it is pretty unequal, and I probably wouldn’t have said that before I came here.

I: In terms of unequal, what kinds of things?

Zachary: Yeah like gender, race, like every subset or bucket or whatever of social identity which I couldn't even name. If you asked me what social identity was before I came, I would say I had no idea. But now I just rattle off race, gender, class, sexual orientation, and ethnicity. I think on every level related to those there is inequality... So if you're not one of the dominant categories it is harder for you to find opportunities, and society is unequal.

Tanya, an Asian female from a lower/working class background, explained the new insights she had gained through the same SEM: "I never really thought about social justice. In my mind, I never really thought there was much [laughs] that could be done. I thought, "Oh yeah, slavery ended. Things are equal. Women are working." You think society is all great and stuff but obviously that is not true." As exemplified by Zachary and Tanya, students with different social identities felt that their MCSP experiences were influential in challenging their previous understandings of "equality" in America.

Many of the students described translating their newfound knowledge of societal inequities into an awareness of the perpetuation of racism, sexism, classism, and/or heterosexism in their everyday lives. In relation to their personal interactions, the students mentioned becoming more conscious of how their family, friends, and classmates perpetuated various forms of racial, gender, and class-based discrimination. For example, Stephanie described noticing her aunt's biased language while at a family gathering during Thanksgiving: "Some of the things my aunt said -- probably before MCSP, I would have not really cared, but...[my] exposure in MCSP to different topics in social justice, community service learning, and respecting other people's backgrounds just gave me a different outlook on the way she spoke." Zachary discussed becoming more conscious of the racist jokes that his friends made during a trip back to his hometown:

Coming from [the South], a lot of my friends are pretty racist even if they like -- They're joking about it, but going back after being here where everything is focused on being

accepting... We'll be driving around and they say the most racist stuff. They'll laugh and they're joking but at the same time they're like not joking. I'll just be like, 'whatever' because they're not like -- it is just like three guys in the car, but I'm more aware of it now. That has sort of had an impact on me... They'll just say something racist and think it is funny. I guess I've become more aware of that just through the whole experience of being here.

Although Zachary had previously encountered his friends' "racist" behavior while growing up, he now had a heightened awareness of why their prejudiced language was not just "funny," and was instead tied to a system of racial inequities in our country.

As Stephanie and Zachary applied their burgeoning consciousness of societal inequities to recognizing discriminatory behaviors outside of campus, other students including Garrett, Megan, Ethan, and Cynthia noted becoming more aware of racism, classism, and sexism during their experiences at U-M. Garrett described his new sense of awareness around racial inequities that arose from taking the SEM, "Nonviolence-Montgomery to the World," that was offered in conjunction with the African American Studies department:

I guess last semester, I took the African-American class so that really shaped the way I think about these things. It is really interesting. On North Campus...there aren't many in engineering -- African-Americans. You wonder why is it. Because they just don't -- they can't do these things or do they not get into some things. I didn't notice that until I was told that by my professor. Also just looking around on [North] campus, to be the honest the ratio of African-Americans there is really low compared to Central [Campus].

Megan also reflected on her newfound awareness of sexism and classism among her classmates and sorority sisters that developed as a result of her experiences in MCSP:

In my Math class for example, I mean maybe I wouldn't have noticed that somebody was being sort of -- I mean he wasn't being super sexist but he was being sexist. Maybe, I wouldn't have noticed that. Maybe in my sorority...you don't notice that people are so different socially or economically.

As Megan and Garrett's narratives indicate, they were beginning to "notice" systems of oppression both within and outside of classroom that they have not been aware of prior to their MCSP experiences.

A number of students, including Jenna, Tim, Cynthia, Brandon, Tyler, Jenna, and Aisha described becoming increasingly aware of how societal inequities were perpetuated in media forms such as advertisements, TV shows, and movies. Along with female students, such as Jenna, Aisha, and Cynthia, becoming aware of oppressive behaviors targeted toward their own social identities, several of the males, including Tim and Tyler, reported noticing inherent biases in how both men and women were portrayed in their daily lives. For example, Tim observed how the language on his shower gel perpetuated sexism, along with heterosexism:

I use Axe [shower gel] that kind of says -- this will automatically help you attract women. Some catchy slogan like that...It says it on there that women will come to you immediately -- kind of deal. I was telling someone about it and they were like, "It automatically assumes men would want women."

When asked if he would have been aware of this prior to MCSP, Tim explained: "I wasn't so aware of it. Definitely in MCSP and talking to [friends] made it a lot more clear and obvious that there were issues like this. I kind of took it for granted they didn't exist, or weren't a problem."

Just as Tim had begun noticing the gendered messages in the media, Tyler described his new observations of the Disney movie, *Mulan*:

I didn't realize that literally every sentence in that movie is super gender focused. Men can't do that or women are like this. I know that's how the movie is supposed to be, but I almost thought it failed in the end of trying to be feminist. In the end, what mattered to her family is that she brought home the good-looking guy.

In conjunction with learning more about societal inequities during their time in MCSP, the sample developed a deeper understanding of how they personally played a role in maintaining and perpetuating systems of privilege, power, and oppression.

Consciousness⁴ of Own Positionality

One of the strongest areas of growth for the participants was their awareness of their *positionality*, which is a term used in the social justice education and feminist literature (e.g., Hackman, 2005; Maher & Tetreault, 2001) to refer to how we are situated in relation to others with respect to our power and privilege in society. The term, *consciousness*, is intentionally used to coincide with Frankenberg's (1993) and Cabrera's (2012) conceptualization of "racial cognizance" about the privilege or oppression someone encounters in society based on their skin color and other factors such their gender and social class (Orlowski, 2011). For the purposes of this study, students' *consciousness of their positionality* will therefore refer to students' awareness of their privileged⁵ racial, gender, and social class backgrounds, and the intersections between these identities (Cole, 2009; Crenshaw, 1994). It is important to note that students generally had to first become aware of the existence of societal inequities (i.e., White individuals are given more unearned advantages in society than other racial groups), before they constructed an understanding of the privilege and power they personally held in society. Students' awareness of their positionality included both cognitive and intrapersonal dimensions because they integrated their knowledge of their own roles in systems of privilege, power, and oppression into their sense of self.

Overall, 91% of the students in the sample, with Nate and Joshua being the exceptions, reported gaining more awareness of their positionality through their MCSP diversity experiences.

⁴ The words, "awareness" and "consciousness" are used interchangeably in this study to refer to students' knowledge and understandings of systems of privilege, power, and oppression, both in their own lives and in broader society.

⁵ As highlighted in Chapter Four, the terms "privileged" and "marginalized" will refer to the existence of social structures and power imbalances that lead to the inequitable treatment of individuals in society (Adams, et al., 2007). Those with privileged identities generally have unearned advantages and conferred dominance in society as a result of their self-claimed or ascribed social identity backgrounds (Johnson, 2005; McIntosh, 1988). Individuals with marginalized identities often face oppression in society, such as racism, sexism, and classism, which is tied to less access to resources and opportunities than their privileged counterparts (Bell, 2007).

Peter described how his involvement in MCSP influenced his awareness of his “position” in the world as it related to the privileges he held in society:

I think it kind of made me reflect on the position I stand -- where I am in the world in relation to everyone else -- in relation to people around me, in relationship to my community at large. And what I can do in that position, perhaps, to try and, uh -- You know use some of these privileges to my advantage to attempt to try...to kind of assist in spreading those privileges.

Although students developed new insights about a variety of their social identities—including their gender, religion, social class, and citizenship status—gaining more knowledge about their race seemed to be especially salient because many had not explored it in depth prior to college (Chesler, Peet, & Sevig, 2003). The majority of the White students in particular explained that developing an awareness of their White privilege during their time in MCSP was an “eye-opening” experience. As Dylan described: “As far as being, identifying as White or Caucasian, I think that has really changed how I view that when I came here. Just through UC-102, and reading a lot of articles about White privilege or some things that a lot people take for granted every day -- it has really impacted how I view myself.” Students of color also discussed learning more about the intersections between their privileged and marginalized identities (Cole, 2009). Olivia mentioned that she became more conscious of the “many facets of privilege” in her own and others’ lives: “If I told someone...they look at me and see I’m Black. But if I say I’m from [my hometown], I’m from a middle-class family or blah, blah...they may assume I’m underprivileged in general but [I’m] learning there are so many facets of privilege. It is more than just race; it is more than socioeconomic status.” Brandon, who came from a multiracial and lower-middle class background, commented that he developed a greater awareness of his privilege as a male during his Gender IGR course:

It was just really interesting to see like how gender does affect us on a daily basis. I didn’t know it was such a prevalent issue. Like I never thought about it before and I never

thought about the privilege that comes along with being a male -- the oppression that females are subjected to. I never really gave it a conscious thought.

As exemplified by Dylan's, Olivia's, and Brandon's narratives, MCSP was influential in helping students with a variety of racial, gender, and social class backgrounds gain a greater awareness of their privileged identities, which was not something that they were particularly conscious of prior to joining the RLC.

Even though many of the students generally viewed learning more about their own positionality in a positive light, this new "sense of self" was also met with less favorable reactions. Consistent with the literature about students' resistance to learning about their privilege (Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Gallagher, 2009; Goodman, 2011), several students that identified as White including Dylan, Austin, Owen, Jason, Ashley, Nate, and Joshua reacted to discussions about White privilege with emotions such as guilt, avoidance, apathy, and denial. Although Dylan gained more awareness about his social identities during his time in MCSP, this was accompanied by feelings of guilt about his unearned privileges:

At first it is sort of shocking to see all these, and then you start to feel a little guilty. Should I feel bad that I've taken these kinds of things for granted? But then I sort of realized just being able to -- being able to recognize all these privileges I have will help me to be more socially just.

While Dylan was able to move past these feelings rather quickly during his first semester and redirect his feelings of guilt into developing a stronger awareness of his privilege, at the end of his first year in MCSP Austin was still reconciling his newfound knowledge of his White privilege with feelings of guilt:

Like I still feel some guilt but there's not much I can do about it since I was born this way. But there's a lot I can do to change it or like to do good things anyways... I've just become like -- I decided that the guilt doesn't help that much. It will always be there so I've just stopped feeling it as much.

Because Austin believed that his feelings of guilt were largely unproductive, he was making a concerted effort to reconcile these feelings. Although both Dylan and Austin grappled with the guilt they felt around learning about the unearned advantages they had in society, they saw an opportunity to “do good things” with their White privilege.

As Dylan and Austin worked past their feelings of guilt about their White privilege, students such as Owen, Jason, and Ashley continued to have difficulty with recognizing how their Whiteness played a role in their lives. For example, Owen did not seem particularly interested in exploring his Whiteness during his UC 102 discussions over the course of his first semester: “It was sort of like a vacuum. It happened and then as soon as I left, it didn’t -- It didn’t really follow me.” His avoidance about exploring the White privilege he held in society continued during his second semester while he was enrolled in an IGR dialogue course that was specifically focused on White racial identity: “The takeaway for me was really just getting to know the other people in the group and understanding what they believed. And less so about understanding what White racial identity is.” Although Owen had several opportunities during his time in MCSP to delve deeper into exploring his White privilege, he distanced himself from acknowledging all of the advantages that his social position afforded him.

As will be explored in Chapter Eight, both Nate and Joshua were not particularly receptive to participating in discussions about social justice issues within their MCSP courses and informal interactions, which prevented them from exploring their positionality in more depth. Thus, while the sample in general developed greater knowledge of their positionality, they varied in how receptive they were to acknowledging their individual roles in systems of privilege, power, and oppression. Along with a heightened sense of awareness about how social justice issues impacted their own and others’ lives, many of the students reported a stronger

interest in engaging in self-directed actions during their time in MCSP, which would allow them to be better equipped to become advocates and agents for social change.

Educating Myself

Overall, 45% of the participants reported greater motivation to learn more about social justice issues. In this way, they wished to expand their knowledge of the various injustices in society so that they would be able to promote social justice in the future. As Tim described, educating himself via additional social justice-related courses during his time at U-M was an important step before he made “a move”:

First, I'd like to get more learned about the topics, educate myself. So next semester, I'm actually in an African-American Studies class. It kind of inspired me to learn more about the issue. I don't really want to put my opinion out there unless I know exactly what I'm talking about. I don't want to present the wrong opinion. I want to understand the ins, the outs, the benefits, the disadvantages and everything before I perhaps make a move. I think educating myself is the first step I'm going to make.

As Tim mentioned, several of the students in the sample enjoyed taking social justice-focused courses during their time in MCSP and planned to take additional U-M coursework to develop a deeper understanding of others' lived experiences and social justice issues.

Ashley, Olivia, and others also discussed “educating themselves” by continuing their involvement in diversity experiences such as joining student organizations, participating in dialogues, and volunteering in the local community. Ashley described her intentions to continue her participation in a mentorship program for underrepresented students called “Leaders and Best,” along with attending dialogues during her second year as a way of “getting my knowledge up so I'm able to give it away to someone.” Olivia likened educating herself to a “journey,” which involved “investing time” through a variety of experiences such as reading on her own, taking service-learning courses, and attending rallies in order to gain more knowledge about “gay rights” and other social justice issues:

Taking time on my own to learn more like doing hands-on, um -- just like service learning and also doing my own research, reading books, asking questions, maybe taking classes, participating in rallies or whatever. Maybe not like all in one month but over a period of time -- I feel like it is a journey...It is not to say this month I'm going to really educate myself about gay rights and the things they go through, and participate in this rally -- all within this one month. It is more than that; you need to be educating yourself over a long period of time because issues evolve and you can see different facets over time.

As Olivia alluded to, educating oneself was a continuous and evolving process, and she and others planned to do this in a variety of hands-on ways, which ranged from taking more social justice-focused coursework, to actively joining rallies to fight for others' rights.

While Ashley and Olivia had concrete plans for how they planned to educate themselves, others in the sample were not always able to clearly articulate how they planned to engage in this inward growth. For example, Austin was provided rather vague details about his future plans to educate himself: "I think the big thing I'll always do is try to educate myself...because I'm at least -- I feel once I'm educated about [social justice issues], I'll want to do something about it." Instead, students' narratives highlighted their intentions to engage in this self-directed action. As described in the next section, the students in the sample also exhibited inward growth when it came to their heightened motivation to reduce their own biases.

Reducing One's Own Biases

The second type of inward action involved intentional efforts to challenge prejudicial, stereotypical, or biased thoughts that percolated in their minds. By monitoring and evaluating their thought processes, they attempted to reduce their biases, while keeping in mind that this was often an iterative process and their negative thoughts about others would continue to surface. Through their MCSP-related experiences, the sample began to realize that many of these biases existed at an unconscious level and were "ingrained" and "reinforced" by society, and that they needed to engage in a process of continuous self-monitoring in order to challenge their existence.

As Tyler explained, “Even if you try as consciously as you can to get rid of these racial biases and sexual biases, they’re probably just ingrained in you. I mean clearly you can choose actions that don’t reflect those, but it is just really hard to fully escape those.” A challenge that many of the students alluded to was that although they reported a greater awareness of their biases, many of these thoughts were automatic and were tough to get “rid of.” When these thoughts arose, students such as Bryan discussed actively reflecting on their internal thought-process by sometimes engaging in a form of “thought-stopping” in order to challenge his stereotypes: “I can’t really get rid of it -- my mind immediately thinks of this [stereotype], but I can always think in my head -- just like stop and say, “No, this is not. This is like maybe one case, but like not true for everyone else.” Stephanie alluded to an internal dialogue that she could engage in when a stereotypical thought occurred: “Sometimes take a step back and say, “Well maybe -- why am I thinking that way? What’s the reasoning behind that? Is it okay?”

Even though approximately 50% of the sample reported that their MCSP experiences heightened their intentions to reduce their biases, they often did not have as much concrete evidence demonstrating their reduced bias. As Austin explained, “I’ve been trying to correct -- like my past tendencies and bad habits like about my thoughts. So that’s hard to do [laughs]. So that’s the work I’ve been doing now. I haven’t done much physical action I can show.” Tanya mentioned that she had more motivation to reduce her biases, but still needed to “make it happen”:

I think it is something that takes time because it is really got to register in your head. It is hard just because everyone else around you is doing it. And so you have to not -- you have to make a note to yourself that I can’t. It is so easy. It is not like you want to; it is just like the first thing that comes to your mind to just say, “Those Black people -- those Indian people” -- it is really hard but obviously that’s not an excuse. But I haven’t been actively doing it but I think it is something I could work on and something if I really-really put my mind to it, I think I can make it happen.

Despite their heightened awareness about how they stereotyped people based on their social identity backgrounds, both Tanya and Austin still struggled with their inclinations toward making judgments about others, and felt it was something they still needed to “work on.”

Nevertheless, some students did give concrete examples of ways that they had reduced their biases about someone based on their perceived or actual social identities. Ashley discussed how she had reduced her prejudicial thoughts of others from higher SES backgrounds than herself: “I’ve actually looked down on people who have more money than me, because I automatically think they’re very snobby. I think they’re stuck up, and I do have that wrong perspective that has been adjusted a lot being here at MCSP and at Michigan.” A few students also discussed being more cognizant of inherent biases in the language they used and trying to be intentional about using more inclusive and respectful terms when interacting with others with different identities. As a result of his participation in his Sexual Orientation IGR course, Dylan mentioned that he was trying to make it a point to use more gender-inclusive language: “After taking IGR, I really pay attention a lot more to my language -- or even saying things like, ‘Hey, you guys’ when it is a group of different people.” Interestingly, although Dylan and a few other students mentioned being cognizant of their own biased language, it was far more common among the sample to report being aware of how others’ terms, jokes, or comments were disrespectful or offensive. As discussed in the next chapter, the sample actively applied what they learned through their MCSP diversity experiences to interrupt or challenge others’ biased language. The following section will explore which diversity experiences contributed to students’ burgeoning self-awareness of their identities and biases, consciousness of the inequities around them, and their intentions to engage in self-directed actions.

Diversity Experiences and Inward Growth

Rather than one particular type of diversity experience, the participants mentioned that a variety of courses, co-curricular activities, and informal interactions both within and outside of MCSP influenced their inward growth. As a whole, these experiences provided students with greater content knowledge about how privilege, power, and oppression operated in their own lives and in broader society. Engaging in *dialogic conversations* with diverse peers where they could “listen to their own and others’ thoughts and feelings, voice their perspectives, find value in others’ experiences, constructively express disagreements and feelings, and inquire into each other’s perceptions and beliefs” was also a particularly powerful aspect of their MCSP diversity experiences (Nagda & Zuniga, 2003, p. 114). Students not only discussed a variety of social justice topics in their courses, but took what they had learned into their lived environment by discussing these important topics with their peers in various settings within East Quad, such as in the cafeteria, during late-night “SJ talks,” or the informal IRC hot topics. Thus, it was interconnections between students’ curricular, co-curricular, and informal diversity experiences that created a more holistic learning environment for students within MCSP. Through their coursework and hearing the lived experiences of their fellow peers, they were simultaneously gaining more knowledge about social justice issues, and sharing their own experiences with systems of privilege, power, and oppression, both within and outside of the classroom.

There were common themes and distinct differences among students’ MCSP and U-M affiliated diversity experiences. UC 102 was more of a “introductory” course, whereas UC 151 involved in-depth discussions about a variety of social justice issues. The other SEMs, CIVIC requirements (i.e., IGR, Project Community, and Project Outreach), and U-M courses often focused on societal inequities related to a particular social identity (e.g., race, class, gender),

and/or social structure (e.g., education, criminal justice, healthcare). Amidst these differences, the courses that specifically focused on providing SJE and involved more opportunities for dialogic communication—the UC 102 discussions, UC 151, and IGR—were mentioned most frequently as positively influencing students’ inward growth.

Sustained co-curricular experiences in the form of week-long service trips through Alternative Spring Break, monthly participation in the IRC hot topics, and regular engagement in the Action Teams, were generally more influential than “one-time” community service activities or social justice-related documentaries. Students also attributed their ongoing involvement in “SJ talks” to developing greater knowledge of various social justice issues and their own social identities, compared to more social interactions with their fellow peers.

As will be described below, students discussed several features of the diversity experiences that were the most impactful, which included using interactive pedagogies, hearing others’ stories, and gaining “hands-on” experiences with societal inequities. By influencing both the cognitive and intrapersonal dimensions of their inward growth, students were able to develop a new understanding of their identities and worldviews, while also developing more motivation to continue to educate themselves and reduce their biases.

Increasing Self-Awareness Through Interactive Pedagogies. The sample reported that the interactive curriculum within three particular MCSP-affiliated courses—UC 102, UC 151, and IGR—helped to enhance their knowledge of systems of power, privilege, and oppression. By discussing thought-provoking readings, watching videos, engaging in SJE-related exercises, participating in dialogic conversations, and writing reflective papers, they were able to strengthen their understanding of themselves and the world around them. Moreover, two of their

co-curricular experiences—the IRC Hot Topics and Action Teams—involved multiple pedagogies, which helped build students’ awareness about a particular social justice issue.

Many of the students mentioned that the cross-cultural interactions and interactive activities in the small-group discussion sections that accompanied the required UC 102 “Student in the University” lectures played an important role in shaping their inward growth. Dylan, Aisha, Garrett, Olivia, and Brandon each noted that engaging in dialogic conversations about one particular article during their UC 102 discussion, the essay “Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack” by McIntosh (1988), was especially influential in helping them gain a deeper awareness of their own and others’ positionality. Brandon discussed how it was an “eye-opening” experience for him to see his peers “in the majority” come to terms with their privilege, which caused him to reflect on his own positionality:

Certain people in the discussion didn’t know people in the majority have certain privileges. They were surprised and now I have to look at myself -- what privilege do I have? It was really interesting; I never thought about it like that. It was an article by this one woman and she explained all the privileges she had. I was just like -- this is like a lot; I’ve never seen it in so many different ways. It was eye opening that somebody of the majority would decide to look at it and talk about it. I never expected that.

Like Brandon, several of the students mentioned that openly discussing their own power and privilege in society with a diverse group of peers was often a new experience, and that this particular article was a powerful tool for understanding of how they were situated within systems of power, privilege, and oppression.

Jenna, Nate, Tyler, and others reported that the RAs who facilitated their UC 102 discussion section leaders often incorporated videos that raised their awareness of various societal inequities. Nate recalled a video that highlighted the existence of racial bias:

He showed us this clip from a Dateline episode... Two different people, one Black and one White steal a bike from a post. Nobody really minded the White person doing it but

once the Black person did it, people started to flock and all that stuff. I remember that; that was kind of interesting to see real life examples of racial profiling.

These videos helped to supplement the knowledge they had gained through the UC 102 readings and dialogic conversations, and also gave students a greater understanding of how societal inequities affected individuals in “real life.” Some discussion sections, including Peter’s and Cynthia’s, participated in the “Privilege Walk,” an activity where students respond to different statements by taking a step forward or backward based on the privileges they have in society. Peter summarized his main-takeaways from the “Privilege Walk” along with his other experiences in UC 102: “It sort of makes it [privilege] more real to you. I think that’s the main thing about it...it took those big issues and packaged it into nice, bite-sized pieces.”

While the UC 102 lectures included just a few sessions focused on social justice issues and often involved guest speakers, the UC 151 course, “Social Justice, Identity, Diversity, and Community,” was taught by the Director of MCSP and involved in-depth discussions about social identities and societal inequities during the entire semester. As Zachary explained: “Every single day that we have class, we end up talking about social identity...Basically everything we read, like all these nuanced, esoteric categories relate back to social identity.” The five students that were enrolled in this course—Zachary, Peter, Megan, Tanya, and Austin—reported that its intentional focus on exploring social justice issues through readings, interactive activities, and dialogic conversations facilitated a greater knowledge of themselves and the world around them. For example, Zachary described how a UC 151 reading influenced his awareness of gender inequities:

One reading I was mentioning a minute ago was about, uh -- this woman, she was trying to compete in the Olympics but her testosterone levels were too high. They were like you can’t compete because of that. And it wasn’t fair because they were determining -- they were saying she wasn’t a real woman. What does that mean? How do you quantify or

qualify that? Why can't she compete? A male's testosterone levels can be infinitely high. Where do you draw the line? Is the Olympic committee discriminating?

Austin mentioned how the readings and reflective papers in UC 151 sparked his newfound awareness of being "like the majority of everything in America," which was not something he previously thought about before joining MCSP:

I didn't think about them at all before I came here. I didn't even know what social identity was. I was in David Schoem's class this semester, his seminar. That was really eye opening, because we read a lot of articles that push you out of your comfort zone of thought. We wrote papers about our social identity. So just going through those reflections was really big to me. I'm a member of the privileged class for most things. I'm upper middle class. I'm white and um -- that's what I really focus on. I'm Christian. I'm like the majority in everything in America and also in America, there is so much hate toward minority groups and all these inequality and stuff.

Peter described how UC 151 heightened his consciousness of his social identities that he took "for granted": "I'm kind of this lower-middle class guy who has majority faith, who kind of fits right into the American ideal except for race and perhaps social class... It is just something that is I guess bubbling up, and more culminating with the class." As a result of the interactive pedagogical approaches in UC 151, Peter explained that the course helped him "break down" various societal inequities so that he had a deeper understanding of how they could be addressed:

Whether it is you know problems in education, race relations, interfaith relations, or intolerance. It is just these vast issues. What that class did for me is kind of broke them down. These are kind of impossible issues at first but when you break them down, they're not so impossible. These mountains aren't so tall. They bare attacking; they bare trying to get over; they bare seeing what you can do to get over it.

By tackling these "vast issues" over the course of the semester, the students enrolled in UC 151 gained a deeper understanding not only about their own social identities, but also how they were tied to interconnected systems of privilege, power, and oppression.

Unlike UC 102 and UC 151, the Intergroup Relations Program's (IGR) dialogue courses focused on one particular social identity. Overall, ten students in the sample (45%) were enrolled

in IGR courses with topics that included White Racial Identity, Students of Color, Race & Ethnicity, Sexual Orientation, Socioeconomic Status (SES), and Gender. These courses intentionally incorporated four stages of dialogic conversations as part of its curriculum: (1) group beginnings: forming and building relationships; (2) exploring differences and commonalities of experiences; (3) exploring and dialoguing about hot topics; and (4) action planning and collaboration (Gurin, et al., 2013). As a whole, the IGR courses were quite powerful in helping students reflect on how their own privilege and power in society influenced their daily experiences. For example, Tyler discussed how his Race & Ethnicity course helped him become more aware of how his positionality as a White male from an upper-middle class background might affect how others perceive him:

After taking that class, you just realize the fact that you don't have to recognize your race is such a privilege in itself. And that was a big realization for me. So I think it's been a super positive experience in helping me be...more aware of how my identities affect the way I am perceived by people.

Both Cynthia and Jason discussed how their White Racial Identity course influenced their awareness of the biases they held in society. As part of the course, Cynthia described taking the Implicit Association Test on Harvard University's Project Implicit website, which allowed her to better understand the unconscious racial biases that she held toward those that were African American:

It was some, I think, implicit association test...it was European Americans and African Americans and then positive words, I think...so it was like: happy, friendly, cheerful and stuff like that. And then negative words like: scary and stuff like that. And you had to push -- when you identified there would be a picture and you had to put it on one side or the other. It was much harder to put African American faces on the same side as like the positive words. I was like, "Oh my, gosh, something in my brain just made that take longer." And that was one of the things that really stood out for me.

As a result of Cynthia's and others' newfound awareness of their biases, they were more motivated to reduce their prejudiced thought-processes in their everyday lives.

Two other elements of the IGR curriculum, completing a “Intergroup Collaboration Project” (ICP) and discussing “hot topics” with their peers, were particularly helpful in increasing students’ knowledge of societal inequities. Brandon described how his ICP assignment led to a newfound awareness of gender inequities: “We did our...project on like [pause] gender body image in the media---When we were walking in the mall, we never see these things...Like we never pay attention to them, we’re just like “Oh, it is just a model; we don’t care.” Megan spoke about the new insights she gained as a result of the “hot topic” discussions during her Sexual Orientation IGR course:

I think that last semester I would have thought of like -- for example, sexual orientation as an issue but I wouldn’t have necessarily known the huge issue that it was. I would have thought about, um -- marriage as one of the issues but I wouldn’t have known the problem -- the work force or like [pause] – a lot of the laws that go against it.

The new insights that students gained on both cognitive and intrapersonal dimensions through their MCSP-affiliated courses also encouraged students to educate themselves in the future.

Tyler explained that he wished to build upon the knowledge he had gained about social justice issues through UC 102 and IGR by taking additional U-M coursework: “I think [about] what I want to do with it, and I think how I’d be most useful is continuing to learn about through sporadic classes I might take as electives.”

Aside from their MCSP-affiliated coursework, students mentioned several co-curricular experiences, the IRC hot topics and Action Teams, that involved building “awareness” about social justice issues. While the IGR dialogue courses were graded and held weekly in a classroom, the monthly IRC hot topics offered an informal co-curricular dialogic opportunity for MCSP students within the walls of East Quad. The “curriculum” of these hot topics often involved a combination of educational videos and activities, along with dialogic conversations. For example, through participating in “gallery walk” where students wrote about their various

perceptions of Detroit, and then hearing her fellow peers' lived experiences growing up within the city, Cynthia thought more critically about whether she had perpetuated the "White savior complex" during the IRC hot topic, "Identifying the Diversity of Detroit: Unpacking Stereotypes and Perceptions":

We talked about the Detroit dialogue, the whole savior complex. Here is this glorious white person come to save us from our troubles. That really bugged me. Was that the image I was giving off? Because that is definitely not my mentality at all, I don't want to tell you how to do things. I don't want to be perceived as that girl from the North side, who is just slumming it or whatever. And I guess what I came off with after thinking about that was -- it is all about your intention. Making sure you let people know that you're not there for anything else but to help them.

Like Cynthia, many of the students developed a more complex understanding of their positionality during the IRC hot topics, along with gaining content knowledge about a variety of social justice issues.

The MCSP-affiliated Action Teams involved regularly scheduled meetings within East Quad and occasional community service trips that focused on raising awareness about and addressing a particular social justice issue. Several of the students that were involved in the Rural and Poverty Action Team (RUP), which included Peter, Jenna, and Ashley, discussed learning more about socioeconomic inequities through educational activities and events, which included a panel called "Faces of the Homeless: Stigmas and Stereotypes." Ashley discussed how she had deepened her understanding of complexities of classism through an online simulation activity called "Spent" that she played during a meeting:

You had \$400 and you had to buy food and you had to do this and it had to last till the end of the month plus rent. It was a lot of that stuff that was more -- I think a lot of it for me was educating, like seeing how hard it can be. I always had the mindset more or less that like if you needed a job you can go out and get one. You know you can go work at McDonalds; you can do this; you can do that. What I realized with RUP is that even if you do go out and get that job, you're still not making enough.

Through activities such as “Spent” and engaging with youth at a local community center, Ashley and others that participated in the RUP Action Team was able to develop more knowledge of “how hard it can be” to encounter economic disparities. As highlighted throughout this section, the MCSP-affiliated curricular and co-curricular experiences that students participated in employed a variety of pedagogical techniques to influence students’ inward growth. Often embedded within these experiences was the power of hearing others’ “stories,” which came in a variety of formats.

The Power of Hearing Others’ “Stories.” Students described the benefits of hearing others’ “stories” during panels, within dialogic conversations, and in narratives that they either read or watched while participating in MCSP and U-M diversity experiences. Ashley and several other students described one particular panel during one of the UC 102 lectures where current and former MCSP students shared their social identity backgrounds, which allowed her to “relate” to their stories and reflect on her positionality:

I remember one UC-102 class. It was like one person from -- not every different social thing but you know there were a gay person, an American Indian person, African-American, White, and whatever. They had all of them on a panel and they all were talking. You know each person -- Each person’s story, I can relate to in some sense.

Hearing their fellow MCSP peers reflect on their own backgrounds during UC 102 was an especially powerful way for the sample to become more conscious of the advantages they had as a result of their privileged identities. For example, listening to a MCSP peer’s story helped Dylan to realize that his privileged background as a White male allowed him to be part of the “majority” on campus and that he generally did not have to be worried about being perceived as “dangerous” as a result of his race:

I really like the lectures, like the testimonials. We always had people come in and talk. I liked seeing the other students tell their stories. One of the things that I took away with me was all -- when they had a bunch of the higher up MCSP students come and talk and

tell their stories and share their social identity or their personal identities. It was really interesting. There was an African American student, and he talked about his background from Detroit. How that has played a role here on campus and how we only have a 4% African American population, which is crazy to me. I think one of the things he said is that he's been walking at night, and girls or people have gone to the other side of the street if he is walking toward them. I think that just shows that even here in Ann Arbor, a liberal city, how different it can be and how people judge. I don't really experience that being like a White male and normal or in the majority here on campus, so that has helped me learn about other people's stories.

As Dylan alluded to, hearing these stories allowed the sample to compare their own experiences to their peers' in order to develop a better sense of their "social location" in relation to others.

In addition to the UC 102 lectures, students reported sharing "stories" in their discussion sections. Aisha's and Dylan's discussion leader was a female upperclassman in the Ross School of Business who was quite knowledgeable about social justice topics. By sharing her own personal experiences, she encouraged her students think more critically about their own social identities. Aisha explained that her UC 102 discussion section helped her reflect on her gender identity as a woman, especially the advantages that men possessed in the Business field:

For MCSP, the discussion sections, we'd always talk about gender and stuff. And, it got me thinking about like... privilege especially for women, so I learned a lot about that... For Ross [U-M Business School] as an example, they have a special women's career day, and a lot of the men don't think that's fair. But I think it is fair, because usually men always get picked over women.

Just as Aisha was able to reflect on one of her marginalized identities through hearing her RA's experiences, Dylan was able to gain a deeper understanding of his gender-based privileges: "I think I've learned a lot about that because they're a very small minority in the B-School -- being a woman. I just sort of realized how many advantages there are on campus or in the work place or wherever being male." Although not all of the RAs were able to connect with students in the same way as Aisha and Dylan, they often served as an important catalyst for students' ability to gain a deeper understanding of their social identities.

As a result of their dialogic conversations in their UC 102, UC 151, and IGR courses, students reported that they were able to openly and honestly share their own stories and hear others' in a more "personal" manner. For example, Austin discussed that he enjoyed his SES IGR course because "you get more personal experience than just reading a bunch of articles about it." Jason explained that during his IGR White Racial Identity dialogue course, "One day we went around and said experiences where we were biased." He reported that he identified with his peers' stories:

Someone had an example where somebody flipped the table and they blamed it on him being Black -- like him being impoverished or something. I could totally see myself doing that. So I guess you can see yourself being biased. And that's another thing the [pause] -- going over my own thoughts like sometimes, "That was racist or kind of biased."

As Jason indicated, hearing another student's personal experience prompted him to reexamine his own biases.

In their other SEMs and U-M courses, students such as Aisha, Ethan, Cynthia, and Austin mentioned that hearing others' narratives, both in spoken and written form, allowed them to better understand others' experiences in a more "personal" and "emotional" way. When describing what she learned through her "Memoirs" SEM, Aisha explained, "I mean I feel everyone has a story. I feel through everyone's writing, you got to know the person more, and their views and their beliefs in life." Through her SEM, "Environmental Literature," which involved reading others' narratives through an environmental justice lens, Cynthia described the insights she gained through reading the book "Bayou Farewell": "I never really thought about it a lot but just to see the relationship between environmental activism, and then social justice, and how people that are more affected by bad living conditions typically are underrepresented." As

Cynthia and Aisha's narratives suggest, others' stories in written form also served as a powerful way of learning about social justice issues.

As part of their co-curricular and informal diversity experiences, students discussed hearing others' stories as a key component of the IRC hot topics and "SJ talks." During the "We're a Culture, Not a Costume" hot topic, Cynthia along with several others recalled how "one girl was talking about how her family is part Native American and how it really offensive for her to see -- the Urban Outfitter's tribal pattern underwear." Hearing his fellow peers' "story" allowed Brandon, whose multiracial background included Native American ancestry, to gain new insights into how racial oppression in the form of cultural appropriation had affected those with his heritage:

A lot of people didn't know that wearing Native American clothing was actually disrespectful. And that was a shock to everybody, even to myself. I'm part Native American and I never knew this because I've never explored the identity a lot. It was like, 'Really, I never knew that...' I felt I was informed about something I didn't know, and a lot of people didn't know. I would have never guessed.

While the IRC hot topics took place at a designated time and space within East Quad, more informal dialogic conversations in the form of SJ talks filtered out into other areas of the dorm, and often occurred in the evening and early morning hours. As described by Peter, "They kind of happen at random. I hear them going on at 3 o'clock in the morning outside my room; I live right next to the lounge." Many of these social justice talks with their peers involved comparing and contrasting "stories" about their different social identity backgrounds. Although Aisha "never met many atheists" prior to college, she encountered quite a few peers during that shared this belief system. Through her conversations with them, she gained new insights about her own Sikh faith, "I feel like I had a hard core set of beliefs when I came into college. And after I met people and listened to them talk and see their perspective, I started questioning my beliefs in certain

things, and how I feel about them morally and religiously.” As described above, the power of hearing others’ “stories” was a common thread that ran across students’ curricular, co-curricular, and informal diversity experiences. Students’ in- and out-of-class experiences were integrated within the lived culture of MCSP where they could openly engage across their differences. In many ways, the spoken and written narratives that students encountered during their time in MCSP allowed them learn about others’ lived experiences with oppression in a more candid, vulnerable, and “emotional” way than a typical textbook. Moreover, the stories helped the sample view their own and society’s roles in systems of privilege, power, and oppression as more “real,” which also related to students’ “hands-on” experiences with service-learning.

“Hands-On” Experiences with Societal Inequities. Many of the students reported benefiting from gaining “firsthand” knowledge about societal inequities through community-based courses and activities such as their “Project Community” and “Project Outreach” courses and weeklong service-learning experiences as part of Alternative Spring Break (ASB).

The “Project Community” and “Project Outreach” courses generally involved volunteering several days a week at a local non-profit organization, in addition to weekly discussion sections that revolved around the particular social structure that the organization was connected to, such as the education and healthcare systems. Zachary, Ethan, Austin, Dylan, Jenna, Joshua, and Megan discussed learning more about race and class disparities in the education system through volunteering at primary and secondary schools. Zachary described the discrepancies he noticed between the education he received at a private school where the vast majority of the students were White and wealthy and the students’ experiences at a predominantly Black and low-income public middle school where he volunteered as part of his “Project Community” course:

The kids will literally write a sentence as, “The dogs is walking.” And I’ll say there is a grammar error in there, let’s read it again and see if you can find it. And they’ll be like, “The dogs is walking.” And they’ll look at me and be like I don’t know what’s wrong. And they’ll be like, “Walking -- the -- did I choose the wrong article?” And they’ll literally choose every single thing except for the verb and they can’t find it. Um, like when I was in middle school, we were writing essays and doing pretty advanced math. I think it was Algebra-II or something. Some of these kids are still working on addition and subtraction and stuff, so educational inequality is huge.

By seeing these societal inequities firsthand through their volunteer experiences, many of the students in the sample developed a more personal connection to social justice issues, and to those that were affected by systems of oppression.

Megan, Olivia, Garrett, and Stephanie also discussed their heightened awareness of socioeconomic inequities through their ASB trips. Megan described the insights she received around economic disparities during her ASB trip that involved working with low-income youth in Kentucky:

We helped with financial literacy so we taught kids about budgeting -- middle schoolers. They would come in and get a fake job and like a fake salary for the month... We went into a third grade classroom and taught them about taxes and how the bank works... That was pretty hard because it was in a pretty bad area and so we saw the different spectrums. When we first asked, what are different forms of money? The first answer we got was food stamps; and that was crazy for us.

Garrett partnered with an urban garden in another Midwestern city as part of his ASB experience: “I guess one thing for me was it showed me hunger is really real. When I think of hunger, I think of hunger in Africa and Third-World countries; you don’t think of it being a problem in America, because generally people here have too much to eat.” Similar to their “Project Community” and “Project Outreach” experiences, having direct contact with those facing oppression during their ASB trips challenged students’ previous worldviews, and helped them develop more consciousness about the state of “equality” in America. However, given that

many students had entered MCSP with differing amounts of knowledge about social justice issues, these diversity experiences affected them in disparate ways, as described below.

Pre-College Diversity Experiences and Inward Growth

Amidst all of the variations in the students' pre-college communities, prior exposure to social justice issues, and social identity backgrounds, the majority of the sample was able to deepen their knowledge of their positionality and societal inequities, and heighten their motivation to engage in inward actions. However, students' preexisting social justice attitudes mediated what they gained from their curricular, co-curricular, and informal diversity experiences. Because many of the students from homogeneous communities often had a limited understanding of systems of power, privilege, and oppression prior to college, participating in courses such as UC 102, 151, and IGR illuminated many of the privileges and societal inequities in their lives that had previously been "invisible" to them. Prior to college, Zachary explained that he associated his privileged background as "white, Christian, male, wealthy" as just "not diverse" and "boring." However, in UC 151, he was able to think more critically about his identity "even if it is all the dominant stuff." Like Zachary, many of the White students and those from less diverse communities were just beginning to build the foundation of their social justice-related knowledge and were coming to terms with their new views of themselves and the world. This understanding contributed to the variety of reactions they had to acknowledging the unearned advantages they had in society.

On the other hand, those from more diverse pre-college communities were generally more aware of the "differences" between themselves and others and had more prior exposure to societal inequities. As Stephanie explained: "I definitely have the sense these issues existed in the United States before, um -- I guess the causation behind that is something that continues to

grow.” Although many of their curricular experiences helped to deepen their existing social justice knowledge and further explore the intersections among their privileged and marginalized identities, the IGR dialogue courses and the “dialogic” components of their other diversity experiences were particularly beneficial because they allowed students to hear others’ stories. Given that he had taken a social justice-focused course in high school, Bryan commented that learning about his MCSP peers’ lived experiences during his Students of Color IGR course was especially valuable for helping him go “deeper” because he was already familiar with much of the UC 102 course content:

I remember saying it [UC 102] was kind of a little basic information, which is useful for someone who doesn’t know...But IGR gave me that pushing motivation of getting right into it, talking about it more in-depth...IGR was just a priceless experience because I always loved learning about new -- different -- experiences of people...Even if we talked about the same kinds of things as back in high school, it was still always a different kind of way of hearing about it. Someone new always had a different perspective or experience they had to share about it. And I really value those kinds of experiences.

As Bryan alluded to, hearing their peers’ stories during IGR and other dialogic-based experiences allowed students with more prior social justice knowledge to continue to reflect on their “position” in relation to others. The following section will now explore how these findings correspond with the extant literature on students’ diversity experiences and self-directed social justice outcomes.

Conclusion

By exploring the emerging themes, as well as those connected to the existing body of research on college diversity experiences and social justice education, I identified two awareness-based outcomes, *becoming “aware” of societal inequities* and *consciousness of own positionality*, and two action-based outcomes, *educating myself* and *reducing my biases*, that were connected to students’ inward growth. These outcomes were most closely associated with

the *cognitive* dimension of gaining content knowledge of systems of privilege, power, and oppression, along with the *intrapersonal* dimension of integrating an awareness of their social identities and worldviews into their sense of self (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005). As the findings indicate, students from a variety of racial, gender, and social class identities, along with differing levels of pre-college exposure to diverse environments and social justice issues, showed growth self-reported inward growth during their time in MCSP. Interestingly, some of the MCSP-affiliated experiences that most affected their growth were *interpersonal*, such as hearing others' stories, and gaining hands-on experiences in the local community.

The awareness-based outcomes highlighted in this chapter were consistent with the previous literature on the positive influence of diversity experiences on students' consciousness of their privilege and power in society (Bowman, 2009, 2010; Case, 2007) and awareness of racial, gender, and class-based inequities (Engberg & Mayhew, 2007; Lopez, 2004; Lopez, et al.; 1998; Henderson-King & Kaleta, 2001; Tatum, 1992). The inward actions reported by students in this study closely resemble self-directed actions noted in the work of Alimo (2012), Nagda, et al. (2004), and Zuniga, et al. (2005). In particular, the scale items, "Make efforts to educate myself about other groups" and "Recognize and challenge the biases that may affect my own thinking" most closely approximate the inward actions that students reported in this study (Alimo, 2012, p. 45).

The findings of this study confirm previous research related to the value of SJE pedagogical approaches (Fuentes, et al., 2010; Gurin, et al., 2013; Storms, 2012), the power of hearing others' stories (King, et al, 2013), and the benefits of "hands-on" service-learning experiences (Eaton, MacGregor, & Schoem, 2003; Dunlap, et al., 2007; Schoem, 2008). However, this study is unique in that it explores these features across curricular, co-curricular,

and informal experiences, and highlights how they can operate in multiple contexts. Although the benefits of dialogic conversations within curricular settings have been highlighted extensively in the IGD literature (Nagda & Gurin, 2007), less attention had been paid to their existence in co-curricular and informal settings. As the students' narratives indicated, having dialogic conversations through the IRC hot topics and "SJ talks" within their residential hall also helped to facilitate a deeper understanding of both themselves and the world around them. Evidence of students' inward growth due to their "hands-on" participation in ASB trips, "Project Outreach" and "Project Outreach courses," and Action Teams supports previous findings regarding how "awareness-building" service-learning experiences and sustained engagement with community partners are often more transformative experiences than "one-time" community service activities (Furco, 1996).

Connected to both the cognitive and affective processes embedded within students' inward growth, students used various descriptors when discussing what they gained from their experiences, which included "knowledge," "awareness," "personal," and "emotional." As highlighted in Dovidio, et al.'s (2004) and Nagda, et al.'s (2004) conceptualizations of "enlightenment-oriented" interventions, several of their curricular, co-curricular, and informal experiences provided students with new information about their own and other social identity groups. Hearing others' stories and participating in "hands-on" service-learning experiences resembled "intergroup encounter-oriented" interventions (Nagda, et al., 2004), which led to new thought-processes and emotions toward themselves. As indicated by some of their reactions of guilt, apathy, or avoidance, students may have encountered cognitive disequilibrium or dissonance (Dovidio, et al., 2004; Gurin, et al., 2002) Although many students developed new

understandings of their identities, biases, and worldviews, there were other cases, such as with Nate, Joshua, and Owen, where this type of growth did not occur.

MCSP's intentional focus on providing students with an array of interconnected diversity experiences, and making several of them a requirement for their participation in this RLC, gave students a greater understanding of both individual and systemic factors that shape societal inequities in a way that they might not have otherwise encountered during their first-year at U-M (Adams, et al., 2007). Chapter Seven will now explore how students translated their inward growth into outward awareness and actions toward their MCSP peers, friends, and family members, and a forward commitment to promoting social justice in their future lives and careers.

Chapter Seven: Students' Outward and Forward Growth

Students' awareness of their identities, biases, and worldviews has been associated with their ability to develop positive relations with diverse others, and create a more just society (Bell 2007; Bishop, 2002; Dovidio, et al., 2004; Hackman, 2005). While Chapter Six focused on students' understandings of themselves and the inequities around them, Chapter Seven explores their awareness of others' perspectives and feelings, communication across their differences, and commitment to making the world a better place. Although both chapters examine students' construction of cognitive knowledge about social justice issues, this chapter specifically focuses on how they intended to or actually integrated their awareness of systems of privilege, power, and oppression into their interpersonal interactions with others, and desire to create social change in their future lives and careers.

Through deductive and inductive analyses of the themes in students' interviews and papers, I have conceptualized students' *outward* growth as their *cognitive and affective empathy* toward those in their lives, and involvement in *educating others*, and "*speaking out*" against *injustice*. I have defined students' *forward* growth as their personal and professional commitment to promoting social justice, which encompasses *creating "small-scale" change in their everyday lives*, and *incorporating social justice into their future careers*. In this way, students' outward and forward growth involves their self-reported changes in their thoughts and emotions that

guide their actions toward others. However, it is important to note that students described both their actual and intended behaviors. Although many reported a greater motivation to promote social justice during their time in MCSP, there was not always evidence that they had actually taken steps to translate their awareness of social justice issues into action, as will be discussed below. This chapter will first begin with a discussion of the main themes associated with students' outward and forward growth, and then present an overview of the key curricular, co-curricular, and informal diversity experiences that students believe influenced both their intended and actual behaviors around engaging in accepting and inclusive interactions with others, and "making a difference" in their future lives and careers.

Gap Between Inward and Outward Growth

Perhaps one of the most striking patterns that appeared in students' narratives was the variation in their outward growth during their first year in MCSP. For example, some students such as Zachary, Nate, Joshua, and Owen, reported that being aware of societal inequities was "enough" in terms of their desired involvement in promoting social justice. Zachary explained that although he had become more knowledgeable about sustainability through his MCSP-related coursework, this new level of awareness did not necessarily translate into changes in his behaviors, such as promoting ethical food practices: "Maybe I'll go to BurgerFi, and be like, 'This cow got really screwed,' but at the same time I'm hungry and it tastes good. I'm kind of practical and I just try not to think about it because like -- I don't know. But I mean I'm aware; it is all about being aware [laughs]." Similarly, Nate highlighted his hesitance about going beyond "just" being aware when it came to actually acting on his knowledge of various societal inequities: "I'm definitely aware that there are racial and social inequalities. But I've never really been overly involved with any of the causes, but I'm just aware and cognizant of it." As

Zachary's and Nate's comments illustrate, although the students in the sample participated in numerous MCSP-affiliated diversity experiences, they possessed differing levels of motivation to translate their self-awareness into outward action, and varying perceptions of their personal responsibility when it came to holding themselves accountable for promoting social justice.

While Zachary and Nate showed consistency throughout both semesters in feeling that awareness was their current "stopping place" in their social justice journeys, others such as Olivia, Brandon, Garrett, and Ethan viewed becoming aware as their "first step" toward outward actions. Several of the students discussed a progression that took place between being more "aware" during their first semester in MCSP, and then spending their second semester applying this knowledge to interacting with others. As Olivia explained, "I think last semester was more of a learning period, and then this semester I was able to apply everything I learned." Brandon discussed feeling more confident about "speaking out" during his second semester because he now had a deeper understanding of the issues: "I feel like I would challenge a negative idea now since I'm educated. Before, I couldn't really take a stance on things because I didn't really understand it. You can't really speak on something that you don't understand."

Even though Olivia and Brandon were able to bridge the gap between their inward and outward growth in a temporal fashion, others such as Austin, Cynthia, and Owen, struggled with intrapersonal barriers related to translating an awareness of their power and privilege into concrete behaviors toward others. These students discussed not wanting to offend others, and seemed especially concerned about whether their actions would be well-received. Though Austin commented that he was in the "noting it" phase because he was still developing his awareness about social justice issues, he seemed particularly concerned about whether his behaviors would be negatively received by others:

Like I've been more aware of it, like I still find myself being silent when such things come...someday maybe I'll interact with that. Also I don't want to come off as like [pause] -- like insulting the person. Like the same things with my friends, trying to educate people when I don't know all the facts and stuff. So it is like I don't want it to come off as a personal attack because sometimes I feel if I do; I'll be causing more harm than positive. So I'm trying to figure out how to find a balance.

Both Cynthia and Owen also connected their new insights about their positionality to their tentativeness about taking action to promote social change. Cynthia explained that she was struggling with “just kind of going from being aware of an issue, to actually acting and not wanting to be perceived as someone who knows better or has more power.” She was trying to find a way to use her power in a “positive way and in a powerful way, but also in a way that doesn't offend anybody.” Given that Cynthia, Owen, and Austin were all White, it is interesting to consider whether their concerns about not “offending others,” was a way to avoid having to confront the racial privilege they held in society, or encounter negative reactions from their fellow peers (Gallagher, 2009), as will be explored in later sections of this chapter. Additionally, because engaging in outward actions could produce intergroup anxiety (Dovidio, et al., 2004), the fact that they could decide whether or not to educate others or “speak out,” was another privilege that many of their fellow students of color did not have. As this section highlights, several of the students faced challenges in engaging in social justice-related actions, either because they believed being aware was “enough,” remained focused on educating themselves, or worried about how their behaviors would be perceived by others. However, the majority of the sample still reported developing a deeper understanding of others' thought-processes and feelings through their MCSP-affiliated diversity experiences, as will be described in the following section about students' outward growth during their time in MCSP.

Outward Growth

Cognitive, Emotional, and Behavioral Empathy. Within students' narratives, they discussed developing an internal understanding of others' perspectives, feelings, and lived experiences, as well as the capacity to engage across differences in a respectful and inclusive manner. In this way, students' acquisition of empathy involved both "inward" and "outward" changes, across both the cognitive and interpersonal dimensions of their growth.

The thought-based forms of empathy, *perspective-taking* and *intercultural openness*, were tied to a cognitive capacity to understand and respect others' differing worldviews and identities, whereas, the feeling-based types of empathy, *empathetic understanding* and "*humanizing*," involved the ability to acknowledge and share the emotional reactions of others in regards to their experiences with oppression, discrimination, or other forms of bias. Students also exhibited empathetic behaviors when *gently communicating across differences*. Although these different features of empathy are described separately below, it is important to note that empathy has been conceptualized to be multidimensional (Konrath, O'Brien, & Hsing, 2011), and interrelated (Batson & Ahmad, 2009), because it can incorporate cognitive, affective, and/or behavioral components (Stephan & Finlay, 1999; Wiseman, 1996). For example, Olivia demonstrated that she had strengthened her ability to take into account others' points of views through the cultivation of her perspective-taking skills during her time in MCSP, which also accompanied feelings of compassion in the form of empathetic understanding and "humanizing":

Seeing different people's perspectives, and where their hearts really are. Because when you hear someone has a certain view that doesn't align with my own view; it kind of makes me just like attach stereotypes -- just as a human -- just a human inclination. But when you take the time to actually hear why they think that way; you can see that it may not be from a place that's -- you know of hate, or something negative, but it is just a different way of thinking.

By interweaving words such as “perspectives” and “hearts,” Olivia discussed how she learned to understand and embrace others’ thought-processes and emotions, even when they were different from her own, as will be explored in the narratives from both herself and her fellow peers throughout this section.

Perspective-Taking: Learning Where Others Are Coming From. During their MCSP experiences, all of the students in the sample discussed engaging in perspective-taking, which is defined as attempting to understand another’s thought-process or point of view. This particular outcome was often described as learning to understand “where someone was coming from” and tended to focus on cognitively processing why others’ opinions might differ from their own and “why they think the way they do.” Tim described the type of cognitive “analyses” he had learned to perform during his first semester in MCSP:

The biggest thing I learned is people come from different backgrounds and so on. Now because of that perspective when I meet people from other places, I’m like okay. I kind of suddenly break into analysis mode. What is this person like? What is his opinion? Where is he from? Just simple things I think a lot more about why they say things and why they do things. It is no longer just going with the flow. He said that and going with it. I understand why. What made him say that? Has he been through something that made him say that? And I think that’s perhaps the biggest influence MCSP has had on outside interaction.

Several of the participants discussed their use of perspective-taking in terms of being “open-minded” when others were being “close-minded.” Bryan described how his experiences in MCSP influenced his “open-minded” approach to learning to understand why some people might possess racist beliefs:

I guess more open-mindedness, understanding the perspective they’re coming from...An example like someone who is born into -- A White person is born into a racist family and grew up with the views of racism. It is kind of back and forth trying to understand. I feel like with that there can be some middle ground or at least a reason.

Instead of judging this particular “racist” person, Bryan took into account factors such as their upbringing to better understand their perspectives.

Olivia and others also discussed perspective-taking as trying to not place a value judgment on other’s opinions and labeling their views as “right” or “wrong.” She described attempting to come from a place of “curiosity” when trying to understand other’s perspectives: “Just having a genuine curiosity, not out of noisiness or trying to weigh things saying one is better than the other but just being curious about other people’s views and culture...to be able to meet people where they need to be met.” Tyler mentioned becoming less judgmental when he described how MCSP influenced his understanding of others’ points of view:

I think it [MCSP] has definitely made me more open-minded in terms of how I think. You know just being less judgmental basically. I’ve come to the philosophy that most people don’t just believe something for an irrational reason. They have a reason for thinking what they do. If you can understand why they think it, before you attack them for thinking it, it is a lot more effective way of talking to people and dealing with them then, just like trying to change their viewpoints.

By honoring that others had a “reason” for their viewpoints, and trying to understand their perspectives rather than “trying to change” how they think, Tyler and the other students in the sample learned to embrace the differences of others’ worldviews.

Though many of the students in the sample further developed their perspective-taking abilities during their time in MCSP, Tim, Tyler, and Joshua perceived that many of their fellow peers were not as open-minded about respecting viewpoints that were more “conservative” or were not as “social justice-focused” than their own. Although Tim spoke positively about hearing others’ perspectives during his first semester, he felt “ostracized” by his MCSP peers during his second semester as a result of his more conservative political beliefs. He explained that observing his peers “force opinions” onto himself and others actually caused him to become more inclusive of others’ perspectives because “they have the right for their voice to be heard.”

Tyler commented that some of the peer leaders within MCSP judged others' perspectives in a way that was "hyper-social justice":

[They] know a ton about it [social justice], almost lose the original message, and are a little bit hypocritical in it...they assume if you don't know what the terminology; you don't know privilege and that stuff. You don't know that stuff, so you're just like racist -- not racist, but you are inferior to them.

Like many of his peers, Tyler was not familiar with the concept of social justice prior to college, and felt that some of his older MCSP peers were not as accepting of his steeper learning curve when it came to acquiring social justice-focused knowledge and perspectives. Thus, it seemed that although the sample had acquired perspective-taking abilities through their MCSP experiences, there were possible tensions with understanding and respecting the viewpoints of those that did not share their more liberal, or as Joshua referred to, "super progressive," perspectives.

Intercultural Openness: Refraining From Judging A Book By Its Cover. Overall, 73% of the sample discussed learning to display intercultural openness by suspending judgment on someone based on their social identity. Several students mentioned refraining from making assumptions about another person based on what they "looked like from the outside," and that it was important to get to know them on a more personal level. For example, Jenna commented on how her MCSP experiences influenced her intercultural openness, "I've been more aware of people from all different backgrounds and just seeing that you can't always tell where a person comes from just by looking at them. It is really good to get to know a person, or just talk to a person and just hear where they're from." Although students sometimes used the word "open-minded" to also refer to perspective-taking, their intercultural openness was specifically tied to recognizing the ways in which they engaged in stereotyping, prejudice, or other forms of bias toward others. In particular, the participants discussed becoming more aware of their biases

toward others as a result of their MCSP experiences. As described by Peter: "It makes you more aware of the sort of quiet discriminations...I do without even thinking about it."

Given that many of these biases would continue to exist if left unchallenged, the students discussed monitoring their assumptions as a way to illustrate intercultural openness. Tyler described this tension as he became more aware of how the biases he held about others were "ingrained" in his thought-processes: "Just how even if you try as consciously as you can to get rid of these racial biases and sexual biases, they're probably just ingrained in you. I mean clearly you can choose actions that don't reflect those, but it is just really hard to fully escape those." While Tyler was still working through how to engage in intercultural openness in his everyday life, Zachary discussed how he had learned to not "judge the book by its cover," and to monitor the assumptions he made about others (i.e., Jewish people tend to be wealthy):

With stereotypes and everything like -- I mentioned the Jewish one, and Jewish people and business and money. If I'm talking to someone who is Jewish -- maybe if I was back [home], I would just be like, "You're Jewish. What does your dad do?" Just like that -- like not thinking about it but now whenever I meet people I'm very careful of what I say. I've just been made more aware I guess.

As Jenna, Tyler, and Zachary explained, developing intercultural openness was a challenge because it involved becoming aware of unconscious, automatic, and/or implicit assumptions about others' appearances, which was also tied to their inward growth of reducing their biases.

Students discussed monitoring their judgments about those both with similar and different social identities as themselves, although it was far more common for students to describe situations that involved peers with differing identities. They described making judgments about someone based on their style of dress or mannerisms, or other distinguishing features related to their appearance such as their skin color. For example, Cynthia described that the IRC hot topic about "hook up culture" led her to reflect on her judgments of other women:

Slut shaming or whatever and like, “Oh, you see these girls going out in their super high heels and super short skirts.” Oh, man! And we talked a lot about that’s their choice; it has nothing to do with you. But then it is rude to think of a girl based solely on her clothes but then I see myself doing it. What is she doing? What is she trying to do? It has just been something for me to step back and be like, “What are you doing?” That’s not okay.

Tyler described learning not to make assumptions about someone based on their appearance of looking “foreign” and having an accent: “I noticed -- that if someone, um -- looked foreign in my eyes... I would have seen that they didn’t speak English -- or didn’t speak English well or something like that -- which has been proven false so many times especially here.” As Tyler and Cynthia alluded to, their experiences within MCSP allowed them to interrogate the basis for their judgments, and question how their stereotypes about “slut-shaming” and “foreign accents” held true during interactions with their fellow peers.

As another component of intercultural openness, several students discussed being “accepting,” especially as it related to acknowledging and embracing others’ differences, which also related to the concept of tolerance (Hurtado, 2001). When describing what he had gained from his MCSP coursework, Austin explained, “Accepting difference is a big thing -- I’ve worked in myself and also hopefully everyone else can work on too.” Peter elaborated on how MCSP had strengthened his ability to engage in intercultural openness:

We can acknowledge our differences. We can work together despite our difference and we can appreciate our differences. They can’t be stumbling blocks. They can be kind of nuances and facets to who we are. I hesitate to use the word differences. What is the term I’m looking for? I guess our seasonings, our different little tastes, textures.

By acknowledging others’ “little tastes, textures” as Peter described, the students in the sample developed a greater understanding of others’ worldviews and lived experiences. Although perspective-taking and intercultural openness primarily operated in students’ “heads,” their

involvement in MCSP also influenced their ability to connect with others with their “hearts,” as will be described below.

Empathetic Understanding: Stepping in Someone Else’s Shoes. Within the sample, 64% of the students reported that they developed or displayed a form of empathetic understanding while participating in MCSP diversity experiences. This understanding involved relating to and sharing a range of emotions, such as anger, frustration, sadness, and compassion, after learning about the oppression someone else had faced. Several students, including Tim, Ashley, Tanya, Megan, Peter, and Ethan, described feelings that involved being upset by the way others had been “unfairly” treated. For example, Tim discussed how hearing one of his fellow MCSP students’ stories during UC 102 “triggered emotion in me”:

It is unfair that some people get categorized. For example, in one of the UC-102 classes, I can’t remember his name but he was an African American student. He came to the front and he told a story about how every time he is walking back from the library late at night, he would walk back and people would always walk away from him. I felt really bad. This guy is a really nice guy. He seemed really nice. He was positive. He was doing well in school, he had a great GPA. He was a great person; he had lots of friends. It seemed unfair to me because the stereotype around your race that someone gets discriminated, that they get treated poorly or they don’t get equal options to do things that everyone else would. I think that’s kind of what -- events and reading things kind of triggered emotion in me that that’s not fair.

In addition to reflecting on times when others had not been treated in a “fair” way, students discussed empathetic understanding as “putting yourself in someone else’s shoes” in terms of understanding others’ emotions. As Brandon explained:

We have most of our issues because we can’t put ourselves in the other person’s shoes. We’re too busy concerned with our own life that we don’t look at other people’s lives...If we knew about each other, we could be more peaceful because we could understand how they may be feeling or they could understand how we’re feeling.

In attempting to understand how others were feeling, Tim, Brandon, and others gained an emotional connection to others’ lived experiences with the oppression that they had faced.

Another way of demonstrating empathetic understanding was offered by Dylan and Ethan who described being mindful of keeping the focus on the oppressed person, rather than themselves. Dylan shared how his MCSP involvement helped him develop his mindset around “being sort of an empathetic listener and just hearing out people rather than trying to give your own voice... Try to put myself in their shoes.” As Ethan also mentioned when he said, “there really is no need to relate your own... you’re there to understand the others’,” several of the students in the sample were able separate their own lived experiences from their peers in order to gain a deeper understanding of their struggles.

Despite the fact that many students in the sample were able to put themselves in “other’s shoes,” Ashley, Aisha, and Nate had difficulty engaging in empathetic understanding around social justice issues that didn’t “relate to them.” As Aisha explained, “If it is not close to my heart, I’ll support it, but I won’t like -- I won’t actually put effort into it...I’m up for all social justice issues that are like -- that apply to me.” Instead of attempting to understand what others were going through in their “hearts,” Aisha saw a separation between herself and others when it came to fighting for social justice issues. Nate was also hesitant to take into account the feelings of Black students when the Theta Xi fraternity threw a “Ratchet” themed party because he personally was not offended by it:

I thought it was kind of over exaggerated a little bit, personally. Like I didn’t find it to be incredibly offending, but obviously it is easy for me to say because I’m not Black. But it wasn’t like -- I never really talked about it on a serious note with anybody... I remember talking to a few of my friends not in my pledge class but my friends from back home. We talked about it and they all agreed it was a little blown out of proportion.

By using phrases such as “over exaggerated” and “blown out of proportion,” Nate negated the emotional impact this party had on other U-M students, which as described in Chapter Four and the Appendix, led to the #BBUM movement where many of his Black peers shared their feelings

about not being respected, supported, and included on campus. Even though the majority of the students in the sample developed an emotional capacity to understand their fellow peers' emotions and lived experiences with multiple forms of discrimination, students such as Aisha and Nate, still had room to grow in terms of relating to others' experiences. Like empathetic understanding, "humanizing" others involved exhibiting an emotional connection toward individuals at the margins of society.

Humanizing: Making Those That Are Marginalized Real. As a whole, 45% of the sample discussed attitudes related to "humanizing" or showing compassion toward individuals that are marginalized in society. In particular, students began to see the humanity in those that were homeless, or from other social identity groups that were often ignored or treated unfairly by society, such as veterans, refugees, the elderly, and the poor. For example, Peter explained that learning more about the real-life experiences of the homeless through the Rural and Urban Poverty (RUP) Action Team "as opposed to just an epidemic of homelessness as sort of a vast kind of massive deal," allowed him to "humanize" them: "When you break it down to the human element, the personal, it makes it a lot more real." Nate described that he was able to "humanize" others through his volunteer experiences at the local Veteran's Affairs Hospital as part of his "Project Community" class: "[Veterans] are real people with real problems. Just to show compassion and express interest in them and [pause] things like that." Like Peter and Nate, several other students discussed being able to see marginalized people and the struggles they faced as more "real" due to their participation in the MCSP experiences. While students' engagement in perspective-taking, intercultural openness, emotional understanding, and "humanizing," was sometimes limited to internal changes in their thoughts and feelings toward

others, some students also discussed exhibiting cognitive and affective empathy during their interpersonal interactions with their fellow peers.

Gently Communicating Across Differences. Ashley, Bryan, Tyler, Peter, Dylan, Olivia, Jason, and Zachary mentioned that MCSP had taught them to communicate across their differing perspectives and identities in a more respectful and inclusive manner. For example, Peter mentioned that MCSP was “a huge part” of learning to address his peers’ offensive language in a more “gentle way”:

Maybe when I see a microaggression, I would say this semester, I’m more likely to confront it... But not to confront it in an angry way because I, you know, -- I can hear them in my head say, “We’re not teaching you guys to go loose on people.” But maybe in a gentle way and say, “Hey buddy, that’s not how you refer to an individual. It is not something that we say around here.”

Ashley explained that she had developed a more “sensitive” and “gentle” approach to discussing social justice issues through her involvement in MCSP:

I think it is like a gentle way of speaking when it comes to these issues. It is just whether or not, uh -- things are like hard to talk about just being able to be sensitive and gentle. You know if I’m asking a question that relates to a social identity, asking it in a way that is sincerely curious and sincerely caring so that people do not feel persecuted. Or, that I’m trying to bash on them for their culture.

Instead of “persecuting” them, Ashley explained that she had been taught to ask questions and come from a “caring” place so that she could reach a common ground with the person that she was trying to relate to.

By “being curious and learning and asking questions,” Olivia and others reported actively listening to others to gain a deeper understanding of their fellow peers’ and family members’ perspectives and experiences. Zachary discussed how his MCSP experiences encouraged him to put himself in a fellow fraternity member’s “shoes” and ask questions to learn more about the difficulties his peer might be facing as the only Black person in his organization:

Being the only Black kid in a fraternity would probably be kind of hard, so just be more aware of the type of stuff that that kid probably has to deal with especially like I mentioned him to [another fraternity member] and he said, “Yeah, he probably is considered White in the Black community, because he joined a fraternity.” And I’d never really thought about that but MCSP made me more aware of asking the questions and seeing what he would, um -- the type of experience he’s having I guess.

As Zachary mentioned, he was mindful that his fellow peer’s experience in his Business fraternity could be “kind of hard” and displayed empathetic understanding toward him when gently communicating across their differences. In addition to applying their social justice knowledge they gained from their MCSP experiences to interacting with their peers in more empathetic ways, many students what shared they learned during their time in the RLC with others in their lives, as will be explored in the following section.

Educating Others. Approximately 59% of the students in the sample reported educating others in their lives about systems of power, privilege, and oppression. Several students discussed developing a sense of responsibility to disseminate the knowledge they had gained through their MCSP experiences with their U-M peers, friends, and family members. For example, Tanya mentioned sharing the newfound insights about social justice issues during her time in UC 151 with family members and friends that were not members of MCSP:

When I go home, I just like want to tell everyone what I learned this semester. I was like, “Did you know the statistics? Do you know why?” I like to tell my mom about it and tell my sister about it -- or tell a lot of my friends about it. They are like -- Let’s say my engineering friends, they would never take that many liberal arts...I’m the only one in my school that came to U of M that is in this learning community...I’m the only one, so when I talk to my friends about it whenever we have time to sit...It just comes up nowadays. I just talk about issues. I spent a whole semester...I spent good time writing about it. Like, now, I know about it and so I just want to tell people about it [laughs]. So I end up just talking about it. Do you know that? You never thought about it, did you? [Laughter].

When it came to which topics they discussed with those in their lives, several of the students with more privileged racial, gender, and social class backgrounds such as Ethan, Dylan, and

Tyler, felt compelled to educate others about the association between their social identities and the privilege and power that they held in society. After learning more about how his identities as White, male, and upper-middle class made him part of the “majority,” Ethan explained: “A crucial goal of mine is just educating the majority and make them more aware. If every person thought about it a little bit, I think that would make a huge difference.” Just as they had been encouraged to think more critically about their positionality and societal inequities through their various MCSP diversity experiences, several of the students in the sample hoped to encourage others to gain a deeper understanding of systems of privilege, power, and oppression.

Although many students reported a heightened motivation to “educate others,” they varied greatly in how they shared their newfound knowledge of social justice issues. For some students like Zachary and Dylan, virtually sharing resources or particular bits of knowledge from their MCSP or U-M affiliated courses was one avenue for disseminating lessons from their social justice education to their peers. Because he found reading the “New Jim Crow” during UC 151 particularly enlightening, Zachary emailed sections of the book to a friend: “We read an excerpt from it that was like 20 pages and that was really impactful. I actually took the link of the PDF, and e-mailed it to one of my friends and was like, “You have to read this.” Dylan kept his friends informed of important social justice issues via Twitter: “I’ll express my views sometimes. I had a Tweet the other day about: Why does it make sense that the minimum wage has only increased by 200% since 1980, but the in-state tuition cost at U-M has by 1000%?”

Although Zachary and Dylan shared social justice-related information through email or social media sites, quite a few students discussed having face-to-face conversations with their fellow peers. Bryan discussed causally slipping social justice-related conversations into everyday

activities, like watching television, as a way to get his friends thinking more about societal inequities:

Sometimes my roommate, he'll see something on TV in an ad and I'll see some kind of social justice implication right there and I'll just blurt it out. And he'll be like, "Oh yeah, I guess so." I guess because with my more thinking of it -- like when I am thinking about it more -- it kind of just starts coming around with my friends, and then maybe they start thinking about it more.

Joshua mentioned discussing insights he had gained about sustainability as part of his environmental-focused SEM with his friends, and he noted that it had led to gradual changes in their behaviors, "It has definitely influenced them a little bit. They don't buy water bottles at least. It is a small change." As Bryan and Joshua's comments illustrate, not only were they able to share what they had learned through their MCSP diversity experiences in contexts outside of the classroom, but they also encouraged their friends to make small changes in their behaviors so that they, too, could become involved with promoting social justice.

Tyler, Dylan, Stephanie, Peter, and Austin reported having more frequent conversations about social justice issues with their parents or siblings. For example, Dylan discussed engaging in social justice-related conversations during car rides with his family: "I have brought up some of the topics that we touch on in MCSP. That's sort of cool. I think I did talk about the gender -- or so inequality, like the GINI-Coefficient, and the diversity of money in America." Some participants also discussed having more in-depth discussions about systems of power, privilege, and oppression with their families and drew upon what they had learned in MCSP during their conversations. As Tyler explained, "I always send my family and people I know readings and stuff that I do, or just like articles I find interesting. He [Tyler's Dad] clearly had read one of the ones about like, uh -- privilege and social identity and just like talked about it for an hour and half, so that was really cool." Similar to the casual conversations with their friends, many of

these conversations also came up during everyday activities with their families. Based on the insights she had gained from her Sexual Orientation IGR dialogue course, Megan had the following exchange with her mother while watching a television broadcast of the ice skating competition during the Olympics:

One of the broadcasters was male and he had on a necklace and was wearing makeup... My mom said, "Oh, he has to be gay. Look at his necklace." I was just like, "Mom, you don't know what his sexual orientation is. You cannot tell that from what he is wearing." She said, "But, look at his necklace." And I said, "Mom, you cannot tell just from that. I'm in sexual orientation dialogue and we talk about this all the time." And she said, "Okay, you're right." And so it was cool that she actually listened.

Through sharing what they had learned in MCSP, Dylan, Tyler, and Megan created opportunities for discussing these important social justice topics with their families, which was not something they generally talked about before joining the RLC.

Even though several of the students reported being quite willing to share their social justice-related knowledge with their U-M friends and family members, and that these types of interactions were generally well-received, they expressed more hesitance about engaging in these types of conversations with friends from their hometowns. Much of this hesitation stemmed from their perceptions that their friends were more "closed-minded" or had not "changed" as much as they had since high school, as a result of their differing postsecondary education experiences. Austin mentioned having a friend at Harvard whom he felt very comfortable talking to about social justice issues, but expressed more reluctance about engaging in these types of conversations with friends that were attending less selective universities in Michigan:

I feel like it would be taken badly if I brought up race. Like, "Hey, this is racist." A few would be offended by it... I think they'd be maybe offended by the fact that I said it and they didn't think about it themselves. I think that's a big thing just that like -- It may come off as me seeming more righteous than them. Me trying to be like, "Did you think about this deep thought?" And trying to show them up or something; so that is oftentimes where I don't bring that up with people.

As was the case with Austin, several students reported feeling a tension between being more “educated” about social justice issues than their hometown friends, and that they did not want to appear “better than them” or act in a way that would be offensive.

Interestingly, the theme of not wanting to be viewed as “more righteous” than their pre-college communities cut across different types of hometowns and social identity backgrounds. Like Austin, who was a White, upper middle-class, male from the suburbs, Brandon expressed similar sentiments as a multiracial, lower-middle class, male from a large city. Brandon commented, “It is hard to talk to people from back home, because they might not be as educated on certain issue...like explaining it to some people can be problematic. I don’t want to come off as better than anybody.” In this way, there was a shared perception among the sample that their MCSP and U-M diversity experiences had “changed” them in a way that made it more difficult to relate to, and educate, their friends and family members with differing educational backgrounds and worldviews.

Although students reported greater willingness and preparation for engaging in social justice-related conversations during their time in MCSP, they generally felt more at ease educating those that would be more “receptive” to this type of information. As Austin implied when he said, “I don’t want to talk to people who maybe disagree with me,” the possibility of encountering conflict with those who would be less receptive may have dissuaded them from engaging in these types of conversations. Nevertheless, some students such as Megan, who was from a small, rural town, indicated that they were still willing to educate their hometown friends, despite their differing educational experiences and viewpoints. She explained:

Because they don’t really see it at their colleges and stuff, sometimes I get frustrated. We always talk about how some of them can be close-minded. But I’m going to be home for four months [for Summer Break] so...I think it is a good opportunity to enlighten some of them and open their minds to some of the ideas.

Unlike several of her peers, Megan felt that the minds of her hometown friends could be “opened” with the new social justice-knowledge that she could provide, and she was up for the challenge of educating them.

Even though developing a stronger motivation to educate others was mentioned by many in the sample, self-reports of being motivated to “speak out” against offensive language occurred even more frequently among the students. Interestingly, this type of outward action did involve students’ willingness to step outside of their comfort zone, and possibly engage with conflict.

“Speaking Out” Against Injustice. Overall, 77% of the sample reported having a stronger motivation to challenging or interrupting language that perpetuated negative stereotypes, prejudice, or other forms of bias toward different social identity groups based on their first year experiences in MCSP, and U-M. Tyler explained that he was more motivated to “speak out” as a result of his involvement in his Race & Ethnicity IGR dialogue course and other MCSP-affiliated diversity experiences: “I would have maybe noticed those kinds of things before and talked to people, but I wouldn’t have confronted people or said stuff like that before, mainly IGR, and MCSP and stuff.” Several of the students, including Stephanie, Tyler, Peter, and Megan, felt that their experiences within MCSP led them to feel more comfortable and confident about challenging the offensive language they encountered from their U-M friends and others. Tyler described his new level of comfort and confidence as having more “courage” to speak out: “I have a lot more courage to say something about it and bring up my opinion on the issue and confront people about it, in an understanding way.”

Like Tyler, several students discussed being more conscious of racist, sexist, or homophobic jokes that their U-M peers, hometown friends, or family members made and having a greater willingness to “speak out” during their first semester in MCSP. However, there was a

noticeable shift in students' statements about being more likely to speak out during their second semester. As Stephanie explained:

I mean if something happens like if I'm like racially profiled or someone else is. I think I'll be more apt to speak out than I would have been last semester I think. Um, it is always in my consciousness. I'm always -- not always thinking about, but if something arises where it is clearly an issue pertaining to social justice, I would definitely be the one to speak out.

However, in the context of her heightened motivation to "speak out" during the latter half of her time in MCSP, it is important to note that Stephanie mentioned addressing problematic behaviors against her or someone else. While the majority of the sample reported that they were more likely "speak out" against incidents of bias in order to support or advocate for others, those with marginalized identities were also sometimes called upon to speak on behalf of their self-claimed or perceived social identities.

Even though MCSP promoted students' motivation to address others' problematic language, it is also worth mentioning that some students such as Owen, Bryan, Megan, Ashley, and Peter indicated they were comfortable with "speaking out" prior to attending U-M. However, many of these students reported that MCSP heightened their desire to intervene when they encountered offensive comments or jokes. Though Bryan had already challenged his friends about their offensive jokes prior to college, he commented: "IGR gave me that pushing motivation of getting right into it, talking about it more in-depth," and that he had increased his frequency of intervening: "Now I do it like in a more -- even like to the detail. If some tiny little thing they say, I start going again, "What are you saying?" While Bryan already had an inclination toward "speaking out," he was more willing to address subtle incidents of bias, such as microaggressions, and "get into it" when challenging his friends' problematic language.

Despite the sample's statements of being more likely to speak out due to their involvement in MCSP, they often were unable to recall specific instances where they had challenged offensive language, and often spoke in a more future-oriented way about interrupting incidences of bias. For example, although Zachary discussed his desire to interrupt and refrain from participating in the racist jokes that his friends often made in his Southern hometown, he used language when describing specific situations, such as "I think" or "I might," that suggested that his plans for "speaking out" were more tentative: "If they're actually negatively impacting anyone, I would probably say something. But just in general, if they're making a joke, I'll be like, "It's funny you guys say that because people would not like you if you said that where I've been going to school." Despite the fact Zachary had become more aware of the offensive nature of his friends' language, it was unclear whether he would actually confront their racist behavior when it occurred. Similarly, Aisha spoke about how MCSP had strengthened her motivation to "speak out," but was unable to recall particular instances where she had done so:

Aisha: I won't go and try to try and preach to them about why they should change their views. But I feel if they say something that isn't correct or is like a stereotype, I'll definitely talk about it. I'll tell them that what they say they shouldn't be saying. I'm always up to talk to people about them, but only if they're willing to listen. I just don't want to go around preaching to them what I believe and why.

I: Do you think you had a similar stance about this before you joined MCSP?

Aisha: Not really. I didn't really speak up that much before MCSP.

I: Have there been any times you spoke up this semester?

Zachary: Not particularly, no.

I: But you feel like if a situation presented itself –

Aisha: I would.

Although Aisha appeared more motivated to speak up as a result of her MCSP experiences, it was uncertain whether she would actually rise to the occasion. While students such as Aisha and Zachary had become aware of problematic language and the importance of "speaking out"

during their time in MCSP, there was still a sense of testing the waters and finding ways to not come across as “preaching” to others.

Some of the students’ tentativeness about “speaking out” revolved around concerns about how these interactions would impact their relationships with those close to them, and their uncertainty about how receptive their friends and family members would be to being “called out.” To help ameliorate some of their discomfort, Dylan and others discussed wanting to find “effective” ways of interacting with their peers or family members so that they would be more receptive to having their language challenged or critiqued: “Sometimes when I go home, they’ll still act the same way, immature and stuff. I’m trying to figure out more effective ways of talking to them about that and being like a facilitator so to speak but also a friend where they don’t judge me and think, “Oh, I have to be a different person around Dylan now.” In a similar way as not wanting to come across as “better than” their peers while sharing their social justice knowledge, these students struggled with not wanting to police others’ language. When it came to addressing the language of her hometown friends who were “more comfortable with holding stereotypes and being judgmental,” Stephanie mentioned: “I definitely don’t want to overdo it and be like, “This isn’t right and this isn’t right.” You know what I mean?”

Although not being able to find the balance between “speaking out” and “preaching” caused Cynthia, Dylan, Stephanie, and others to sometimes stay silent, a few students were able to provide actual examples of how they utilized what they learned in MCSP to interrupt biased language or behaviors. Austin mentioned that, “every day I feel more comfortable with interrupting bad things and stuff” and provided an example of how he had taken the initiative to interrupt some offensive comments that he saw on a Facebook post:

There was the girl who did the protest because she didn’t get into Michigan -- the Black girl...I didn’t know all the facts, but people were posting these things and they’re being

so mean. They were like posting the article and like, “Ha. This made me laugh.” This is a person. And so I did some sarcastic comments on their thing...I was like, “It is very interesting how only White people liked and commented on this.” [Laughs] -- And just everyone stopped commenting on it...I felt mean; I’m not a mean person but like it was just -- interesting. I just thought it could be very offensive if I’d seen that. Like especially the girl, I would be so sad. She felt that she’s right. Who cares that she’s not right?

Both Tyler and Jason shared examples of interrupting overtly racist, sexist, or heterosexual conversations while interacting with their fraternity brothers. Tyler provided an example of “speaking out” against his fraternity brothers’ offensive jokes about their Asian peers.

Let me think. Well, just the other night...There are some Asians in our fraternity and there is -- They like to crack jokes at their own expense a lot of the time. And that is fine but then other people like to join in as well. And you know make like slanty eye jokes and that kind of stuff. And that just pisses me off a little bit. [Pause] -- I’ve talked with some of those people about you know saying some of that kind of stuff.

By “calling out” his fellow fraternity brothers’ biased language, Tyler advocated for his Asian peers who may have offended by their “slanty eye jokes.”

Several students discussed feeling more comfortable with “speaking out” when their family members made offensive comments about other social identity groups. Olivia discussed taking the initiative to stand up to her older brother about the racist language he used while she was spending time at home during Easter:

My brother was like making fun of something -- some ethnic group or something. And he even looks like them, so it was even more stupid. So then I asked him, “Why are you doing that?” And he’s like, “They make fun of us.” So is that how you respond to injustice by doing the same thing? And like he didn’t really -- I don’t think it even made that big of an impression. But I’m glad that I felt that strongly to even say something to him, with him being my oldest brother. He’s supposed to be like, wise, because he’s almost 40 now but...

While Olivia’s attempts to help her brother reflect on his own contributions toward perpetuating the oppression of others were largely unsuccessful, her ability to “speak out” despite his seniority over her was something that she still felt proud of.

Even though many of the students in the sample reported some inconsistencies between their desire to “speak out,” and actually doing so, they attributed their greater motivation to interrupt offensive language and other behaviors to their involvement in MCSP diversity experiences. Moreover, as exemplified in Austin, Jason, and Olivia’s narratives, some of the students were able to do it in a variety of settings, whether online, with their fellow U-M peers, or with their family. Although several of the students discussed promoting social justice among those in their lives, this was something that they continued to struggle with, as made evident by their narratives throughout this chapter. In many ways, they were still coming to terms with how they saw themselves creating social change beyond their first year in MCSP, as will be described in the next section.

Forward Growth

Creating “Small-Scale” Change in Their Everyday Lives. In line with MCSP’s mission of encouraging its students to “make a difference” through their civic engagement and social change efforts (MCSP website, 2016), the majority of the sample spoke about their heightened personal commitment to actively promote social justice in their everyday lives. As Peter explained: “MCSP has been a kick in the pants for you to be an active member of your society, more so than just passive volunteering, but really actively trying to promote these kinds of common goods.” Although many were still unsure about how they would create social change in the future, they used words such as “obligation to give back,” “responsibility,” and “duty” to denote that incorporating social justice into their lives was something that had become important to them. When describing feeling “more of a duty” after taking his IGR course, Bryan explained that “if I want to see change in the world that I [believe] should be happening; I need to reach out more, speak more of my own opinions.” Although many students discussed their future plans for

promoting social justice during their subsequent years at U-M, a few, like Austin, spoke about incorporating social justice in their post-college lives: “I would try to do it just in my everyday life. Like teach my kids, if I have kids, and friends and stuff and maybe do community service.” In addition to educating his future family about social justice issues, Austin saw himself promoting social change in his “everyday” life through his personal interactions and extracurricular activities, which was also a predominant theme amongst the rest of the sample.

Even though several students had a pre-existing interest in promoting social justice and discussed wanting to “change the world” in their MCSP applications, their plans for creating positive social change had often shifted by the end of their first year. Instead, many of the participants discussed their future plans of making a difference on a “small-scale” through their interpersonal interactions and daily actions, rather than on a “large-scale” in the form of actively addressing systemic and structural inequities. During their time in MCSP, they had learned that person-by-person interactions to raise awareness of social justice issues, interrupting incidents of bias, and showing compassion toward others, could also “make a difference.” As Cynthia explained, “I think you can make a bigger difference when it is a smaller group of people than you can -- you know than you can on a big scale.” Though many students felt that the most change could occur through those within their sphere of influence, Tyler discussed creating “small-scale” change through interactions with people outside of his social circle:

I think if I could like truly live out the things that I think are true in social justice, just like through my life, how I talk, how I interact with people, with my friends -- I think that would be doing like pretty good service because to me that doesn't just involve my personal friends too, but if someone just around me is being visibly or un-visibly oppressed, being able to speak up and do something, um -- just in like everyday interactions is a huge deal. So I guess I don't see my role as you know -- joining the fight for it, I guess. You know just kind of living it out through your life, I think is one of the more powerful things you can do for it.

Although Tyler connected his personal commitment to social justice to “speaking out” in his everyday life, he and several of the other students mentioned that they didn’t see themselves “joining the fight” for social justice, which they often connected to being an “activist” and addressing issues at more of a systemic level.

The shifts in students’ orientations toward creating change on a “small-scale” may have stemmed from their uncertainty about how they could, in fact, create systemic change as just one person. While he mentioned that “I’ve made a difference on a small scale by mentoring and tutoring,” Zachary commented that he currently did not have the capacity to make a larger scale impact: “I think for now it’s just going to be little impacts on the side, until I have more time and resources to have a bigger impact.” Others, like Bryan, were doubtful about whether one person could truly create change on a large-scale:

I want to try at least on a small scale at some point, whether it be as small as volunteer work or trying to spread awareness to issues. In a bigger sense, I’ve even entertained the idea of being a politician [laughs] but that’s not very enticing at the same time. It is hard yet also a very big stigma is the idea of I’m just one person. Even if I do something small, will that actually make an impact whatsoever? So it is kind of also like, maybe I could make a difference, but I don’t think it would be a big difference.

Although Bryan had expressed an interest in being “part of the big group that is trying to bring back Detroit,” he did not necessarily see his potential “small” actions of volunteering and spreading awareness as being able to create a noticeable impact toward a larger cause.

Although many of the participants saw creating social change as a broad and elusive goal, several had begun to take personal responsibility for integrating their personal commitment to promoting social justice into various aspects of their lives, such as their extracurricular activities at U-M. Although Ashley had at first been “this gung-ho person that was going to change the world,” she now said that, “I think my difference that would be made would be the small things

in the daily.” As part of her small-scale social justice efforts, she was in the process of creating a more racially diverse intramural women’s basketball team:

Because you know I started the basketball program, and in that within itself bring that equality in. You know bring more. Right now we have, um -- We have one Black person and two Chinese people and one Hispanic person and then the rest White people. I mean that’s positive, but you know that’s still not where I’d like to be. In my own efforts, I think that I focused a lot more on the little things that I can do, because it kind of overwhelms you thinking about the world. I think it is very much what you can do in your situation; and I think that’s how it has changed for me -- focusing more on me and what I can do, than the world.

While “thinking about the world” was overwhelming for Ashley, she planned to bring more racial “equality” into the aspects of her life that she had control over, which besides the basketball team, included encouraging her predominately White church to recruit members from more diverse backgrounds, and inviting friends of different races to events.

As part of their “small-change” efforts beyond their first year at U-M, many of the students discussed their continued involvement in MCSP, and participation in other social justice-related student organizations, community service opportunities, and on-campus positions. As it so happened, 41% of the sample would be returning to MCSP during their second year as a peer leader. Among these returners, several students mentioned trying to involve incoming first-year students in social justice-related activities. For example, Dylan was already starting to think about ideas for “good [MCSP] events that encompass social justice,” and Stephanie hoped to “make a difference in some sort of way” when mentoring incoming first-year students. Ethan discussed his future plans of “educating the majority,” while also continuing his own self-education, during his second year in MCSP: “I think it will give me an avenue, a venue, to work on that...my work with other White males, it is going to be tough in the field of social justice...but I think it will be good moving forward to just learn alongside [them].”

Despite the fact that several students in the sample would no longer be actively involved in MCSP after their first year, they still spoke about their commitment to promoting social justice through their extracurricular activities, such as their continued participation in community service activities during the rest of their time at U-M. Garrett planned to continue volunteering in Detroit with the Michigan Engineering Zone, along with exploring new possibilities for community service: “Maybe not MCSP per se but I guess in terms of social justice and volunteering, definitely. I just want to seek out new opportunities and see what else there is on campus.” Peter and Megan spoke about continuing their involvement in MCSP-affiliated community service activities, even though they would not be returning to MCSP. Peter’s community service activities at a local community center had been facilitated through the RUP Action Team, and he still planned to continue volunteering and “rallying for their rights” during his second year:

I’m going to try and stay active volunteering for my causes. Maybe, I’ll -- I’m still trying to figure out how I’m going to stay connected with MCSP...I’m going to still try and be committed to educating myself about the social justice issues. And standing when I need to stand with the people, that you know, who are fighting for them. Be sure I’m one of those fighters, so that means I’m going to try and continue to volunteer at [the community center]-- I’ll stand out there when somebody is rallying for their rights.

Megan explained that she planned to volunteer with her friends who were going to be MCSP peer leaders, along with pursuing other “social justice things” like becoming a IGR facilitator for the dialogue courses:

A lot of my friends are still going to be in MCSP so I’ll pop in and do community service with them...And like I said I seek out community service, so I’ll still be doing that. I would like to be an IGR facilitator. And there are so many opportunities on this campus, especially to do social justice things. So I think I’ll still definitely do it.

Like Megan, many of the other students saw opportunities to create “small-scale” change within other organizations on campus, regardless of whether or not they would be returning to MCSP.

Many of the students also discussed their plans of applying their personal commitment to promoting social justice to other on-campus experiences during their time at U-M. In addition to her role as a MCSP peer leader, Cynthia explained that she planned to get involved in other social justice-related organizations during her second year: “MCSP is great, but I’m realizing that the university is bigger than MCSP, so I’m planning on joining some more social justice clubs or activities.” Although both Peter and Brandon would not be returning to MCSP, they hoped to integrate their passion for social justice into their positions in other residence halls. Brandon commented, “I feel like I have a deep-rooted commitment in social justice...I wanted a way to apply it and I feel like Res Staff was like the best way for me to apply it personally, because I want to be involved on the individual level.” As exemplified in these students’ narratives, there were numerous ways that they planned to personally promote social justice, during their second year at U-M and beyond.

Despite the fact that the majority of the participants felt more motivated to promote “small-scale” change in their daily lives, it is important to note that a few students including Joshua, Garrett, Jason, Nate, and Zachary, considered their commitment to social justice as more of a “hobby” or side interest. They discussed plans to be more civically engaged through donating money to charity, voting, volunteering occasionally, or discussing social justice issues with friends or family, and did not necessarily see promoting social justice as a large focus in their lives. Similar to when he wrote about “donating his time” in his UC 102 application, Zachary spoke about creating social change “philanthropically along the way through -- you know either money or time commitment.” As will be described in Chapter Nine, Nate remained virtually unchanged in his opinion that philanthropy was one of the primary ways that he saw himself “making a difference.” Like Zachary and Joshua, Owen provided more “distanced”

answers when it came to his personal commitment to promoting social justice. During both interviews, Owen reported that he didn't "know where I fit," and struggled with determining his personal role in making a difference in the world:

It is sort of like a weird -- people always talked about how you have to give more power to people who don't have it. But I'm trying to figure out how do you give away that power?...I don't know if I inherently have it -- I don't understand the power that is necessary in order to create a changed world.

Even though Owen's experiences in MCSP had sparked his reflections on "how he could give away his power," he and several of his male peers seemed more hesitant to make a definitive personal commitment to incorporating social justice into their daily lives, which could relate to their privileged positions in society. Although the sample described different approaches and commitments to "making a difference" during their second year and beyond, their experiences in MCSP prompted them to assume more responsibility for creating "small-scale" change in their everyday lives. While they often seemed hesitant to acknowledge their roles in influencing society on a broader scale, the shifts in their future academic and career plans suggested that they, too, had larger plans for creating social change.

Incorporating Social Justice into Their Future Careers. Although their future academic and career plans did not always surface when asked how they planned to "make a difference" in the future, many of the students indicated at other points during their interviews that their MCSP and U-M experiences heightened their interest in more social justice-focused academic and career paths. One such student was Megan, who was initially considering pursuing a career in marketing either in a Business or Non-Profit setting. However, after taking the "Project Outreach" course and participating in the "Youth and Education" Alternative Spring Break [ASB] trip, she was now strongly considering pursuing a career in Education:

I wouldn't have taken Project Outreach if it wasn't for MCSP, so I think that helped. And then I think I was always basically going to do ASB and that helped a lot too...I think it can help a lot of people. Honestly, people coming here, they think business or science or anything like that. But they don't think about the things that they you can do that -- They don't get a lot of attention. Like Education doesn't get a lot of attention, or a lot of little things. You join little learning communities, and they shed light on the social justice aspects...The community action and social change [minor] -- I know a lot of people end up doing that if they're in MCSP because they take the classes like [Project Outreach]. And so that can influence people's majors and minors.

As Megan discussed, her experiences in MCSP “shed light on the social justice aspects” of different career options, which not only helped her decide on a new academic and career path in Education, but also influenced the careers, majors, and minors of her fellow MCSP peers, as highlighted in Table 7.1 below.

Like Megan, the majority of the students in the sample initially intended to pursue careers in Business or Healthcare, representing 41% and 27% of the sample, respectively⁶. While many still planned to remain in the same field, their future academic and career plans now had a stronger orientation toward social justice. Overall, 45% of the sample reported that they were planning to pursue new majors, minors, or career directions, due to their involvement in MCSP diversity experiences and other social justice-oriented coursework and extracurricular activities at U-M. Another 32% stated that they now planned to incorporate social justice into their existing career paths, either by creating a more inclusive or accepting work environment, or finding ways to integrate work that addressed societal inequities. Approximately 23% did not see their future careers connecting to promoting social justice.

⁶ The participants were asked to “briefly explain your long-term educational/career goals” in their pre-interview survey that was distributed in mid-November, and this information was also triangulated during their first interview at the end of Fall semester to determine their initial career interests. The question, “Do you think your involvement in MCSP influenced any decisions regarding your major and/or future career plans in any way? Why or why not?,” was asked at their second interview at end of their first year to assess any changes in their educational or career trajectories.

Table 7.1. Influence of MCSP on Future Academic/Career Plans

Participants	Entering Career Aspirations	Influence of MCSP on Academic/Career Plans	Plans for Incorporation of Social Justice
Aisha	Healthcare	No Change	"I want to be a pharmacist, so I don't know how that would impact society."
Ashley	Psychology	Incorporate SJ into Career	Interested in being a counselor for lower SES students
Austin	Undecided	Academic/Career Change	Considering majoring in Environmental Engineering because of MCSP course
Brandon	Healthcare	Incorporate SJ into Career	Plans to create a more respectful and inclusive work environment
Bryan	Business	Academic/Career Change	Interested in pursuing International Business due to engagement across differences in IGR/MCSP
Cynthia	Education/Religion	Academic/Career Change	MCSP broadened career options, now exploring other fields with social justice focus
Dylan	Public Policy/ Law	Incorporate SJ into Career	Wants to integrate a social justice focus, such as human rights policy or education reform into career
Ethan	Business	Incorporate SJ into Career	"Positively changing any organization, spreading awareness of social justice"
Garrett	Engineering	No Change	Career options limited by fellowship from country, but may pursue social justice as a side interest
Jason	Education/Environment	No Change	Still planning on pursuing an environmental-focused major/career
Jenna	Healthcare	Academic/Career Change	Considering minor in Women's Studies to increase multicultural competence in future Nursing career
Joshua	Business	No Change	Views interest in environment as side interest, and not connected to Business career path
Megan	Business	Academic/Career Change	Interested in majoring in Education due to MCSP course/ASB experiences
Nate	Healthcare	Academic/Career Change	Considering minoring in Spanish due to engagement across differences in MCSP
Olivia	Healthcare	Academic/Career Change	Still planning to pursue Pre-Med path, but considering majoring in Sociology
Owen	Undecided/Business	No Change	"Selfish" in terms of career choice, doesn't see future Business career impacting society
Peter	Business	Academic/Career Change	Considering Pre-Law path, focused on NGOs or Nonprofits
Stephanie	Healthcare	Academic/Career Change	Planning on pursuing an environmental-focused major, instead of Neuroscience
Tanya	Business	Academic/Career Change	Plans to switch intended major from Business to Organizational Studies due to more "social" focus
Tim	Engineering	Incorporate SJ into Career	Would like to pursue an Engineering career that benefits people/society due to MCSP course
Tyler	Business	Incorporate SJ into Career	Will be more aware of diversity/dynamics in the workplace and create more accepting environment
Zachary	Business	Incorporate SJ into Career	May pursue more "socially aware business" and will be aware of diversity in the workplace

Among the students who planned to pursue a career in Business, there was quite a bit of variation in how their initial educational and career trajectories had shifted. Interestingly, two

women, Tanya and Megan, and no men reported changing their intended Business majors. Megan was now considering a major in Education, and Tanya planned to switch her major to Organizational Studies because of its attention to how organizations could “benefit society.” Peter and Bryan were still planning on majoring in Business, but had shifted their career direction to incorporate a social justice-related focus. Peter explained that he was thinking about pursuing a dual degree with LSA, the liberal arts college, because the “social sciences are where you can help effect more change.” In addition to changing his academic focus, Peter was now considering a Pre-Law career path centered upon NGOs and Non-Profits, and reported that “I think MCSP is probably to blame for that -- for my soon to be diminished future salary. Just kidding [laughter].”

Ethan, Tyler, and Zachary planned to continue to pursue Business-oriented fields and discussed how they would utilize their newfound awareness of social justice to identify problematic office dynamics and opportunity structures and create a more accepting and inclusive work environment. Tyler commented that the social justice-related knowledge he gained during his time in MCSP would influence how he would “behave” in his future job:

I mean just like having people in all sorts of positions regardless of where they are, just knowing social justice, I think is important. People who make decisions in life, like business leaders or whatever -- if everyone had more understanding of this stuff, I think it would be beneficial.

Zachary explained that he was now interested in more “socially aware business” that considered whether individuals were negatively impacted by business practices:

I think my career plans are pretty set to start with and probably still kind of are going into business. But maybe doing more like socially aware business, thinking about the impact the business that I’m doing is having on people. And you know who has the opportunity to work in the office that I’m in. Am I just surrounded by a bunch of white, wealthy, WASPy people who went to really nice schools? Where is the diversity in the office? Are we having a negative on anyone with the work we’re doing or anything?

Zachary's intentions around being attentive to the diversity within his future workplace was notable given many of his fellow highly-educated "White, wealthy, and WASPy" colleagues would likely not be as aware of their own privilege and power in society. Interestingly, his desire to be cognizant of how others in the business world were being affected by systems of privilege, power, and oppression was a departure from his "selfish" career aspirations during his first semester. As Zachary explained in his previous interview: "I have this selfish outlook just because right now everything in college is focusing on what can you do to better your opportunity to get into graduate school, to get a job. So right now, I'm pretty focused on myself, which I'm aware of, but I think it is natural for a 19 or 20-year old person." It was likely that Zachary was still primarily focused on his own job prospects during his second interview, but his interest in applying the social justice-knowledge he acquired to his future business career was now evident.

Although Zachary seemed to be considering how to incorporate social justice into his future career path, the same could not be said about his fellow Business-oriented peers, Owen and Joshua. Neither felt that his future career in Business intersected with promoting social justice. While Joshua seemed less conflicted, as will be described in his case study in Chapter Eight, Owen was "struggling" with the realization that his intended career in Investment Banking would likely not have a "tangible benefit for society":

I'd want to do that but that's a very self-rewarding thing that produces no tangible effect on society, which is something I've been struggling with lately. I don't know if I want to do anything specific to help others. I'm sort of selfish right now, and working on if I want to just help myself and see how that goes.

Owen's acknowledgement of being "sort of selfish right now" suggested that despite his limited time in MCSP, he still had developed some consciousness around the importance of helping others in his future career.

The majority of those interested in the Healthcare field planned to integrate a focus on social justice into their future career plans. In particular, Jenna was considering a minor in Women's Studies because she had enjoyed learning about diversity and social justice issues in her MCSP and U-M coursework and felt that gaining more knowledge in this discipline could strengthen her multicultural competence as a future nurse:

I think pursuing a minor in Women's Studies would definitely help me learn even more about social justice and diversity and women's issues and things like that...I know a big part of Nursing is cultural competence, um -- Just that is really important in providing the best care, knowing where people come from and their different cultural practices.

Several of the other students, including Olivia and Brandon, planned to integrate their awareness of social justice issues into their future Healthcare careers. Even though Olivia was still on a Pre-Med path, she was now considering majoring in sociology and felt that MCSP helped her prepare for her future career as a psychiatrist for underserved, minority youth from her hometown:

I think I have more of a specific passion that has developed through being in MCSP and all the other, um -- I guess social justice oriented experiences I've had. I found that civil rights is such a larger issue than I ever realized, which is funny because it is not like I grew up unaware of it...So I want to be in the position to give back to people even though it is like I understand, but I don't. I really want to become educated on my community, and to be able to go back with the resources to be able to help them.

Although he did not elaborate on whether he still wished pursue a career as an anesthesiologist during his second interview, Brandon mentioned that he planned to apply what he learned in MCSP to "be more respectful and inclusive in a work environment." On the other hand, during both of their interviews, Aisha did not see a particular connection to how being a pharmacist could "benefit society," and as explored in the following chapter, Nate expressed a similar sentiment around being a doctor.

While Garrett and Tim entered U-M with intentions to pursue an Engineering career, Austin's interest in pursuing this field developed more organically through one MCSP course in

particular. He explained that taking the SEM, “Environmental Literature,” sparked an interest in Environmental Engineering because “the class made me want to do something...and it made me appreciate nature more”:

I think I’d like that because at the beginning of the semester when I was taking my environmental literature class, I would say we really need some engineers to do this stuff. They could make things better. It would be cool to make things that are human made, but as if nature made them so it would be sustainable. And I realized I really like Calculus a lot. It’s my favorite class right now, and I’m pretty good at it too. So, “I could just be an engineer...”

Austin’s initial career aspirations were “to learn about what I enjoy studying at university, and to live a life and a career that challenges me intellectually, yet leaves me time for my personal life and development.” Consequently, the environmental-focused MCSP course played a role in giving him the career direction that he had been seeking. Although Tim’s and Garrett’s career plans had not changed, the social justice-focused Engineering 100 course that they took to fulfill their CIVIC requirement positively influenced their desire to utilize their engineering skills to benefit society. Because of this particular course, Tim explained that he was now gearing his intended career in Mechanical Engineering toward a stronger focus on “benefitting people”:

So what I use the mechanical engineering for, I think that will be kind of modified. It will not necessarily just be like -- for the benefit of machines or streamlining processes but it will be more toward [pause] -- helping people or helping society at a fine level that kind of benefits them in like more than one way, not just like give them something that pollutes the environment brazenly.

Similar to Tim’s interest in designing products that involved providing “access to water or food or problems that other countries or America itself faces,” Garrett designed an urban gardening kit for an “apartment dweller” during his Engineering 100 course. This experience offered him a new perspective on how he could apply his engineering skills to helping others. Although he planned to major in Aerospace Engineering and saw his newfound interest in gardening as more of a “hobby,” Garrett explained the course taught him the importance of “finding the need of

your community partner, generating empathy for the people we're serving...it is only when you do that, you can start designing something that is really useful for them." Though the majority of Tim's and Garrett's time was spent outside of MCSP, this particular MCSP-affiliated course had planted the seed that they, too, could positively influence society as future engineers.

Even though the remaining students in the sample were already interested in careers within the social or public sector, such as Education and Public Policy, their experiences in MCSP helped them to further explore and refine the ways that they wished to create social change. For example, Dylan began to explore "actual things" that he could study within public policy to promote social change such as human rights policy or education reform, and explained that "is becoming more realistic in like an actual game plan now." Although Ashley was still interested in pursuing a career as a psychologist, she had come to the realization that she wanted to gear her career toward working with youth from lower socioeconomic statuses, and credited MCSP with helping her get to "the base of knowing all these different things." Since these first-year students were undergoing a pivotal time of transition (Gurin, et al. 2002), the fact that their MCSP-affiliated experiences strengthened their commitment to incorporating social justice into their everyday lives and future careers was quite striking. The following section will further explore themes related to how students' MCSP diversity experiences played a role in their outward and forward growth.

The Influence of Diversity Experiences on Outward and Forward Growth

Similar to Chapter Six, students' MCSP experiences influenced their outward and forward growth, cognitively and affectively. Learning about themselves, others, and the world around them in a variety of curricular, co-curricular, and informal settings—including UC 102, UC 151, IGR dialogue courses, IRC hot topics, and "SJ talks"—provided students with

opportunities to gain knowledge about others' perspectives, and allowed them to develop emotional connections to those that had been oppressed. In conjunction with influencing their inward growth, participating in dialogic conversations and hearing others' stories played an important role in "getting to know" peers with different social identity backgrounds, and helped them learn how "speak out" and gently communicate across differences. Lastly, MCSP's diverse, open-minded, and social justice-focused culture also positively influenced their cross-cultural interactions with others, and their personal and professional commitment to creating a more just society, as will be discussed below.

"Getting to Know" Others with Diverse Backgrounds

Like hearing others' "stories" in Chapter Six, several students explained that "getting to know" others from diverse backgrounds on a more personal level—both within and outside of the classroom—helped them develop cognitive and emotional empathy toward them. As Bryan explained: "Just straight talking to them, and getting to know them...it's just helped me kind of like push away from any hesitations I might have just from my assumptions in my head." The integration of students' various diversity experiences within their time in MCSP allowed them "get to know" their peers in a variety of settings including within their courses, during community service activities, and while participating in informal "SJ" talks in their residence hall. Thus, for many students, they had multiple points of contact with their peers, and were able to develop meaningful connections with them throughout their first year in MCSP.

Among their curricular experiences, the IGR dialogue courses in particular allowed students to better understand the thought-processes and feelings of their fellow peers. Dylan described that hearing his peers speak about their lived experiences on a weekly basis allowed him to be "more accepting, like not having as many preconceived conceptions before the

experience of meeting people.” Through “getting to know” others in their IGR courses, Dylan, Stephanie, Jason, Cynthia, Tyler, Megan and others were able to develop more empathy toward those with different backgrounds, which also occurred outside of the classroom during the IRC hot topics in their residence hall.

By participating in IRC hot topics, Austin, Cynthia, Stephanie, Olivia, Cynthia Ethan, and Brandon explained that they were able to listen to their MCSP peers speak honestly about their opinions, and show vulnerability when sharing their experiences. As a native Detroit, Brandon commented that hearing where his peers “were coming from” during the “Unpacking Perceptions of Detroit” dialogue helped him to better understand the perspectives of those who had negative opinions of his hometown:

They were raised a different way. Everybody had their own different issues and backgrounds and problems. To hear where they’re coming from, helps me better understand. So now I’m not just like, ‘Oh, he’s being mean. They’re being insensitive.’ They really don’t know sometimes.

Through gaining an understanding of how “they were raised a different way,” Brandon and others were able to emotionally connect with their fellow MCSP peers during the IRC hot topics in their residence hall, while also learning more about their various perspectives about social justice issues.

Like the IGR dialogue courses and IRC hot topics, students shared their lived experiences and perspectives during “SJ” talks.” As described by Tim, “Everyone is coming from those 50 different places and all have different opinions.” While occasional “SJ talks” were one avenue for “getting to know” others in a more informal setting, many students also developed cross-cultural friendships within and outside of their residence hall. For example, developing a friendship with a fellow MCSP peer who was multiracial helped Dylan develop more intercultural openness toward others: “He doesn’t really physically look, like he is half-Chinese

and so I think learning about his background and how he got bullied in middle school. It really affected me realizing that you don't know who anybody is just from the outside." Along with cognitively "learning" about their fellow peers, students' personal relationships allowed them to connect with others on a more emotional level.

Although students were able to develop close friendships with diverse peers, they often did not "get to know" those that were marginalized in society, such as the homeless, veterans, and refugees, in the same way. Instead, as described in Chapter Six, they were able to "humanize" them as result of their "stories" during panels or the film series, or "hands-on" community service experiences. Attending the RUP-sponsored "Faces of the Homeless: Stigmas and Stereotypes" panel allowed Jenna to gain a deeper sense of compassion for the homeless: "You know that they're just like other people; and they're not all dangerous to approach. They also deserve everyone's respect, just like you'd respect anyone else." One documentary, "Where Soldiers Come From" which explored the experiences of four young men from Michigan's Upper Peninsula that joined the National Guard, prompted students such as Cynthia, Garrett, Tanya, and Peter to see veterans in a more "human" light. As Peter mentioned, "I kind of forget these are real people we send to fight our occasional meaningless wars."

Although some learned to "humanize" others at more of a distance, a few students encountered one-on-one interactions with marginalized individuals through their participation in Action Teams and other MCSP-sponsored community services experiences. During a community service trip to the Freedom House in Detroit, Tyler described gaining more compassion for refugees based on his personal interactions with them: "The strength of some of these people to even get here, and go through what they've been through is really amazing to see." Through learning about their stories in person or on screen, students reported viewing those

that were marginalized as more “real.” As described above, a variety of curricular, co-curricular, and informal experiences allowed students to “get to know” others’ thoughts, feelings, and lived experiences, while also playing an important role in teaching them how to dialogue across their differences.

Learning to Dialogue Across Differences

Students reported that their dialogic conversations in variety of settings—including their IGR dialogue courses, UC 102 discussions, IRC hot topics in East Quad, or informally in their halls—taught them how to “speak out” and gently communicate across differences. In these settings, students had candid discussions about their identities, biases, and life experiences, and actively communicated with their peers about their differing opinions and perspectives. Through dialoging across their differences, Stephanie and others gained more confidence to engage in situations that might involve conflict:

I think IGR, since it gives you so many perspectives and experiences, I think it gives me and everyone else in the class confidence outside of IGR to speak out in situations where need be. Because we learned so much from the class, I think people are okay with saying like, “Hey, this isn’t okay because of what I learned from this, this and this.”

Stephanie mentioned that the guideline of “challenge the idea, rather than the person” that was used during her IGR dialogue course on Race & Ethnicity helped her feel more confident about “speaking out”: “In the more recent weeks, everyone has been more confident in speaking out because you know we realize that conflict doesn’t have to be toward the person. It can be toward what they [are] saying, like the topic.”

Students discussed actively listening to their fellow peers, sharing their own opinions, and responding to conflicting perspectives during their IRC hot topics and “SJ talks.” As Cynthia explained, participating in IRC hot topics often involved, “Having a diverse group of people talk about issues that could be sensitive or controversial and just hearing all these different

perspectives.” In this way, dialoguing about their differences inside and outside of the classroom with their fellow MCSP peers allowed students to gain experience with addressing differing worldviews in a respectful and inclusive manner.

Even though students entered MCSP with differing knowledge of social justice topics and perspective-taking abilities, there were often socialized to respectfully and “gently” discuss controversial topics, which sometimes involved observing their peers explore both sides of the issue, or in the case of Megan, receiving guidance about how to do so. Megan recalled a “SJ talk” she had with her MCSP peers about the death penalty, where they helped her consider different sides of the issues that she had not previously considered:

I would say something and my friends wouldn't yell at me. They would just be: You have to think about this way and they'd bring up another point. I think they bring up very good points where it makes you think and if not change your mind, but you definitely think about their point...like see it from their point of view.

Although not all students participated in the “SJ talks” and IRC hot topics, the opportunity to take part in respectful and meaningful dialogic conversations within their residence hall with others that were passionate about social justice was a rather unique diversity experience. Peter summarized how MCSP taught him to engage across differences in a “balanced” way that involved both perspective-taking and “empathizing” with them:

MCSP has really impressed upon me the sense of fairness, of trying to approach things from a balanced way. Not just recognizing other people's opinions, but sort of empathizing with them. I think that's a powerful tool for anything. That's something I think I've kind of taken with me. The sort of idea you can put yourself in another person's shoes. If you can do that, it is a lot more effective. It is not argue things out or convince people, it's talk about it...And there is nothing wrong with compromising to reach a solution. You don't have to compromise your morality or your beliefs, but you can still work together.

When it came to engaging across differences, another important diversity experience was MCSP's "culture," as it related being part of a community that was diverse, open-minded, and social justice-focused.

The Diverse, Open-Minded, and Social Justice-Focused Culture of MCSP

In addition to mentioning specific curricular, co-curricular, and informal experiences, many students referred to "MCSP" more generally to describe how the integration of these various experiences influenced their outward and forward growth. Peter discussed "MCSP" more broadly when discussing his personal commitment to promoting social justice in his UC 102 final paper:

That is what I learned not just in UC102, but in MCSP as a whole. What we do should be about our community, our society, our friends, and our beliefs. Our actions should reflect what we profess to believe. In other words, it means thoughtful action to change your world.

While many alluded to the overlap between their various diversity experiences within MCSP, they also highlighted the importance of its lived culture that was diverse, open-minded, and social justice-focused. Tyler referred to numerous MCSP diversity experiences, and its culture, when describing what had influenced his personal and professional commitment to creating "small-scale" change:

I think social justice is like an awesome thing. It makes kids who maybe normally wouldn't have heard about it before -- like for me also. Learn a ton about race, gender, and just accepting people in general and what we can do as a personal activist to try and change that stuff.

As Tyler alluded to, students' year-long involvement in a social justice-focused and civic-minded community made a lasting impact in their ability to engage across differences, and their future plans to make the world a better place. Brandon also explained: "I feel like if you're in MCSP; you kind of like get immersed in social justice, so much that you just like -- You just

think about it all the time. In high school, I would never think about any of this. It is like a whole new world.” In relation to feeling “immersed in social justice,” Brandon discussed how being in a community of peers that were educated about social justice issues played a role in his outward and forward growth: “They’re more open minded and they’re willing to deal with different views and opinions than other people on campus may be.”

Several of the other students, including Ashley, Aisha, and Megan discussed that belonging to a unique community of diverse peers that were “open,” “accepting,” and very willing to talk about their social identities played an important role in their ability to engage across differences. As Megan explained: “You get into these other classes where there are discussions and you’re like, “Where are you coming from?” Because you’re hearing these people who aren’t open-minded and you realize MCSP is this secluded little bubble where people think that everything is cool in social identity or whatever.” Ashley also emphasized that the combination of the diverse MCSP community, and their willingness to talk about their various identities contributed to her ability to “gently” communicate across differences:

MCSP, you have people that are all different diversity – races, ethnic cultures. All the time you’re with them and you’re having fun. I can be the minority in the group and barely even notice. It was different and it made me realize how happy I am to be in MCSP, and how glad I am to have the opportunity to be open with all these people. Anybody in MCSP would be willing to talk about their racial identity and all that stuff so I think that’s cool.

Even though some of the students in the sample may have disagreed with Ashley’s statement about “anybody” being willing to talk about social justice issues, the fact that there was a critical mass of diverse students who were very willing to engage across their differences, and embodied MCSP’s values related to “making a difference,” positively influenced the sample’s outward and forward growth. As exemplified by many in the sample, the integration of their diversity experiences within the lived environment of MCSP positively contributed engaging in inclusive

and respectful interactions with those in their lives, and their commitment to creating “small-scale” change in the future. The following section explores how findings in this study connect to the literature on students’ engagement across differences, and their involvement in creating a more just society.

Conclusion

As highlighted throughout this chapter, students self-reported changes in their thought-processes, feelings, intentions, and actual behaviors toward others. They applied their burgeoning awareness of systems of power, privilege, and oppression to engaging across differences in more accepting and inclusive ways, and developing a sense of personal and professional responsibility to make the world a better place. Students’ outward growth involved the following outcomes: *cognitive, affective, and behavioral empathy*, along with *educating others*, and “*speaking out*” *against injustice*. The sample displayed forward growth in the form of *creating “small-scale” change in their everyday lives*, and *incorporating social justice into their future careers*.

The dimensions of empathy identified in this study are consistent with the definitions of in previous research (Batson & Ahmad, 2009; Konrath, et al., 2011; Stephan & Finlay, 1999; Wiseman, 1996). Students’ narratives around *perspective-taking* closely resembles its conceptualization within the diverse democracy and intergroup empathy literature (Finlay & Stephan, 2000; Hurtado, et al., 2012). *Intercultural openness* encompasses a combination of Wiseman’s (1996) “nonjudgemental” empathy attribute and Dovidio, et al.’s (2004) framework for prejudice reduction, along with the tolerance of diverse others (Hurtado, 2001). *Emotional understanding*, is closely tied to exhibiting an emotional reaction based other’s experiences with prejudice, discrimination, or other forms of bias, and *humanizing* relates to feeling compassion

for those that are marginalized in society (Finlay & Stephan, 1999; Konrath, et al., 2011). *Gently communicating across differences* is reflective of Wiseman's (1996) behavioral component of empathy referred to as "communicating the understanding."

Although "*speaking out*" against injustice maps onto the other-directed outcome of "challenge others on racial/ethnic/sexually derogatory comments" (Alimo, 2012; Nagda, et al., 2004), the literature has placed a stronger emphasis on social justice-related actions that focus on educating oneself, rather than *educating others* (Zuniga, et al., 2005). The concept of social action engagement relates to students' *personal and professional commitment to promoting social justice*, especially around continued efforts to spread awareness of social justice issues, challenge injustice, and engage with communities beyond students' first year in college (Bowman, 2012; Bowman, et al., 2011; Gurin, et al., 2004; Hurtado, et al., 2003; Nelson Laird, 2005; Jayakumar, 2008). However, this study adds to the literature by highlighting students' shifts in wanting to "change the world" to creating "small-scale" change. Moreover, very few studies have assessed how diversity experiences influence students' majors and career paths.

Students' outward and forward growth occurred across all three dimensions—cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal. They shared their *cognitive* knowledge of social justice issues with their peers, friends, and family members, and were able to hold multiple cultural frames through their development of perspective-taking. Students' *intrapersonal* growth, both in terms of their awareness of their social identities and values related to promoting social justice, influenced their desire to create "small-scale" change in their future lives and careers. Although some students did report cases of actual *interpersonal* growth, the majority spoke about their desire to engage in accepting, nonjudgmental, and respectful interactions with diverse others, and advocate for those that are oppressed. In this way, students' cognitive knowledge about

themselves, others, and the world around them enabled them to understand and interact with their peers, friends, and family members in ways they had not done prior to joining MCSP. Students' growth across these dimensions were often interconnected, and reinforced each other. For example, shifts in some students' thoughts and feelings toward others influenced to their "gentle" interactions with their peers, which relates to Dearthoff's (2006) conceptualization of empathy as an internal outcome associated with interpersonal growth. Some students discussed how their involvement in "speaking out" against injustice was motivated by thinking about how others who faced racism or heterosexism would "feel" if they overheard others' offensive language toward them, which reflected their cognitive knowledge of social justice issues, and development of affective empathy.

The findings in this chapter mirror the themes in Chapter Six, and affirm the findings in the IGD literature (Gurin, et al., 2013), in regards to the importance of engaging in dialogic conversations and hearing others' stories during students' participation in curricular, co-curricular, and informal diversity experiences. In many ways, MCSP allowed students to bridge these various diversity experiences so that they were "getting to know" their fellow peers and learning to dialogue across differences both in the classroom and in their lived environment. Moreover, being immersed MCSP's diverse, open-minded, and social justice-focused culture helped them to develop a personal and professional commitment to creating positive social change past their first year in MCSP.

Students' outward growth during their time in MCSP both support and raise questions about the findings of previous studies (Alimo, 2012; Broido, 2000; Reason, et al., 2005). Although Broido (2000) reported that students generally had to be invited to "speak out," there were mixed findings in this study. Although some students in the sample did advocate for others

on their own initiative, others stayed silent because they worried about how their actions would be received by others. Nevertheless, the fact that 77% of the sample reported being more motivated to “speak out” against injustice due to their involvement in MCSP holds promise. Even though more research is needed on what exactly precipitated these acts of “speaking out,” these preliminary findings suggest that MCSP experiences produced more comfort with engaging across differences and dealing with situations that involve conflict. As noted by several students, the culture within the MCSP community, and certain classes such as IGR, promoted an atmosphere where students experienced both “speaking out” and being “called out,” which more often than not, appeared to be a positive experience.

The fact that the majority of the students in their sample saw it as their “duty” and “responsibility” to create social change in their everyday lives speaks to MCSP’s goal of having its students develop a life-long commitment to promoting social justice. However, this study supports Reason, et al.’s (2005) findings that first-year students generally felt more comfortable with engaging in “small-scale” social change efforts that involved influencing those in their lives, rather than at the societal level. Although they struggled with their roles in creating “large-scale” change, 77% of the sample had either shifted their majors, minors, and career directions toward pursuing a path that could “benefit society,” or planned to create a more inclusive and respectful workplace.

Despite these promising findings, it is important to note that much of the diverse democracy and social justice education literature has not fully assessed the distinctions between students’ “actual” and “intended” actions, due to their use of self-reported survey data (e.g., Hurtado, et al., 2012; Gurin, et al., 2013). The gap between students’ inward and outward growth suggests that although some students may have the knowledge and tools to take action to

promote social justice, it does not necessarily mean that they will actually do so (Fuentes, et al., 2010). This study captures some of the contingencies associated with students' readiness to engage in social justice-related behaviors and presents some examples of possible intrapersonal barriers. For example, several of the students indicated that they were worried that they would come across as more righteous than those in their lives that were less educated about social justice issues, and that their outward actions would not be well-received. Moreover, some students continued to struggle with their inward growth of acknowledging their power and privilege in society, which lead to feeling self-conscious about "offending" others.

Exploring the recipients of students' social justice actions is a research area that has not received as much attention in the literature. Students often made distinctions between "receptive" and "less receptive" friends and family members. Less receptive groups named in the sample included hometown friends, those in Greek Life, and relatives that were more "close-minded" or "conservative." While some students such as Jason, Tyler, Megan, and Olivia were willing to engage with those in their lives that were less receptive, this did appear to be a tension for many of the students in the sample. Moreover, many of the students spoke about sharing their social justice knowledge and "speaking out" among peers and family members that had similar racial, gender, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Even though these forms of intragroup behaviors could be considered to be a way of utilizing their their power and privilege in society to enact social change, it may also suggest that intergroup anxiety or discomfort with engaging with conflict (Dovidio, et al., 2004; Gurin, et al., 2013) may have prevented them for engaging in outward behaviors with intergroup recipients in the same way.

The fact that some students got "stuck" in between awareness and action highlights the influence of students' pre-college experiences. As illustrated by Austin and Cynthia's comments

about wanting their actions to be “positive,” the majority of students that expressed hesitance or difficulty with translating knowledge of their own positionality and societal inequities into social-justice-related behaviors were White students, and White males in particular. While “opting out” from promoting social justice could be seen as a way of enacting their privilege, some of the White students in the sample may have still been coming to terms with their own power and privilege in society, or have felt uncomfortable engaging in situations that could potentially produce conflict (Chesler, et al., 2003; Gallagher, 2009). In this way, their social identity backgrounds and other pre-college factors may be contributing to the gaps between students’ motivation and confidence in engaging in social justice behaviors. In light of the connections between students’ pre-college experiences, engagement in differing diversity experiences within MCSP, and their social justice outcomes, Chapter Eight will further explore the different trajectories that existed within MCSP, which contributed to the sample’s inward, outward, and forward growth during their first year in college.

Chapter Eight: MCSP Trajectories

Although the interview sample, in general, displayed inward, outward, and forward growth during their first year in college, individuals varied in how they engaged in the various curricular, co-curricular and informal diversity experiences within MCSP. While some students voluntarily participated in numerous MCSP-affiliated diversity experiences including the community service trips, IRC hot topics, action team meetings, and “SJ talks,” others primarily limited their involvement to the required courses and interacting with their friends in MCSP. Through the process of creating and reviewing students’ meta-memos, I identified differences in the diversity experiences they engaged in during their first year in MCSP. These activities often corresponded with their primary motivation for joining the RLC⁷. Consequently, I identified and analyzed the engagement patterns of five distinct trajectory groups within the sample, based on which reason for joining MCSP they ranked first in their pre-interview surveys. As shown in Table 8.1, these trajectories were categorized as: the Service Enthusiasts, Location Scouts, Personal Connectors, Community Seekers, and Aspiring Change Agents.

⁷ Their rankings corresponded with the following trajectories:
Service Enthusiasts: “I liked MCSP’s focus on community service/service learning”
Location Scouts: “I wanted to live in East Quad” and “I wanted to live on Central Campus”
Personal Connectors: “It was recommended by someone I knew”
Community Seekers: “I was interested in being in more of a close-knit community”
Aspiring Change Agents: “I liked MCSP’s focus on social justice”

Table 8.1. Students' Engagement Patterns in MCSP by Trajectory⁸

Participants	Trajectory	Rating of Social Justice as Reason for Joining MCSP	1st Semester Engagement	2nd Semester Engagement	Returning Next Year
Aisha	Service Enthusiasts	2	Low	Moderate	No
Ashley	Service Enthusiasts	2	Moderate	Moderate	Yes
Garrett	Service Enthusiasts	5	Low	Low	No
Jenna	Service Enthusiasts	4	High	Moderate	No
Joshua	Service Enthusiasts	6	Moderate	Moderate	Yes
Tim	Service Enthusiasts	2	High	Low	No
Bryan	Location Scouts	5	Low	Moderate	No
Jason	Location Scouts	6	Moderate	Low	No
Megan	Location Scouts	2	Moderate	Moderate	No
Nate	Location Scouts	6	Low	Low	No
Tanya	Location Scouts	4	Low	Moderate	No
Zachary	Location Scouts	5	Moderate	Low	No
Austin	Personal Connectors	6	High	High	Yes
Owen	Personal Connectors	6	High	High	Yes
Stephanie	Personal Connectors	4	High	High	Yes
Tyler	Personal Connectors	5	High	High	No
Brandon	Community Seekers	3	Moderate	Low	No
Dylan	Community Seekers	2	High	High	Yes
Ethan	Community Seekers	5	High	High	Yes
Peter	Community Seekers	3	High	High	No
Cynthia	Aspiring Change Agents	1	Moderate	High	Yes
Olivia	Aspiring Change Agents	1	Moderate	High	Yes

The Service Enthusiasts and Aspiring Change Agents were drawn to MCSP's focus on community service and social justice, respectively. The Personal Connectors applied to MCSP based on a recommendation from family members or friends. The Community Seekers were

⁸ Coding used to determine first and second semester engagement patterns:
 Low - Mainly Requirements and/or 1 Voluntary Diversity Experience
 Moderate-2 Voluntary Diversity Experiences and/or "Off and On" Engagement
 High-3 Voluntary Diversity Experiences and/or On-Going Engagement

interested in belonging to a close-knit community. Location Scouts were particularly attracted to MCSP's location in the newly renovated East Quad and/or desirable setting on Central Campus.

In terms of their engagement patterns, most of the Community Seekers and the Personal Connectors were highly involved in MCSP during both semesters. The Community Seekers were often able to find "a sense of community" that they sought. In general, the Personal Connectors were also quite successful with establishing relationships with their fellow peers, and became involved in MCSP community service opportunities to a greater extent than the Service Enthusiasts. The Service Enthusiasts and Aspiring Change Agents, who articulated reasons for joining MCSP that were closely aligned with MCSP's values, had mixed patterns of involvement. The discrepancies in the Aspiring Change Agents' engagement patterns may have stemmed from the fact that some individuals initially had difficulty connecting with peers who shared their values related to social justice, given that many of the students they interacted with during their first semester were similar to the Location Scouts, and joined for the "wrong reasons." Moreover, several of the Service Enthusiasts commented that their actual engagement in MCSP-affiliated community service opportunities was different than their initial intentions, because beyond their Welcome Week and UC 102 community service requirements, their involvement was "up to them." As a result, the majority of the Service Enthusiasts enacted their interest in serving communities outside of MCSP and became more involved with volunteering for other U-M organizations. The Location Scouts, who appeared to have been attracted primarily to the physical location of the MCSP, were generally less involved in MCSP diversity experiences, and primarily focused on fulfilling the course requirements.

Table 8.2. Students' Most Meaningful⁹ MCSP Diversity Experiences by Trajectory

Participants	Trajectory	1st Semester	2nd Semester
Aisha	Service Enthusiasts	<i>Co-Curricular:</i> UC 102 Community Service Trip (Ronald McDonald House)	<i>Informal:</i> Met some "really good friends" in MCSP
Ashley	Service Enthusiasts	<i>Example Outside of MCSP:</i> Applying for job in residence hall	<i>Informal:</i> Becoming closer to MCSP community
Garrett	Service Enthusiasts	<i>Curricular:</i> UC 102/African American Studies SEM/Engineering CIVIC	<i>Example Outside of MCSP:</i> Alternative Spring Break/Church
Jenna	Service Enthusiasts	<i>Curricular:</i> UC 102 course	<i>Informal:</i> "Meeting people from all different backgrounds"
Joshua	Service Enthusiasts	<i>Co-Curricular:</i> UC 102 Community Service Trip (Brightmoor Gardens)	<i>Example Outside of MCSP:</i> Homeless Shelter/Dining Hall job
Tim	Service Enthusiasts	<i>Co-Curricular:</i> Human Rights Action Team	<i>Curricular:</i> Engineering CIVIC/Asian American Studies SEM
Bryan	Location Scouts	<i>Co-Curricular:</i> UC 102 Community Service (Greening of Detroit)	<i>Informal:</i> Meeting people with shared values/ <i>Curricular:</i> IGR Course
Jason	Location Scouts	<i>Co-Curricular:</i> UC 102 Community Service (Trick or Treat on the Huron River)	<i>Informal:</i> "Recognizing people and knowing them"/ <i>Curricular:</i> IGR Course
Megan	Location Scouts	<i>Informal:</i> Having meaningful conversations with MCSP friends/ <i>Curricular:</i> UC 151	<i>Curricular:</i> Project Outreach
Nate	Location Scouts	<i>Informal:</i> "Meeting all the people in MCSP, being friends with them"	<i>Informal:</i> PB&U Tour of Big House
Tanya	Location Scouts	<i>Curricular:</i> UC 151	<i>Informal:</i> Interacting with Peer Mentor
Zachary	Location Scouts	<i>Co-Curricular:</i> UC 102 Community Service (Greening of Detroit)/ <i>Curricular:</i> UC 151	<i>Curricular/Informal:</i> Cross-cultural interactions in Project Outreach/Hall
Austin	Personal Connectors	<i>Co-Curricular:</i> UC 102 Community Service (Huron River Clean-Up)	<i>Co-Curricular:</i> PACS Community Service Trip (Fuller Park Clean-Up)
Owen	Personal Connectors	<i>Informal:</i> "Friendly and open" people that are a part of MCSP	<i>Co-Curricular:</i> PACS Community Service Trip (Brightmoor Gardens)
Stephanie	Personal Connectors	<i>Co-Curricular:</i> Smile Bringer Singers/UC 102 Community Service (Fall Chore Day)	<i>Co-Curricular:</i> PACS Community Service Trip (Freedom House)
Tyler	Personal Connectors	<i>Co-Curricular:</i> UC 102 Community Service (Freedom House)	<i>Co-Curricular:</i> PACS Community Service Trip (Freedom House)
Brandon	Community Seekers	<i>Informal:</i> Having a group of people that share diversity/social justice values	<i>Co-Curricular:</i> Volunteering with MCSP during Detroit Day
Dylan	Community Seekers	<i>Informal:</i> Having a community of diverse peers who share similar goals	<i>Co-Curricular:</i> Volunteering with SHOCK
Ethan	Community Seekers	<i>Informal:</i> "Spontaneous discussions about social justice"	<i>Informal:</i> "Random talks in hall"
Peter	Community Seekers	<i>Curricular:</i> UC 151/ <i>Co-Curricular:</i> Volunteering with RUP Action Team	<i>Informal:</i> "Number of friends I've made through MCSP"
Cynthia	Aspiring Change Agents	<i>Co-Curricular:</i> Film Series/IRC hot topics	<i>Curricular:</i> IGR Course
Olivia	Aspiring Change Agents	<i>Informal:</i> Meaningful and supportive interactions with MCSP staff members	<i>Co-Curricular:</i> Engaging across differences during IRC hot topics

⁹ The interview protocols included a question about students' most meaningful diversity experiences during their two semesters in MCSP. Students' initial responses are included in the table, which in some cases included two different diversity experiences.

Despite the differences in the MCSP experiences that students within different trajectories found the most meaningful as shown above in Table 8.2., there were also some more predictable patterns. The Community Seekers tended to enjoy the informal interactions they had with their fellow peers, and the Aspiring Change Agents found their involvement in social justice-related activities to be quite impactful. Patterns also emerged in whether or not students would be returning to MCSP during their second year. For example, all of the Aspiring Change Agents were planning on becoming peer leaders, versus none of the Location Scouts. All but one of the Personal Connectors would also be returning, compared to half of the Community Seekers, and one-third of the Service Enthusiasts.

However, regardless of their trajectories, many of the students in the sample reported that they found participating in informal interactions and community service activities that allowed them to develop friendships with their fellow peers with different social identity backgrounds to be the most meaningful. Although many of the students reported that ongoing diversity experiences, such as their courses, IRC hot topics, and “SJ” talks, were the primary influences on their inward, outward, and forward growth, students reported enjoying participating in “one-time” community service activities because they allowed them to make a tangible difference in their communities. This finding may be due, in part, to the fact that most students reported a value related to “helping others” prior to joining MCSP.

Although the sample varied across trajectories in terms of their engagement patterns and most meaningful MCSP diversity experiences, the majority of the students reported growth in their inward, outward, and forward growth. However, some students exhibited greater changes in their social justice outcomes, especially with respect to their sense of “openness” toward engaging in MCSP’s focus on social justice and “choices” to engage in diversity experiences that

allowed them to stretch their comfort zones. For example, some students were more comfortable engaging in MCSP diversity experiences, such as community service trips and courses, that did not have an explicit focus on exploring systems of privilege, power, and oppression. Similarly, others chose to participate in curricular, co-curricular, and informal opportunities that did not challenge their ways of thinking, feeling, and acting about social justice issues. I will next present an overview of each trajectory, and highlight the stories of six students who exhibited particularly compelling variations in their engagement in diversity experiences and subsequent inward, outward, and forward growth during their time in MCSP.

Service Enthusiasts

The Service Enthusiasts included six students—Aisha, Ashley, Joshua, Tim, Garrett, and Jenna—who had rated MCSP’s “focus on community service” as their top reason for joining the RLC in their pre-interview surveys. Along with the Location Scouts, the Service Enthusiasts represented the trajectory with the largest amount of students in the sample. 80% of the Asian students, and the only two International students in the sample were in this trajectory. The Service Enthusiasts came from the most diverse pre-college communities, but possessed mixed initial interest in MCSP’s focus on social justice. Although Aisha, Ashley, and Tim rated this focus as their second reason for joining MCSP, it was in the bottom half of the reasons for wanting to be a part of the RLC for Garrett, Jenna, and Joshua.

Even though the Service Enthusiasts were all involved in community service activities over the course of their first year at U-M, many of these experiences occurred outside of MCSP. For several of these students, their volunteer work was connected to their major, such as Tim’s and Garrett’s involvement in engineering projects with youth in Detroit through the College of Engineering, and Jenna’s volunteer experiences at the U-M hospital as part of her Nursing

program. Some of the Service Enthusiasts, such as Garrett and Jenna, became involved with volunteering experiences that involved their fellow MCSP peers, but they were coordinated through the Ginsberg Center for Community Service and Learning, instead of MCSP. Consistent with their interest in community service, all of the Service Enthusiasts either took a “Project Outreach” course, or a service-focused experience connected to their major to meet their CIVIC requirement, rather than the IGR dialogue courses. Although Aisha expressed a strong interest in serving the community in her MCSP application and pre-interview survey, she did not participate in service opportunities beyond the UC 102 requirement, and actually never fulfilled her CIVIC requirement.

While several of the Service Enthusiasts reported that they found their MCSP-affiliated community services experiences meaningful, others reported opportunities to take social justice-oriented courses that they would not have otherwise taken, or interacting with more a diverse group of peers than they encountered in other spaces at U-M were most meaningful. In particular, Ashley, Aisha, and Joshua reported becoming more connected to their MCSP peers during their second semester. However, the other Service Enthusiasts had limited interactions with the MCSP community, and became more involved in other U-M activities over the course of their first year. Given that they were less engaged in MCSP-affiliated community service activities than their peers in many of the other trajectories, the Service Enthusiasts’ MCSP diversity experiences were mainly limited to the courses they took and the friendships with a few MCSP peers. While the majority of the Service Enthusiasts still demonstrated growth in their social justice outcomes, one particular student, Joshua, was less open to engaging in the social justice-oriented aspects of MCSP, which will be explored in his case study below in order to highlight how he exhibited fewer changes during his first year.

Case Study: Joshua. Although Joshua indicated that he was biracial in his pre-interview survey, he identified as White in his first interview because he was “fairly fair skinned.” His father was in academia, and due to a new job opportunity when Joshua was in the fifth grade, his family moved from a diverse, college town on the East Coast to a rural, homogeneous community in Northern Michigan that was home to a regional university. He described his neighborhood as “all-White,” but mentioned that because his father was Asian, “we were the only color in the neighborhood.” Even though Joshua explained that he was familiar with the “notions” of diversity and social justice before college, he ranked its focus on social justice as his last reason for joining MCSP:

I’m from a multicultural family. I guess the notion of diversity wasn’t a new concept. [Pause] – I guess social justice – I don’t know. It is not like a new concept either. Growing up in [my hometown in Michigan], where there definitely is a difference in how much families earn, I don’t know, social justice is like apparent in schools.

Instead, Joshua was drawn to MCSP for its focus on community service, as well as the opportunity to be in a close-knit community that was similar to the small town where he had spent most of his childhood. He spoke quite a bit about his passion for sustainability issues in his MCSP application, and explained that because his hometown “is a naturally beautiful place,” he was “raised to not only care and respect nature, but also do what I can to protect and sustain it.” Before joining MCSP, Joshua expressed a strong interest in engaging with his peers and the local community around environmental issues, which he was able to accomplish, although not entirely through the RLC.

During his first semester in MCSP, Joshua found several opportunities to engage in work on sustainability efforts within and outside of MCSP, which included enrolling in the first-year seminar (SEM), “College, Culture, and Sustainability-Living on a Changed Planet.” Although he said that “coming in, I wouldn’t say I was all about sustainability,” he explained that his

involvement in the course was now “definitely part of how I think about stuff,” and opened up a “new field of interest.” Within a few weeks of enrolling in the seminar, Joshua started attending meetings for MCSP’s Environmental Action Team, and joined the Student Food Co., which was a non-profit, U-M student-run organization that provided affordable and locally grown produce on campus. As part of the course, he became a member of the Planet Blue Ambassador program, and spoke about how his engagement in sustainability practices such as turning off the lights and using reusable water bottles had also “rubbed-off” on his roommate and friends.

Joshua was rather resistant to engaging in MCSP diversity experiences during his first semester that incorporated a focus on social justice. He commented that he was surprised at “how big of a part social justice was to MCSP, which is fine. I thought it was primarily community service.” He discussed how people are “always talking about controversial topics” and while it is “okay it is going on,” he was not actively seeking to participate in those types of conversations. Joshua also explained that there was a “group of MCSP kids who does social justice, but there also is a group who doesn’t,” and commented that he probably wasn’t in the “super activist group.” In fact, he had a rather critical view of his peers that were “super progressive:”

I guess listening to what people are saying you’d think they’d been suffering their whole life in all these things, but as it turns out they’re all well-off kids and attending the University of Michigan. So it seems almost like a disconnect; these people have never experienced anything like that -- are like the advocates for all these things.

In light of these criticisms, it is noteworthy that he did not see a connection between “advocating” for more sustainable practices and promoting social justice. When describing which SEM he chose to take, Joshua explained, “I think the other choices seemed a lot about social justice. And I would prefer to take an environment class.”

Joshua reported that he was “less engaged” in environmental issues during his second semester: “Last semester was more like what I was thinking about because I was in a class, an

environment class. This year I'm not, so I'm not thinking about it all the time. I'm probably a little less engaged but I still go to all the [Environmental Action Team] meetings." He commented that he was a "little less involved" in MCSP, but that "I'm more active than a lot of kids, who are not in the social justice part," and knew more people in his hallway compared to the previous semester. Instead of taking an IGR Dialogue course to fulfill his CIVIC requirement, he chose to enroll in a "Project Community" course, which involved volunteering at a local elementary school. He mentioned that his most meaningful experience during his second semester was actually his volunteer work with a local homeless shelter, which was independent from his involvement in MCSP

In relation to his inward growth, Joshua's narratives suggested that he experienced limited changes in his awareness of his positionality or societal inequities. He kept his distance from engaging in discussions about White privilege in particular, and referred to it as "like a trend in topic." Joshua discredited the existence of socioeconomic inequities in America, and implied that individuals' perceptions of their personal circumstances were more to blame than actual systemic oppression: "Poor people in the U.S. are not poor by any other measure, only in the U.S. so I think there's something to that in realizing how fortunate you actually are. Instead of thinking about, 'Oh, I don't have anything. Society isn't letting me succeed.'" When it came to his outward growth, he explained that although UC 102 and his CIVIC course had given him an "awareness of different perspectives," he felt that many of his fellow peers were closed-minded: "I find that people -- at least in my [CIVIC] discussion section experiences -- are less open to different perspectives than I am. I feel they're advocating how open they are to different perspectives, but it seemed they're actually not." Joshua did not report engaging in any inward or

outward actions beyond promoting sustainability practices, and did not seem have developed more emotional empathy toward his few peers.

Regarding his forward growth, he admitted that he was “passively doing things” and provided a rather vague response to his personal commitment to promoting social justice: “I don’t know what my commitment is or what that means to have a commitment to social justice...To me commitment seems like you’re actively trying to do something. And I feel like I’m passively doing things.” He seemed skeptical about whether he could integrate his “interest” in sustainability into his future career: “I guess I just don’t know how much someone can change -- how much an entry-level consultant or something can change a business’ practices regarding the environment -- like regardless of their opinions.” Although he stated, “I probably can’t pin down one thing I may have learned from MCSP,” he felt that he still got “something” out of it, and that it was a valuable experience. In fact, he was planning to return to MCSP during his second year as a peer leader, and felt that he could fulfill the requirements to “know enough about -- at least I think so about -- the Michigan community to help someone transition at least to like an elementary stage.” Given that he only loosely connected to MCSP throughout his first year, it is unclear what his motivations were for continuing his involvement with the RLC.

As Joshua’s case study illustrates, his involvement in MCSP was centered primarily around the required courses. Like several of the other Service Enthusiasts, he was more engaged in service-related activities outside of MCSP, such as the Student Food Co. and volunteering at the local homeless shelter. Nevertheless, the environmental-related seminar that he was enrolled in had a positive influence on his involvement in sustainability efforts, and he felt connected enough to the MCSP community to return for a second year. However, unlike the other Service Enthusiasts, he demonstrated a lack of openness to engaging in the social justice aspects of

MCSP. He saw a distinct separation between his interest in sustainability and promoting social justice, and also intentionally avoided interacting with his “activist” peers. Although he spoke about his desire to “make a difference,” his limited involvement in MCSP and hesitance around promoting social justice suggests that he may have also shared characteristics with several of the “Location Scouts,” who were often described by their peers as joining for the “wrong reasons.”

Location Scouts

The Location Scouts included six students—Bryan, Jason, Megan, Nate, Tanya, and Zachary—who rated “I wanted to live on Central Campus” or “I wanted to live in East Quad” as their top reason for joining MCSP in their pre-interview surveys. With the exception of Megan, MCSP’s focus on social justice was ranked toward the bottom of the Location Scouts’ reasons for joining MCSP, and both Nate and Jason rated it as their last reason. Two of the Location Scouts were students of color, but lived in predominately White hometowns and attended racially homogeneous high schools. Although Bryan and Nate gained some knowledge about social inequities prior to college, the majority of the Location Scouts were largely unaware of social justice issues before joining MCSP.

Similar to the Service Enthusiasts, the Location Scouts’ involvement in MCSP was mainly limited to required coursework, although some students attended a few action team meetings or MCSP-sponsored social events. Moreover, their participation in MCSP-affiliated community service and film series events was often linked to assignments or extra credit opportunities for these courses. Outside of MCSP, four out of the six of the Location Scouts were members of a fraternity or sorority.

Although the Location Scouts were less engaged in MCSP than many of their peers, they reported finding several MCSP diversity experiences meaningful, such as their cross-cultural

interactions with their hallmates, their UC 102 community service trips, and specific courses such as UC 151 and Project Outreach. Despite their limited involvement, the majority of the Location Scouts reported inward, outward, and forward growth during their time in MCSP. The only student that did not report much growth was Nate, who like Joshua, generally avoided engaging in the social justice-related experiences within MCSP.

Although several of the Location Scouts were enrolled in courses such as UC 151 and/or IGR courses that were found to be key influences on students' social justice outcomes, these decisions were sometimes happenstance and not always based on the course's focus on social justice. However, in all of the cases except for Nate, the Location Scouts were open to engaging in the social justice-related content within the courses. Although they were not always as active in the co-curricular aspects of MCSP, the Location Scouts benefited from living amongst a diverse group of peers. Especially for those involved in sororities or fraternities, knowing others outside of this community seemed to somewhat prevent the self-segregation that can often happen within Greek Life at U-M. Despite the fact that many of the Location Scouts had positive experiences during their time in MCSP, no one was returning as a peer leader in MCSP during their second year, and all were planning on living off campus, either in their fraternity or sorority house, or with peers who were not affiliated with MCSP.

Two case studies are presented to highlight how students within the Location Scout trajectory both intentionally and unintentionally engaged with the social justice-related activities within MCSP. Nate's story may resemble the trajectories of other Location Scouts who joined MCSP for the "wrong reasons." Jason's story, on the other hand, highlights how MCSP influenced some initially resistant students to engage in meaningful ways around social justice issues.

Case Study: Nate. As White and middle class, Nate easily blended into his homogeneous and suburban neighborhood. It was only his religious identity as Jewish that set him apart from his fellow peers. He attended a private Jewish school until fifth grade, and then transferred into the public school system where he was one of “maybe 10 or 15 Jews in my class out of almost 400 kids.” At his new public school, Nate recalled a few instances of discrimination from his sixth grade classmates, where “people would say bad things they hear from their parents” and “somebody would throw a quarter at me, and stuff like that.” Given the religious differences between himself and those in his predominately Christian neighborhood and secondary schools, Nate spent the majority of his time after school and on the weekends in the “Jewish part” of his suburb. Nate described the Jewish community he belonged to as a “very comforting, supportive, bubble” and mentioned that the majority of his pre-college friends were Jewish.

Nate reported that his pre-college experiences with his religious identity gave him a deeper understanding of societal inequities, and said he “didn’t think it was truly hatred; it was just people messing around.” As he described, “Especially being Jewish. I mean there are plenty of people out against us and things like that, so I’m definitely aware that there are racial and social inequalities.” Nate also mentioned that he had developed knowledge about social justice issues during high school from his history classes, and “just watching the news.” During his first interview, he recalled a time when his high school teacher had said, “You think America is all good now, but women still make 70 cents on the dollar and things like that,” to highlight his preexisting knowledge of social justice issues before joining MCSP.

Nate was drawn to MCSP because his cousin who had recently graduated from U-M “suggested I apply for a learning community just to snag a spot on Central Campus.” As part of

his “strategy,” Nate and several of his friends applied together: “I want to say five of us got in, and one did not.” Like several of the Location Scouts, including Jason, Zachary, and Megan, Nate planned to join Greek Life, which weighed heavily into his decision to apply to MCSP:

I put MCSP first because with the research one, I knew I wanted to pledge and rush and all that so I wanted to do one that -- I heard that the research one is a pretty high commitment. You do research four hours a week and stuff like that and so I wanted to give myself some leeway in my schedule, so I chose MCSP because it was probably an easier workload than the other one.

Interestingly, Nate was the only student in the sample who openly mentioned MCSP’s location as a reason for joining MCSP in his housing application.

Throughout his time in MCSP, Nate was mindful of keeping his involvement in MCSP to a minimum. Like most of the other Location Scouts, his participation in MCSP was primarily centered upon completing the three course requirements. Nate chose to take the first-year English course, “Creative Arts and Community” to fulfill his SEM requirement, which was one of the SEMs that was the least focused on social justice. Nate commented that “it wasn’t that invigorating or stimulating in my eyes.” He cited his own “attitude” as the reason he didn’t benefit much from attending the UC 102 lectures, and described his approach to taking the course: “My mindset was that -- first, it was at 6 to 8 and I wanted to be done. I knew consciously that it might not reflect much on my grades...I’m sure I could have gotten more out of it, had I not approached it that way.” Like the lectures, Nate also avoided engaging in his required UC 102 community service trip in meaningful ways. In his final paper, Nate described his contribution to participating in the AIDS Walk: “all I did was essentially eat, walk, talk, eat some more, and leave.” Nate reported that he found it “pretty meaningful to branch out and meet different people” within the residence hall, but that he had once again become part of the Jewish “bubble” after joining his predominately Jewish fraternity:

Being in college, especially in East Quad, is a pretty unique blend of people so I've gotten to see a lot of other cultures, ethnicities and it's been pretty cool. I-I wouldn't say I like...I haven't isolated myself by any means but during welcome week and during the first couple of weeks when I really got to know -- the blend has been off kind of falling back a little bit into the Jewish scene.

Despite "falling back" into the Jewish scene, Nate's informal interactions with a diverse group of MCSP peers remained the most meaningful experience of his first semester.

During his second semester, Nate opted to take the Project Outreach course to fulfill his CIVIC requirement, which was focused on volunteering at the Veteran's Affairs hospital. He described his volunteering experiences there as: "It is kind of -- pardon my French but -- bitch work almost. A lot of paperwork and cleaning chairs and stuff like that." He reported that although he still primarily associated with other Jews, he had gotten to know more MCSP students through his Project Outreach and Statistics courses. In fact, many of the friends that he had made in East Quad were Christian, which was interesting in light of his pre-college experiences: "I'm not normally with Christians all the time -- at least on a friendly basis -- because all my friends were Jewish. I don't know; I like them a lot." However, during the second semester, the majority of Nate's friends were also affiliated with sororities and fraternities, rather than those outside of the Greek Life system, whom he and his fraternity brothers referred to "God damn independent" or GDIs.

Nate's minimal involvement in his MCSP curricular and co-curricular diversity experiences did little to influence his inward and outward growth. He gave vague responses about his understanding of his own positionality and knowledge of societal inequities during both interviews: "Whites just seem to be in charge almost in society. And that's just kind of how it has always been and [pause] -- whether it is right or wrong I'm not sure but, um --." Similarly, when it came to engaging in outward actions, he provided a very distanced answer:

I think -- I mean honestly it is all very circumstantial. It depends on a lot of factors like: who I'm with or just a lot of scenarios. I would say I feel [pause] -- I guess I'd say I feel more inclined now than before to do something if I thought it was unjust and I could do something to prevent it or stop it. I'd say being exposed to different -- you know different people have kind of -- It would lead me toward that.

Although it was uncertain if he would actually educate others or "speak out," he mentioned that he might feel more "inclined" to act based on his cross-cultural interactions over the course of his first year.

Nate expressed hesitance when it came to explaining his forward commitment to creating social change, and used words like "mellow" and "neutral" to discuss how he had not particularly found his "passion" yet. Interestingly, his proclivity toward making a difference through "charity" that he discussed in his UC 102 application surfaced again during one of his interviews:

I mean obviously I could [pause] give a homeless man money. I mean I could do small things like that. And I'm sure -- I look at Dan Gilbert. He does a lot of work in Detroit. He is kind of helping rebuild it, but then again he has like four billion dollars net worth, and I don't. I haven't thought about ways to improve it. I don't know. I'm sure there are some minor ones but --

Although Nate mentioned that he could possibly "do small things" to improve the world, it wasn't something that he had actively thought about. Nate's career aspirations of becoming a doctor didn't change over the course of the year, but he did mention that MCSP possibly influenced his decision to pursue a Spanish major in order to expand his opportunities in the medical field: "I guess the appreciation of other cultures through MCSP is kind of, perhaps, influenced my decision to major in Spanish -- maybe." However, even then, he still seemed rather unsure if MCSP had truly played a role in his forward growth. Nate commented that being bilingual could be "pretty practical," so his possible new major may have been more connected to advancing his future career. Nate was not planning to return to MCSP, and instead would be

living with his fraternity brothers during his second year. When I asked about whether anything could have increased his engagement in MCSP, he provided yet another vague reply by stating it just “wasn’t his cup of tea”:

It probably would have been the same. I see the flyers. I mean right outside my door is a bulletin board and I see all the events coming up. It is just not really my cup of tea. They make you take a few required classes, and so I still get my MCSP involvement there. I don’t really know if there is much that could have been done to change my involvement. I just don’t think it is totally for me.

By taking a “few required courses,” Nate felt that he gained his desired amount of MCSP involvement during his first year.

Nate intentionally chose to be a part of MCSP due to his perception of the less rigorous requirements compared to the other RLCs, and circumscribed his involvement to mainly just fulfilling the course requirements. Nate’s pre-college experiences with living within the Jewish “bubble” also reproduced itself at U-M; however, in an interesting twist, he was able to develop closer friendships with Christians, which was very much lacking during his childhood. He chose MCSP-affiliated experiences that did not challenge his pre-existing understanding of his positionality and social justice issues, and he showed little change in his social justice awareness and actions during his time in MCSP. In comparison, his fellow Location Scout, Jason, did encounter MCSP experiences that challenged his viewpoints, and experienced inward and outward growth, as explored below in his case study.

Case Study: Jason. Prior to joining MCSP, Jason grew up in a small town in Western Michigan that was “90 to 95% White, upper-middle class.” He explained that he was not particularly aware of social justice issues while growing up, but knew “what diversity meant” because his mother worked as a diversity consultant for a large home goods company. Jason rated MCSP’s focus on social justice as his last reason for joining MCSP on his survey and was

surprised by how much emphasis was placed on it when he joined the RLC, “I didn’t know it was going to be so much social justice stuff...I thought it was going to be like on volunteering and outreach whereas, it is more about changing the system. And that is fine, but I just didn’t know what it was.”

Given that MCSP’s focus on social justice was more of a surprise, his involvement in MCSP diversity experiences occurred in somewhat of a happenstance matter. Jason explained that he had wanted to take a first-year seminar in the English department during his first semester, but they were already closed when he was registering for courses. Instead, he enrolled in a seminar called “Nonviolence from Montgomery to the Modern Day” which was offered through the African American Studies department. He was initially hesitant about being in the course: “What do I want to take an African American Studies class for? I’m not an African American.” However, despite this uncertainty about his “place” in the course, he was able to develop some important insights and found it to be an enjoyable experience: “You can understand why these people would do -- why they like do sit-ins for 40 days straight or do the nonviolent protests when people are getting shot next to them. I really like history too, so it was cool thing.”

Although he was fairly receptive to the course content in his African American Studies seminar, he displayed quite a bit of resistance to the social justice-related discussions during UC 102. As he described: “It kind of seems the school [U-M] is trying to push stuff down your throat, and that’s fine. It is just sometimes they go about it in a little coercive way...just like the discussion sections, there are one or two that I just came out and was like, “That was way too much. They got to cool it.” When it came to “cooling it,” Jason was particularly adamant that too much attention was being placed on recognizing his White privilege:

It felt like it was shaming me for being White and making me feel bad. I didn't choose to be born this way. It is like it just happens. I know it is supposed to show me that there are other people who aren't as well-off as me but, at the same time when it is kind of like affirmative action. When you make it unequal, make it easier for someone just because of the color of their skin to get in, it is unfair to the White people. It just kind of felt like -- it was anti-racism.

During his second semester, Jason was assigned to the "White Racial Identity" IGR dialogue, which was not one of his top choices. Despite being initially disappointed, he considered his IGR courses to be one of the most meaningful experiences during his time in MCSP, because it pushed him outside of his comfort zone and led to new ways of thinking, feeling, and acting in relation to himself, his peers, and the world around him.

In regards to his inward growth, Jason was particularly resistant to acknowledging his own Whiteness during UC 102, however, he mentioned in his final paper that his participation in the course led to a shift in his perspectives about economic disparities:

I considered myself financial conservative before coming to school, meaning I believed low taxes and less aid for those less fortunate. After reading the article and discussion in class, I thought deeply [a]bout the issue. In my internal argument, I could not find a reason to support my previous beliefs.

Based on his new insights about economic disparities, he recalled a conversation he had with one of his fraternity brothers, "It is always the race card that is played, where it is really like social levels and where you come from and your upbringing and socioeconomic levels." Despite his initial resistance to engage in social justice-related conversations, especially around White privilege, Jason actively reflected on what he had learned during UC 102 and shared this newfound knowledge with others.

Jason built upon his new understandings of societal inequities during his time in his IGR course, and now saw the intersections between racial and socioeconomic disparities:

I: I remember last time you talked a little bit about different social justice issues. One was the importance of like social class versus race in terms of where a lot of inequalities come from.

Jason: I think those problems are intertwined. Because there's a reason that people of color are lower because they never had any of the advantages that White people did, so they've always been lower and it is really, really, hard to break the glass ceiling.

I: Do you feel like you see them more intertwined now than you did in the past?

Jason: I think so. We did the thing about the history of the GI Bill. It was all White people that got it, and that's like thousands of people that got into the middle class and all their kids since -- it is really hard to get, so there are definitely things that made it that there is a huge white middle class. That is the problem; they never had any of those big programs.

In light of the fact Jason was “very against affirmative action,” during his first semester, he commented that because of his participation in his IGR course: “My perceptions of affirmative action were changed. Just like speaking for people of color -- it is not my -- I can't talk from experience or talk about it because I've never experienced that.” By learning more about how racism currently existed in society and hearing the perspectives of his fellow White peers, Jason was able to challenge his previous ways of thinking, and develop new insights about his positionality and societal inequities during his time in MCSP.

In terms of his outward growth, Jason was able to translate his newfound awareness of racial inequities into outward actions toward his fraternity brothers. During his second interview, he explained that he had recently become more aware of their “racist” comments, and was making it a point to challenge their biased language:

Jason: I'm definitely more aware. I'm in a fraternity, and there are a lot of biased people in fraternities; and I hate that stuff.

I: Did you notice it before?

Jason: Yeah, but I wouldn't care about it as much. There's some shit where it is just like - - oh, excuse me. It is like, “What are you talking about?” It is 2014, get over it. There are people who are overtly racist. We have a Black pledge list in Winter and people are still making racist comments. “Are you kidding me? It is a person; you don't say that.” So it is standing up, and making it more like uncomfortable for people.

Despite his inward and outward growth, Jason still exhibited uncertainty about his involvement in promoting social justice in the future: “I would definitely always support those things like vote, and [share] my personal opinion. I think what I can do is talk with my friends, and talk with people I interact with, to promote social justice, but I don’t think I can directly do anything.” Although he did not think there was anything he could do “directly,” Jason’s greater motivation to educate others and “speak out,” especially with his fraternity brothers, still alluded to his ability to create change on a smaller-scale. Like Joshua, he was considering pursuing an environmental-related major, but didn’t think his future career would connect to social justice. He was also planning on living in his fraternity house during his second year, rather than returning to MCSP.

Both Jason and Nate rated MCSP’s focus on social justice as their last reason for joining the RLC. Yet, they differed in their openness to engaging in MCSP-affiliated diversity experiences. While his “choices” were not entirely intentional, Jason’s willingness to engage in diversity experiences that challenged his prior understandings led to his inward and outward growth. He left his first year in MCSP with a greater understanding of socioeconomic and racial inequities, and was able to acknowledge how White privilege operated in society and in his own life. He also translated his knowledge of systems of privilege, power and oppression into “speaking out” against racism and other inequities among those in his life. As described in the next section, unlike Jason, some students had a better understanding of what MCSP entailed due to their personal connections with those already familiar with the RLC.

Personal Connectors

The four Personal Connectors in the sample— Tyler, Stephanie, Owen, and Austin— reported that they joined MCSP because someone they knew recommended it. Both Stephanie

and Owen had siblings who had been members of MCSP, and Tyler and Austin had been encouraged to apply to MCSP by friends from their hometown. All the Personal Connectors ranked MCSP's "focus on social justice" as their fourth, fifth, or last reason for applying. Like the Location Scouts, they were raised in predominately White hometowns and generally attended high schools that lacked racial diversity. However, unlike Location Scouts, the Personal Connectors were highly involved in numerous diversity experiences within MCSP. Many of them joined action teams, attended IRC hot topics, participated in several social events, and performed community service activities outside of their UC 102 requirements. During his first semester alone, Austin was enrolled in two first-year seminars, participated in three community service events, attended two IRC hot topics, and volunteered several times a month with the Smile Bringer Singers, which was a MCSP-affiliated student organization that performed uplifting songs for retirement homes and other places in the local community. In fact, all of the Personal Connectors participated in reoccurring community service events with Smile Bringer Singers, the Freedom House, and Brightmoor Youth Gardens, and actively attended other events and meetings sponsored by PACS, PB&U, and the IRC.

The Personal Connectors' sustained involvement in MCSP community service activities during both semesters was a hallmark among this group of students. Although it was the Service Enthusiasts that ranked MCSP's focus on community service as their top reason for joining the RLC, it was actually the Personal Connectors who were the most involved in MCSP these co-curricular experiences. Perhaps as a result of their high involvement in MCSP throughout their first year, 75% of the Personal Connectors planned to return to MCSP for their second year, this time as peer leaders. With the exception of Owen, who reported limited changes during his time in MCSP, the Personal Connectors displayed inward, outward, and forward growth. In particular,

Stephanie's story is compelling because her experiences in MCSP helped her discover a passion for a new social justice-oriented career field.

Case Study: Stephanie. Stephanie grew up in a college town in Michigan that she described as similar to Ann Arbor. While it was still predominately White, Stephanie mentioned that it was “a really accepting place because the [nearby university] brings in people from Asia and Nigeria and places all over the world, and that is actually how my parents came here.” Stephanie's family had immigrated from Africa, and she grew up amongst “a little community” of those who were also from their particular country. Although Black student population at her high school was close to 15%, she commented that it was still predominately White, and so were the majority of her friends.

Although Stephanie mentioned that she was “sheltered” when it came to learning about social justice issues prior to college, she had developed an early awareness of her racial identity as a “high achieving African American person,” because she was often the only Black person in her classes. During her first interview, she recalled an incident during her junior year where her Calculus teacher “was joking about how my name rhymed with a lot of things...he said, ‘ghetto...and I was the only Black person, so stuff like that you notice.’” Thus, despite growing up in a more diverse and “accepting” environment, Stephanie encountered microaggressions prior to college, which was also echoed in the narratives of other students of color.

Her older brother's experiences in MCSP prompted Stephanie to apply to the RLC. He had joined MCSP three years prior as a freshman, and Stephanie noticed how much “fun he was having” when she visited him on overnight stays. Based on her prior experiences with being the only Black person in predominately White spaces, she sought a more diverse community:

My parents wanted me to join HSSP or the other ones, more associated with Science and Math. But I think MCSP was more important to me just because if I don't decide to

continue with this Pre-Med track [pause]. I knew there would be a bunch of different people from MCSP coming from a variety of different backgrounds and majors and whatever. I wanted just like -- I guess a more diverse environment in respect to backgrounds, academically, socioeconomically, racially.

Although she had rated MCSP's focus on social justice as her fourth reason for applying, she was surprised by how much she learned about social justice issues during her time in MCSP: "You learn so much about social justice and identity and disparities, which I didn't even consider." Stephanie commented that she didn't "see many people like me" in many of her U-M classes and around campus. However, she was able to encounter the more diverse environment that she had been seeking in MCSP: "Because there are a lot of different types of people and backgrounds so like -- I don't have to be the only person like me as much in the MCSP community." Interestingly, although she did have a Black roommate whom she became close to, the majority of her friends in MCSP possessed similar characteristics to those from her high school: "We all come from a college town, and they're all Caucasian."

Similar to Nate, Stephanie took the "Creative Arts in the Community" SEM during her first semester in MCSP. She reported that it was "focused a little bit more on creative arts than community," but gained more social justice knowledge through her experiences in UC 102. She was actively involved in co-curricular and informal diversity experiences within MCSP, including joining the Environmental Justice Action Team, attending several IRC hot topics, engaging in informal "SJ" talks with her hallmates, and volunteering weekly with the Smile Bringer Singers.

Stephanie continued to volunteer with the Smile Bringer Singers during her second semester in MCSP and also participated a few other community service activities. In particular, she found her community service trip to the Freedom House in Detroit with the Borders and Immigration Action Team to be an especially meaningful experience because her African

background allowed her to connect with the refugees: “This one lady was like, ‘You look like my friend.’...They all noticed that I didn’t look like everyone else, so I felt like I connected with them more.” In order to fulfill her CIVIC requirement, Stephanie enrolled in the Race & Ethnicity IGR dialogue course, and also found it to be an influential experience during her time in MCSP.

In relation to her inward growth, Stephanie commented that hearing her fellow peers’ stories during UC 102 led her to reflect on the “labels” that society ascribed onto her:

I enjoyed the panels. I remember one with previous MCSP alumnus...Hearing her perspective on how she grew up in a predominantly White community, and she’s the only Indian one. She had this discrepancy in her life. It was like something I was able to relate to...For instance to the outside, I just look like another African American person. So many people think I’m from Detroit, just because there is a large community of Black Detroiters here. But to me, I’m Ethiopian. I grew up in a very cultural African household so just recognizing that society will put that label on me but I can also have my personal identity. That stuck out to me.

Additionally, she was able to develop a greater understanding of her positionality by realizing that she had privileges in her life, such as “coming from a little bit higher socioeconomic class...and being at university, I think that’s a huge privilege. Even though she approached her Race & Ethnicity IGR course with the mindset that she already “knew so much” because of her prior experiences in MCSP, she explained that hearing the “stories” of her fellow peers with other racial identities enhanced her perspective-taking abilities. She was also able to develop more intercultural openness toward those with more privileged identities, including reevaluating her stereotypes of White “frat boys.” During one particular IGR class session, she and her fellow classmates were asked to share their “testimony” about their experiences with their racial identity. During his testimony, one of the White males in her class spoke about his involvement with tutoring teens at a juvenile detention center. She explained his story helped her to realize that: “Wow, he is much more than his identity of being in Greek life.’ You know he also does

other things. I think that was pretty powerful for me to know that about him.” Thus, Stephanie was able to develop cognitive and emotional empathy toward her fellow peers while participating in dialogic conversations during her time in MCSP.

Along with her inward and outward growth, Stephanie strengthened her forward commitment to promoting social justice, especially in regards to environmental issues. She developed an interest in health disparities due to experiences in MCSP and a Public Health course, which prompted her to participate in Alternative Spring Break (ASB). Her ASB trip involved volunteering with Growing Hope, an organization that “deals with the problem of people of color and people of lower socioeconomic status and their lack of access to fresh healthful cheap foods” by creating urban gardens in the Midwest. As a result of her experiences with ASB, she decided to seek out opportunities to become more involved with gardening efforts, and secured an internship at U-M’s botanical garden for the summer. She explained, “I think because of doing MCSP and getting the internship, I’m thinking about switching my major path.” While she was initially pre-med and thinking of majoring in neuroscience, she was now considering the environmental health science program offered through the U-M School of Public Health. When describing her current connection to the MCSP community and commitment to creating social change at the end of the year, she commented:

I feel very connected. I feel like I know a lot of people within the MCSP community. I feel like the friendships in MCSP and the people I’ve met are more meaningful...guess it is all of our commitments to social justice issues and, um --- At the same time, we’re all trying to find our place in the university, in the world, I guess.

As it turned out, Stephanie would have the opportunity to remain connected to many of the MCSP peers that she had grown close to and to explore her “place” in the world, because she was returning to MCSP during her second year as a peer leader.

As shown through Stephanie's story, she displayed inward, outward, and forward growth, despite being exposed to a more diverse pre-college environment and possessing prior awareness of her social identities. Like many in the sample, the opportunity to hear her fellow peers' stories, both during the UC 102 and IGR courses, allowed her to continue to build upon her social justice knowledge, and develop empathy for others. Similar to the other Community Seekers, she actively participated in community service activities within MCSP, including her weekly involvement in Smile Bringer Singers. Moreover, she was exposed to a new field of interest during her time in MCSP, which led her to shift her major and plans toward working on environmental issues. Similar to Nate, she developed friendships with peers who resembled her pre-college friend circle. However, she was still able to encounter a more diverse environment within MCSP compared to other spaces that she encountered at U-M. Just as Stephanie joined MCSP for its diverse community, the Community Seekers had also hoped to find a close-knit and welcoming group of peers within the RLC.

Community Seekers

The Community Seekers—Ethan, Dylan, Peter, and Brandon—consisted of two White and two Multiracial Males. Their top reason for joining MCSP was to be in a “tight-knit” community, and all had rather social and outgoing personalities. Unlike the Location Scouts and Personal Connectors, they attended more diverse high schools, but grew up in mainly racially homogeneous neighborhoods. The majority of the Community Seekers were more drawn to MCSP's focus on social justice than students following the previous trajectories, and rated it as their second or third reason for applying.

In general, they were highly involved in MCSP, especially in regards to their informal interactions with their fellow MCSP peers. True to their name, they listed the “community” as

one of the most meaningful aspects of their participation in MCSP. With the exception of Brandon, they maintained a sustained commitment to a particular MCSP diversity experience which often occurred on a weekly basis, such as the case with Peter's involvement with tutoring children at a local community center, Dylan's participation with SHOCK, a substance abuse prevention program for elementary school students, and Ethan's regular attendance at IRC meetings and dialogues. Given their social nature, they especially appreciated the opportunities to engage in dialogic conversations about social justice issues both within and outside of the classroom. Overall, 50% of the Community Seekers planned to return to MCSP during their second year, and the other two had strongly considered returning, but instead secured paid positions in other residence halls. Even though the majority of the Community Seekers reported inward, outward, and forward growth, Ethan's story is particularly notable. As described below, he progressed from being previously unfamiliar with the concept of "social justice" to actively participating in many of the IRC's activities that heavily centered upon raising awareness about social justice issues.

Case Study: Ethan. Unlike many of the other White males in the sample, Ethan attended a high school that was racially diverse. However, he mainly lived within a White "bubble" outside of his school, and spent most of his time in "homogenous upper-class white neighborhoods." He ranked MCSP's focus on social justice as his fifth reason for applying to the RLC, and reported that he was unfamiliar with "what social justice was" prior to attending U-M. Although living in a "closer" community was his "number one" reason for joining MCSP, he also was similar to the Location Scouts in that "the location was a bonus...I didn't really know much about it, but I knew it wasn't North Campus [laughs]." Although Ethan was not familiar

with all of MCSP's goals prior to joining the RLC, he embraced the opportunity to become involved in its focus on social justice.

During his first semester, Ethan was enrolled in three MCSP courses: UC 102, a first-year seminar offered through the English Department called "Food, Community, and Farming," and a "Project Community" course to fulfill his CIVIC requirement. Outside of his coursework, he actively discussed social justice issues with his MCSP peers through the IRC hot topics, along with "SJ talks" in his hall. Ethan explained that "just the spontaneous discussions about social justice" that occurred in dorm rooms and lounges "when you don't actually want to do work and just want to talk to other people" were the most meaningful aspect of his MCSP experiences during his first semester, which reflected his engagement in the lived culture within MCSP.

During his second semester, Ethan regularly attended IRC meetings and dialogues, and continued to participate in social justice-related conversations in his hall. Even though he felt that his involvement in MCSP had dropped off a little bit, Ethan once again mentioned the informal social justice talks as the most meaningful experience of the second half of his time in MCSP: "The most meaningful was just the random talks in our hall just about like -- life, exchanging our opinions and things like that. I think that is the most meaningful stuff. It is so organic. It is not organized; it just kind of comes about." In addition to talking about social justice issues in his courses, Ethan also appreciated the opportunities to have more casual dialogic discussions with his peers about these topics within their living spaces. Ethan also participated in his fourth MCSP-affiliated course, the Sociology of Suffering, which was essentially an extra MCSP course since he had already met the program requirements.

He noted that the growth of his knowledge of social justice issues had been "cumulative," and that "I'm either in UC class, in SOC class, doing homework for these, just living in the hall -

- so I think it builds up pretty quickly." Through this "build up," Ethan developed a greater awareness of his privileged identities: "I really started to think about how privileged I am to have grown up--White is very privileged, upper middle class very privileged, and male very privileged." In light of his newfound familiarity of his positionality, Ethan discussed the "progress" he had made by bashfully recalling a conversation he had with a friend during high school where he dismissed the campus climate issues at U-M and showed little empathy for students of color who were struggling with finding a sense of belonging on campus:

She had heard that the racial climate is pretty segregated at Michigan...and that minorities didn't necessarily feel a part of the school. And this appalls me that I said this...She remembers me saying, "Why do you care? It is not necessarily going to affect you because you're White." And it appalls me that I said that, but I think it also shows you the progress I've made.

Along with developing a greater understanding of his own social identities, Ethan became more aware of the societal inequities that existed in his other U-M extracurricular activities, which included student organizations focused on sports and business. He noticed that similar to himself, many of his fellow peers in these U-M organizations were "all White" and from higher social classes, which caused him to reflect on why this was the case: "Maybe an explanation is -- who is interested in sports? White males and that is a lot of who it is. Who tends to be interested in sports, who can afford to go to sporting events? And it is upper class, upper middle class." While Ethan was no stranger to homogeneous environments, he became more conscious of the racial and class disparities in his life during his time in MCSP.

Ethan commented that his growth had slowed during the second half of his time in MCSP: "So like going back to my nerdy math sense, but I guess you could say over first semester I was constantly changing, constantly growing. It's kind of been slowing. It is still growing, but it is growing at a slower rate." However, his "Sociology of Suffering" course

allowed him to further develop his capacity for empathetic understanding through listening to others, “validating” them, and recognizing that “each person has their own unique blend of identities.” Moreover, Ethan’s outward actions continued to increase throughout his time in MCSP. During his second semester, he commented on the “progress” he had made in terms of acting on the social justice-related knowledge that he had gained by “talking it out” when it came to sharing his own lived experiences and discussing controversial topics:

One thing is I definitely share my experiences more with others. Or, first importantly, I notice these more often; that’s definitely the most -- I’m much more aware, so that’s definitely been the biggest change. Two, I talk to people about these experiences. And three, I’ve done a better job of being calm and talking it out, instead of just like either A, choosing to ignore it, or B, being confrontational.

Through talking with those in his life about his social identities and important social justice issues, Ethan moved beyond just being “aware” and channeled his newfound knowledge into engaging across differences in a “calm” manner and educating others about what he had learned during his time in MCSP.

At the end of his first year in MCSP, Ethan had gone from not really knowing what social justice was, to making a commitment to create positive change in the organizations that he belonged to: “Positively changing any organization, really spreading awareness of social justice, and also especially for next year in MCSP...making sure people are more engaged in the community--those are kind of the big goals.” While his interest in pursuing a business major and a career in sports management had not shifted much during his time in MCSP, he was committed to integrating his awareness of social justice into his future plans. Not only that, but he was returning to MCSP as a peer leader, a role that would involve engaging in social justice-related conversations with the next cohort of first-year students. Ethan also hoped to create a community for these new students, just as he had been fortunate enough to find during his time in MCSP.

Like his fellow Community Seekers, a key diversity experience was Ethan's informal interactions with other MCSP peers in his hall. Through his "cumulative" MCSP experiences, which included taking four MCSP-affiliated courses and actively participating in IRC events, he learned about the privileges he held in society, developed empathy for his fellow peers, and shared his knowledge of social justice issues with others in his life, both within and outside of the classroom. Although the concept of "social justice" had not been on his radar before joining MCSP, he expressed openness to engaging in a variety of diversity experiences within MCSP. At the end of his first year, Ethan had developed a personal and professional commitment to "spreading awareness of social justice" during the rest of his time at U-M and beyond. Unlike Ethan, both of the Aspiring Change Agents were knowledgeable about social justice issues before becoming members of the RLC, which promoted, and hindered, their engagement in MCSP.

Aspiring Change Agents

Despite MCSP's intentional focus on social justice, only two students in the sample, Olivia and Cynthia, rated it as their top reason for joining the RLC. Although both students came from homogeneous neighborhoods that were comprised of individuals of their same racial background, they attended more diverse high schools and had acquired social justice-related knowledge prior to attending U-M.

Over the course of their first year, both of the Aspiring Change Agents were less involved in MCSP than the Personal Connectors and Community Seekers. They enjoyed participating in IRC hot topics, which was not surprising given their strong connection to MCSP's focus on social justice. However, both Cynthia and Olivia struggled with feeling connected to the MCSP community during their first semester because of their negative

interactions with peers who were uninterested in or resistant to MCSP's focus on social justice. As Olivia explained: "It just seems like they're disconnected. In my discussion group for UC-102... We were talking about white privilege. An East Indian girl who was sitting next to me said, 'Isn't Barack Obama being president enough?' I didn't know how to respond to that." As will be explored below, Cynthia attributed her lack of connection to being surrounded by peers in her hall who had "joined for the wrong reasons" and did not share her values related to social justice. Thus, contrary to what might be expected, both of the Aspiring Change Agents struggled to find their place within this community during their first semester, because they were frustrated by their fellow peers' lack of awareness about and/or disinterest in social justice issues.

Despite their rough beginnings, both of the Aspiring Change Agents' involvement in MCSP grew during their second semester after they developed a stronger connection to more like-minded peers. Both also returned as peer leaders during their second year. Despite their previous exposure to social justice issues, they still reported inward, outward, and forward growth in their social justice outcomes during their time in MCSP. However, Cynthia in particular struggled with bridging the gap between her heightened self-awareness and ability to take action, which will be explored in her case study below.

Case Study: Cynthia. Cynthia grew up in a large Midwestern city in a nearby state, and described herself as "the typical WASP." Both of her parents were Southern—her mother grew up in a military family, her father was from "Southern royalty." She explained that she was "super sheltered" while growing up, and lived in an affluent neighborhood. Although she had attended a private elementary school that was predominately White, she enrolled in a prestigious public magnet school from the seventh to twelfth grade, which exposed her to "kids from all over the city, all different walks of life and all racial backgrounds." When describing her pre-college

diversity experiences, Cynthia mentioned several social justice education experiences that she was involved in during the seventh grade, including a privilege walk, a social identity workshop, reading “Our America,” and watching documentaries about race relations:

We watched a documentary about -- I don't remember what but it was something about Native American versus White settlers' war. And I remember you know the lights came up and teacher was like, “What do you think?” And I remember crying and I was like, “It is so unfair. They were here first.” I had to go out and get a drink of water; I was absolutely humiliated. But from then on I kind of realized things aren't necessarily like- lily-white and there is a lot of bad stuff in the world.

Even though Cynthia mentioned that this experience was upsetting and quite a bit to process when she was thirteen, it opened her eyes to her privileged identities and the prevalence of societal inequities. These pre-college SJE experiences, along with her involvement in community activism related to gun violence and homelessness, sparked her passion for promoting social justice, which was a deciding factor in wanting to join MCSP. Although attending the University of Michigan was not her first choice, being part of MCSP was “the one thing I really wanted.” As she explained: “I care about social justice, that is perfect. That's why I signed up just because I wanted the small community and I really like -- that is something I feel so passionately about. I thought it would be really awesome to be with other people who felt the same way.” Along with Olivia, she was the only other student in the sample that was particularly drawn to MCSP because of its focus on social justice.

In addition to being enrolled in the “Environmental Literature” SEM and UC 102, Cynthia was involved in several MCSP co-curricular activities during her first semester, which included attending IRC hot topics, participating in the Human Rights Action Team, and “really enjoying” watching all three documentaries in the film series. However, she reported that she didn't feel “super connected” to MCSP due to negative interactions within the community. As she wrote in her pre-interview survey: “A lot of people in my hall seem to have no interest in the

MCSP community or in social justice at all. I am also not convinced that meaningful work is being done to create long lasting change.” Cynthia mentioned that she “couldn’t stand” her hall because they were often partying, and absent from MCSP classes and events. She thought they joined for the “wrong reasons” and felt frustrated because: “This is such a cool place to talk, and do stuff. I want to do things that make a difference and I don’t think people in my hall share that.” Cynthia attributed part of her “annoyance” with her hallmates to the fact she and her roommate, who dropped out of U-M after a few weeks because she was “just so unhappy,” were not particularly social at the beginning of semester:

Our door was always closed and we didn’t get that chance to interact with all the other people in the hall, so I think that has a fair amount to do with my annoyance with them. And then after that point when she left, I had the room to myself but it seemed a little bit too late to go out and knock on doors. And be like, “I’m sorry. I know it is three weeks into the game.” I wasn’t comfortable doing that. I haven’t gotten super close and I think that’s probably the reason why.

Cynthia received a new roommate after the first one moved out, and even though they got along, she was not affiliated with MCSP, which was an unusual circumstance given that the other students in MCSP lived with roommates who were also part of the program. Despite her lack of connection to the MCSP community as a whole during her first semester, she talked about being “friendly” with a few students, and mentioned that they had similar backgrounds as herself “maybe not in terms of race but in terms of upbringing.” In light of her limited informal interactions with her peers, Cynthia felt that the film series and the IRC hot topics were her most meaningful experiences in MCSP during her first semester.

Similar to Jason, Cynthia was not particularly excited about being selected to participate in the White Racial Identity IGR dialogue course during her second semester: “At first, I hated it. It just made me super uncomfortable. Why is this necessary? I understand my role and I understand that White people have their own -- like they have the privilege and power associated

with that. But, why can't we make this more diverse?" However, as the semester went on, she started to really enjoy the course because it helped her more fully understand the extent of her White privilege, and the various implicit racial biases that she still held despite being exposed to social justice "early":

It's been I used to think, "I know all this. I know about my identity. I know about social justice. I've been exposed to it early. I know everything." But you learn really quickly that really you have all these innate privileges and you have all these innate prejudices that you've learned that you weren't aware of...before doing this dialogue, I definitely didn't think of myself as prejudiced at all...I was like, "I'm from [an urban city]. I went to a diverse high school. I have a lot of Black friends. I have a lot of Latino friends." It was very much like, "Look at me. I'm so great. I know more than all of you do." But I realized there have definitely been times where -- walking home, clutching my purse a little tighter because the Black guy is over there. You know stuff like that.

In addition to coming to terms with being "prejudiced," Cynthia's IGR dialogue course interrogated the "American Dream" and explored the prevalence of racial inequities. As she explained: "I think last semester I was kind of thinking, "Oh yeah, there's some bad stuff but mostly it is okay." Now I've kind of realized, ... there is so much inequality that I wasn't aware of." Although Cynthia felt she was conscious of her positionality and societal inequities prior to MCSP, her experiences in her IGR dialogue course built upon this preexisting knowledge.

Cynthia still continued to struggle with bridging the gap between her newfound awareness and taking outward action throughout her time in MCSP:

Now, that I have all this awareness; it is still hard to try. I think it would be hard to try and address those problems with someone I care deeply about. It is easier when it is just somebody in the dining hall saying something offensive -- or somebody I don't know or very minimally. It is much harder when it is an uncle or a grandpa or whatever. I think I need to figure out a way to approach it where I let them know that that's not okay. I know for a fact that my uncle -- I think I talked about it -- my cousins or whatever -- they're not going to -- They're not going to engage in the dialogue. I can't really, "We have to talk about this." It will just be like okay; we won't say this in front of you. You're super sensitive.

As explored in Chapter Seven, Cynthia was still concerned with how she “came across” in light of her new understandings of her power and privilege in society, and struggled with finding ways to educate others or “speak out” in a way that was “well-received.”

Despite the fact that she was still coming to terms with how to engage in conversations about social justice issues with those close to her, Cynthia explained that she was “just as dedicated to social justice.” She commented that MCSP had “one hundred percent” influenced her future career plans because it helped her come to the realization that “you can be an activist without that being your job.”

I read this article on how it can be more valuable to have people who look like you or people who [pause] -- I don't know who are similar to you -- how it is more powerful to see them in positions of power than to have some, you know, White person show up...It is social justice on a smaller scale but also on a more, I think, personal scale.

As a result of her new insights about her positionality, she started to consider how she could use her privilege to advocate for and empower others as a way to create social change on a “small” and “personal” scale. Although Cynthia had been interested in becoming a teacher or minister during her first semester, her career plans now seemed a little more up in the air since her realization that “I can pursue social justice in any way I want.” She had recently interviewed for a summer internship at a “voter registration political advocacy nonprofit” that she was excited about because she saw it as an opportunity to learn how “that career field intersects with social justice issues.” Thus, although Cynthia was still exploring her options for “making a difference,” she remained deeply committed to promoting social justice in her future life and career plans.

As for her future involvement with MCSP, Cynthia was planning to return as a peer leader. Luckily, she was able to develop more friendships with her MCSP peers and experience more of the social justice-related conversations that she had been seeking during her second semester. While she reported that there were still “still huge clumps of people who don't care

and don't engage and that makes me kind of sad," she and the other second year students that were returning had "lots of plans in the works to get people more engaged." Though she planned to continue her involvement in PACS, the IRC, and other diversity experiences within MCSP, she also wished to spread her wings and involve herself in additional social justice-focused student organizations on campus during her second year.

As an Aspiring Change Agent, Cynthia entered MCSP with prior exposure to social justice issues that far exceeded many of her peers in the sample. Even though her enjoyment in social-justice focused experiences such as the film series and IRC hot topics was not unexpected, it was interesting to note that her passion for social justice caused her to feel disconnected from many of her fellow MCSP hallmates with different interests. While this speaks to the variation in students' reasons for joining MCSP, it is interesting to consider the implications it may have for students with more social justice knowledge who may initially feel out of place among peers that are not as familiar with these issues. Like several of her peers who also entered MCSP from more diverse pre-college backgrounds, Cynthia's involvement in dialogic conversations during her White Racial Identity IGR course helped her expand her preconceived understandings of herself and the world around her. Even though she was still finding her way to create "small-scale change," she now had a broader view of how she could promote social justice in any career field that she pursued. The following section will now discuss how the findings in regards to students' varying trajectories during their time in MCSP add to the current base of knowledge within the diverse democracy, social justice education, and intercultural competence literature.

Conclusion

As shown in the trajectory profiles and the six individual case studies, this chapter explored how the sample's reasons for joining the MCSP may have affected their engagement in

curricular, co-curricular, and informal diversity experiences, and subsequent inward, outward, and forward growth. Although the Community Seekers and Aspiring Change Agents tended to gravitate towards diversity experiences within MCSP that were associated with their reasons for joining, the Service Enthusiasts surprisingly engaged in more community service activities outside of MCSP, rather than within the RLC. Instead, it was the Personal Connectors who were actually the most involved in community service activities within MCSP, which may have served as an important avenue for establishing connections with their fellow peers. Even though the Location Scouts centered their involvement around fulfilling their course requirements, they still found meaningful ways to connect with their fellow peers that went far beyond their desire to live in a desirable location.

Even though there were notable patterns in students' engagement in the RLC across trajectories, there was quite a bit of variation how students were affected by their MCSP diversity experiences. For example, although most of the Location Scouts limited their involvement to required coursework, Jason, Megan, Zachary, Tanya, and Bryan chose to enroll in curricular experiences such as UC 151 and IGR that led to new ways of thinking, feeling, and acting about social justice issues. On the other hand, Nate chose courses that did not particularly challenge his previous understandings of systems of privilege, power, and oppression, and he consequently remained "neutral" throughout his time in MCSP. Thus, students' "choices" to participate in diversity experiences that pushed their comfort zones, and "openness" to engaging in SJE seemed play a role in the Location Scouts' inward, outward, and forward growth, along with many of the other students in the sample.

The findings also highlight how students' varying levels of "openness" may not have always been connected to their social identity backgrounds and other pre-college characteristics.

For example, although they were both White males from higher SES backgrounds with limited pre-college exposure to diversity and social justice issues, Jason and Owen reported different outcomes associated with their involvement in the White Racial Identity IGR course. While Owen's awareness of himself and the world around him was minimally impacted by this course, Jason reported inward growth in learning about his White privilege, and reported new understandings of affirmative action and the prevalence of racism. Thus, this study raises important questions about what may influence students' variations in their "openness" to engaging in various social justice-related experiences during college.

In conjunction with their "choices" and "openness," a key factor for students' greater engagement across of all the trajectories was establishing connections with like-minded peers, and participating in MCSP-affiliated diversity experiences on an ongoing basis. Moreover, many of the students that immersed themselves in the lived experience of being part of MCSP's civically-engaged and social justice-focused culture reported substantial changes in their inward, outward, and forward growth. In terms of their future involvement in MCSP, approximately 41% of the sample were returning as peer leaders during their second year. However, those students who were not to planning to return—all of the Location Scouts and many of the Service Enthusiasts—began to develop stronger connections to U-M communities outside of MCSP. As shown in Nate's case study, many of the students¹⁰ that were affiliated with Greek Life developed stronger ties to individuals within that community and planned to live with their fellow brothers and/or sisters during their second year instead

¹⁰ Six students in the sample became affiliated with a fraternity or sorority during their first year (Nate, Zachary, Jason, Megan, Jenna, and Tyler). Only two of these students, Jenna and Tyler, were not Location Scouts.

At the end of their first year in MCSP, all but three students¹¹ expressed a moderate to high commitment¹² to promoting social justice in the future. This is notable especially in light of the fact that 59% of the sample ranked MCSP's focus on social justice as their fourth, fifth, or sixth reason for applying to the RLC. Thus, despite their differing pre-college characteristics and engagement patterns, the majority of the sample developed a stronger motivation to "make a difference" in the world during their time in MCSP. These findings affirm previous research that has highlighted how first-year students' involvement in diversity experiences can have a lasting influence on creating social change in their future career and life plans (Bowman, et al., 2011).

The fact that students reported differing social justice outcomes, both within and across trajectories, raises important questions whether or not students achieved the "diverse democracy, intercultural understanding, and dialogue" goal of MCSP during their first year at U-M (MCSP website, 2016). For example, although Joshua mainly avoided engaging in what he considered the "social justice aspect" of MCSP, he participated in environmental-related courses and community service activities during his time in MCSP, which related to his preexisting interest in promoting sustainability. While he may not have strengthened his commitment to social justice during his time in MCSP, he still showed positive outcomes related to MCSP's goal of "meaningful civic engagement and community service learning" (MCSP website, 2016).

Thus, it is important to acknowledge that although many students in the sample did develop a stronger motivation to promote social justice during their first year, this was just one of the four goals of MCSP. As highlighted in Table 5.1 on page 77, the sample was attracted to

¹¹ As described in their narratives throughout Chapters 6-8, Joshua, Nate, and Owen expressed hesitance in acknowledging their own roles in promoting social justice both during their time in MCSP, and in the future.

¹² Coding for "End of First-Year Social Justice Commitment":

High: Developed a personal philosophy around promoting social change, that often includes a central role in their everyday lives and/or career choices.

Moderate: Planned to incorporate SJ in some way in their future career/life trajectory.

Low: Did not see promoting social change as part of their future career path or life plans.

MCSP for a variety of reasons. Students' reasons for joining may have influenced their expectations for what they hoped to gain as a member of the learning community, as well as their choices among the MCSP diversity experience. While many certainly did embrace the "social justice" aspects of its culture, others may have been more interested in being a part of its close-knit community and participating in service-learning, which they may or may not have connected to creating social change. While many believe that there is a link between engaging in community service and promoting social justice (Mitchell, 2010), students such as Joshua saw a distinct separation between these two activities. Moreover, MCSP's goal of being in a "engaged community" could infer being surrounded by a group of diverse students that openly and respectfully discuss social justice issues (Schoem, 2005). However, other students like Nate may have had different interpretations of what it meant to be in a close-knit community, which might have been more social in nature.

In this way, it is interesting to ponder what would be considered a "success" in the eyes of the staff in regards to first-year students' social justice outcomes. As highlighted in the previous chapters, many students were still grappling with translating their awareness into action, and deciding how they wished to create "small-scale" change in the future. During their interviews, the MCSP staff alluded to the fact that although they hoped that students would develop a sense of responsibility to promote social justice in their future lives and careers during their time in MCSP, it was not necessarily an expectation that all of their growth would occur within their first year. As the Associate Director explained in Chapter Four: "MCSP is based on - kind of starting the foundation, a stepping stone to getting to that part where you can better understand social justice." While some students would become less connected to MCSP during the rest of their time at U-M, those that would be returning to MCSP during their second year

would have additional exposure to this “intervention,” which may lead to further inward, outward, and forward growth. These considerations have important implications for students’ engagement in diversity experiences and social justice education within other RLCs and first-year student experiences, which will be explored in the next chapter.

Chapter Nine: Discussion

The following chapter will summarize the key findings of this study, and explore how they relate to the overarching research question and sub-questions. It will then explain the study's main contributions to the current body of diverse democracy, intercultural competence, and social justice education literature, and present implications for future practice and research.

Summary of Findings

The answer to the overarching research question, “*How does participation in RLC diversity experiences influence students’ social justice outcomes during their first year in college?*” is complex. As shown in Chapter Eight, the twenty-two students in the sample exhibited different trajectories—in terms of their pre-college characteristics and engagement within MCSP—that influenced their social justice outcomes over the course of their first year in college. Despite their differing motives, pre-college exposure to diversity, knowledge of social justice issues, and social identity backgrounds, students’ narratives in their interviews and course papers revealed a heightened awareness about themselves, others, and the world around them, and a stronger commitment to engage in intended and actual actions focused on creating a more just society.

Students’ inward growth encompassed two awareness-oriented outcomes, *consciousness of own positionality* and *awareness of societal inequities*, and two action-based outcomes,

educating myself and *reducing own biases*. Their outward growth included exhibiting *cognitive*, *affective*, and *behavioral empathy* toward those in their lives, along with *educating others*, and “*speaking out*” *against injustice*. The sample’s forward growth involved *creating “small-scale” change in their everyday lives*, and *incorporating social justice into their future careers*.

Students’ inward, outward, and forward growth occurred simultaneously across cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal dimensions (Deardorff, 2006; King & Baxter Magolda, 2005).

They developed *cognitive* knowledge of systems of privilege, power, and oppression, which they integrated into their sense of self, and interactions with those in their lives. Students became more *intrapersonally* aware of their own identities, biases, and worldviews, while also developing consciousness of others’ perspectives, feelings, and lived experiences. Their newfound awareness of themselves and others heightened their motivation to engage in *interpersonal* actions to create “small-scale” change, both during and after their first year in college.

Although a variety of curricular, co-curricular, and informal MCSP-affiliated diversity experiences influenced their growth, students’ engagement in dialogic conversations both within and outside of the classroom was particularly influential. In many ways, it was the lived culture within MCSP that integrated students’ various diversity experiences and facilitated meaningful conversations about social justice issues while students were learning together in classes, sharing meals in the dining hall, and having nightly discussions in their dormitory during IRC hot topics or “SJ talks.”

Moreover, students’ growth often depended on their “openness” to engaging in social justice education, and their involvement in MCSP diversity experiences that “expanded their horizons” and produced new ways of thinking, feeling, and acting. Only three students in the

sample, Joshua, Nate, and Owen, reported limited inward, outward, and forward growth, which may reflect their avoidance of thinking critically about their own roles in systems of privilege, power, and oppression. As illustrated by the case studies of Joshua and Nate in Chapter Eight, they were quite intentional about choosing diversity experiences that they perceived as less focused on social justice, and thus, the least likely to push them outside of their comfort zones.

The sample's differing engagement in MCSP diversity experiences affected their cognitive and affective processes (Allport, 1954; Dovidio, et al., 2004; Gurin, et al., 2002; Nagda, et al., 2004; Pettigrew, 1998). In relation to Allport's (1954) intergroup contact theory, the MCSP staff intentionally created curricular, co-curricular, and informal opportunities for students with a variety of social identity backgrounds to engage with each other around the common goals of promoting civic engagement and social justice, while maintaining an equal status as members of the same RLC. The intentional facilitation of students' opportunities to get to know a diverse group of peers on a more personal level, both inside and outside of the classroom, shaped their new understandings of themselves, others, and the world around them. The findings of this study affirm the work of those that have built upon Allport's work, such as Pettigrew (1998), Dovidio, et al. (2004), and Nagda, et al. (2004). Through listening to and learning from their diverse peers' lived experiences, the students in this sample developed greater knowledge of other social groups, and established affective ties with them (Pettigrew, 1998). Moreover, by interacting with their peers in more personal and individualized ways, they were able to alter their prejudicial thoughts, and develop empathy toward them (Dovidio, et al., 2004). Because many of their MCSP-affiliated diversity experiences included both enlightenment-oriented approaches through lectures, readings, and awareness-building activities, along with encounter-focused techniques in the form of dialogic experiences and service-

learning opportunities, the students engaged in “co-learning” about their own and others’ social identities (Dovidio, et al., 2004; Nagda, et al., 2004).

The “co-learning” that occurred during the sample’s MCSP-affiliated diversity experiences helped them construct a more complex understanding of systems of privilege, power, and oppression (Adams, et al., 2007; Gurin, et al., 2002). As highlighted in Dovidio, et al.’s (2004) definition of cognitive dissonance, and Gurin, et al.’s (2002) conceptualization of cognitive disequilibrium, students’ participation in MCSP diversity experiences challenged their sense of self and their worldviews. As they resolved these discrepancies in their thought-processes, students developed new perspectives about themselves, others, and society, which in turn, seemed to affect their social justice awareness and actions. The following sections will delve deeper into students’ social justice trajectories by exploring the connections between their pre-college characteristics, engagement in the MCSP-affiliated experiences, and their social justice outcomes.

The Role of Pre-College Characteristics in Students’ Social Justice Outcomes.

Chapters Five, Six, Seven, and Eight provide answers to the first sub-question, “*How do students’ pre-college experiences with diversity influence their perceived engagement in RLC diversity experiences?*” Students’ pre-entry characteristics—motivations for joining MCSP, the diversity of their pre-college neighborhoods and high schools, prior knowledge of social justice issues, and social identity backgrounds—appeared to play a role in their involvement in MCSP-affiliated diversity experiences. The findings suggest that the ways in which students engaged in MCSP diversity experiences may reflect their pre-college intentions for joining, and that their backgrounds and communities seemed to affect their inward, outward, and forward growth.

Motivations for Joining MCSP. The students I interviewed entered MCSP with a variety of motivations for joining the RLC, which included being attracted to its focus on community service and social justice, desiring a “close-knit” community, knowing someone familiar with MCSP, and wanting to live in a desirable campus location. Most of the diversity experiences students engaged in within MCSP appeared to align with their pre-existing interests, but some initially appeared to be inconsistent. For example, the Community Seekers found their interactions with their fellow peers to be particularly enjoyable. However, it was the Personal Connectors, rather than the Service Enthusiasts, who were the most involved in community service activities within MCSP. At first this was unexpected, but on further reflection it made sense, as it may be that the MCSP community service activities provided an opportunity to further connect with RLC peers. As expected, the Location Scouts were less involved than the other trajectories, but still showed notable growth in their social justice outcomes through the required courses that they took and “getting to know” a diverse group of MCSP peers. Interestingly, the Aspiring Change Agents initially had difficulty connecting with MCSP peers who shared their passion for social justice. They felt that quite a few of the students whom they first encountered in MCSP were similar to the Location Scouts and had joined for the “wrong reasons.” However, as they developed friendships with like-minded peers through the Intergroup Relations Council’s (IRC) hot topics and other co-curricular diversity experiences, their connection to the MCSP community grew.

Although students across all of the trajectories reported that they engaged in meaningful diversity experiences within MCSP, it is interesting to consider how these differing motivations may have shaped their engagement within MCSP. Many of the Location Scouts and Service Enthusiasts seemed content with their limited involvement in MCSP. However, several students

within the other trajectory groups, including Cynthia, Megan, Austin, Ashley, and Tyler noted frustrations with engaging in diversity experiences with their MCSP peers that had joined for the “wrong reasons.” Even though there was still a core group of students who were passionate about engaging in community service activities and social justice issues within the RLC, the students who did not exhibit a connection to MCSP’s values appeared to affect the overall sense of community among some of its members. As was the case with Joshua and Nate, students’ resistance in the form of apathy and avoidance toward dialogic experiences during UC 102 discussions, “SJ” talks, and other MCSP diversity experiences appeared to not only thwart their own growth, but the learning experiences of their fellow peers.

Their differing patterns of engagement may reflect the finding that despite having a social justice as one of its foci, many of the students in the RLC did not have a strong pre-existing interest and/or understanding of this topic. In their pre-interview surveys, 59% of the sample did not include the MCSP’s focus on social justice as one of their top three reasons for joining the RLC. Moreover, there were inconsistencies between students’ self-reported motivations for joining MCSP in their applications, pre-interview surveys, and interviews, which might account for the discrepancies between students’ “intended” versus “actual” engagement in MCSP-affiliated diversity experiences. However, the fact that the majority of the sample, regardless of their motivations for joining, reported substantial changes in their social justice awareness and actions has promising implications for the benefits of intentionally engaging students in particular types of diversity experiences. In reference to the lived culture within MCSP, the participants gained exposure to important social justice issues through the required courses, and living amongst a group of peers that was far more diverse than the majority of the settings they would encounter at U-M. In support of Gurin, et. al’s (2002) and Hurtado, et al.’s (2012)

scholarship on the impact of diversity, students' prolonged exposure to integrated MCSP diversity experiences throughout their first year in college appears to have uncovered new understandings of themselves, their peers, and the world at a very important transition in their lives.

Diversity of Pre-College Communities. Like many of their fellow peers across the country who grow up in segregated pre-college communities (Orfield & Lee, 2006), 77% of the students in the sample lived in homogeneous neighborhoods prior to joining MCSP, comprised of either predominantly White or people of color. Although half of the students attended more diverse high schools, their pre-college friendships were primarily with peers who shared their same racial background. Students from both diverse and homogeneous neighborhoods were attracted to MCSP because of its multicultural community, however, they varied in their informal interactions during their time in MCSP, which also reflects the mixed body of literature on their "openness" to engaging with peers from different backgrounds (Bowman & Denson, 2012; Cabrera, 2012; Milem, et al., 2004; Milem & Umbach, 2003; Saenz, 2010).

Several students with homogeneous pre-college friend groups, including Nate, Cynthia, and Stephanie, reported that many of their MCSP friends' racial and social class backgrounds resembled those from their hometowns. While this finding adds credence to Braddock's (1980, 1985) perpetuation hypotheses, there was evidence that engagement in MCSP buffered students' tendencies toward self-segregation. Those who joined Greek Life in particular, which included the majority of the Location Scouts, reported that they were thankful that MCSP helped them develop a more diverse group of friends than many of their fellow fraternity brothers and sorority sisters at U-M.

Prior Social Justice Knowledge. Students' limited knowledge of social justice issues prior to college was not surprising based on the connection between growing up with privileged identities, living in segregation, and being unaware of societal inequities (Adams, et al., 1997, 2007; Orfield & Lee, 2006). Consistent with past research (e.g., Bowman & Denson, 2012), those MCSP participants who reported the least pre-college familiarity with social justice issues tended to be White. Despite their greater exposure to diverse peers before college, several of the students of color, including Tanya, Brandon, Stephanie, and Olivia, also had a limited understanding of systems of privilege, power, and oppression because they rarely discussed social justice issues at their high school or with their parents. On the other side of the social justice knowledge spectrum, there were two students in particular, a student of color, Bryan, and a White student, Cynthia, who had encountered a substantial amount of social justice education while in high school. Those with limited prior knowledge of social justice issues tended to benefit the most from introductory courses such as UC 102, whereas, students with a greater understanding of societal inequities reported being more engaged during their IGR dialogue courses, which involved hearing their fellow peers' "stories" for the first time.

Social Identity Backgrounds. Though many of the students openly embraced the opportunity to learn more about themselves, their peers, and the world around them, over 32% of the sample, the majority of whom were White and male, displayed several forms of resistance toward learning about their privilege which manifested as guilt, denial, or disinterest during their time in MCSP. Moreover, a few White-identified males, including Owen, Zachary, Joshua, and Nate, mentioned that they were "selfish" or interested in more hands-off approaches to promoting social justice such as "philanthropy," which partially supports Goodman's (2011) assertions about men's more individualistic and less emotionally connected tendencies.

However, several of the White males were able to work through their resistance during their time in MCSP. Jason was particularly opposed to what he described as the “anti-white” curriculum in UC 102, for example, but then became much more receptive to exploring his racial identity during his IGR dialogue course. At the end of their first year, only three students, or 14%, remained resistant to engaging in social justice-focused MCSP experiences, such as dialogic conversations about systems of privilege, power, and oppression both within and outside the classroom.

In spite of their resistance, many of the White males appeared to demonstrate inward, outward, and forward growth during their time in MCSP. This finding is consistent with a body of research about Whiteness that has portrayed White males in both a negative and positive light. Some of the literature has highlighted White students’ increased levels of resistance (Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Chesler, et al., 2003; Gallagher, 2009; Goodman, 2011; Ringrose, 2007), while others have highlighted their potential to serve as social justice allies (Alimo, 2012; Broido, 2000; Cabrera, 2012; Crowfoot & Chesler, 1996; Kivel, 2002; Tatum, 1994). As Cabrera (2012) indicated, a key factor in White males’ ability to reflect on their Whiteness is their openness to engaging in diversity experiences, a finding that seems to be confirmed in this study. In relation to Gurin, et al.’s (2002) impact of diversity framework, White males’ participation in numerous, interconnected diversity experiences throughout their first year in MCSP may have facilitated a reconciliation of their cognitive disequilibrium about their power and privilege in society. Moreover, this finding suggests possible shifts in their White racial identity as they moved past their initial negative feelings about their Whiteness, to finding ways to integrate their newfound awareness of their positionality into various aspects of their lives (Hardiman, 1994).

It is important to note other racial and gender dynamics that occurred amongst the MCSP community. As shown in Joshua's case study, and echoed by Tyler's observations of his male MCSP peers, some students may have avoided engaging in diversity experiences because they were perceived as "feminine" and "super progressive." This perspective is reminiscent of Gallagher's (2009) claims that some White college students feel they are "victims of multicultural, PC, feminist onslaught" (p. 302). Moreover, patterns emerged between students of color serving as "educators" versus White students being "educated" (Galloway, 2013). While Cabrera (2012) and others have highlighted the positive influence that hearing the "minority perspective" can have on White students' social justice outcomes, research has confirmed the psychological toll that serving as "spokesperson" can have on students of color (Richeson & Shelton, 2007). Interestingly, students' roles as "educators" sometimes became reversed. Through the process of struggling with their newfound understandings of their privilege by sharing their lived experiences, White and male students also helped students of color and females develop a better understanding of "where they were coming from." Moreover, many of the White students reported intentions to engage in the inward action of educating themselves, so that the burden did not completely fall to students of color (Cabrera, 2012).

The majority of the sample reported that their understanding of the prevalence of classism was enhanced during their time in MCSP, which may peak to growing up in communities segregated by both race and class (Orfield & Lee, 2006). This adds further support to the supposition that students' pre-college characteristics not only shaped their engagement in diversity experiences within MCSP, but also influenced their awareness of themselves, others, and the world around them, which will be further described below.

Students' Awareness of Themselves, Others, and the World Around Them. The second sub-question, "*How do students perceive that their RLC diversity experiences shaped their awareness of their own positionality, understanding of societal inequities, and other social justice attitudes?*," is addressed in Chapter Six and Seven. As described previously, the sample reported that their participation in MCSP experiences strengthened their awareness of systems of power, privilege, and oppression at both a personal and societal level, and promoted changes in their cognitive, emotional, and behavioral empathy toward their peers. Although there is evidence that students' diversity experiences within MCSP influenced their growth in both cognitive and affective ways, it appears that students' "minds" tended to be more affected than their "hearts." Many of the outcomes—consciousness of their positionality, awareness of societal inequities, perspective-taking, and intercultural openness—reflected their cognitive knowledge of themselves and others. Those that were more affective—emotional understanding and "humanizing"—were reported by the lowest percentage of students. Although the intergroup dialogue literature in particular highlights that both cognitive and affective processes are at play during dialogic experiences (Gurin, et al., 2013), this study raises the question of whether emotion-based forms of social justice outcomes may be more difficult to cultivate. Nevertheless, given that empathy among college students have been decreasing over the past few decades (Konrath, et al., 2011), and men tend to be less empathetic than women (Ickes, Gesn, & Graham, 2000), the fact that several types of empathy, two of which were affective, emerged among students of different gender, racial, and social class identities is certainly a promising finding.

The importance of sharing "stories" and "getting to know others" while engaging in dialogic conversations was a theme that ran across the sample's descriptions of their curricular, co-curricular, and informal diversity experiences. However, they tended to believe that curricular

experiences exerted the greatest influence on their consciousness of their positionality and awareness of societal inequities, whereas their informal diversity experiences played a particularly strong role in heightening their cognitive, affective, and behavioral empathy toward others. The sample's co-curricular experiences, however, were a rather mixed bag. While students linked their involvement in IRC hot topics to most of the outcomes associated with their awareness of themselves, others, and the world around them, they only ascribed shifts in their ability to "humanize" others from marginalized backgrounds and awareness of societal inequities to their involvement in community service activities, action teams, and the film series.

The fact that students' "one-time" service-learning experiences may have had less impact on their social justice awareness is interesting in light of the fact that many indicated that their UC 102 community service trip was their most meaningful experience during their first semester. While this finding could relate to students enacting their preexisting values of helping others, it suggests that a disconnect may exist between the diversity experiences that students find "meaningful" and those that create cognitive disequilibrium (Gurin, et al., 2002) or changes in their thought-processes and emotions. While certain diversity experiences seemed to influence students' awareness of social justice issues more than others, these curricular, co-curricular, and informal activities were often integrated within the lived environment of MCSP, so that students were simultaneously participating in meaningful in- and out-of-class experiences.

Along with being intentional about requiring students to take three courses that incorporated a social justice lens, MCSP purposefully created a more diverse community than other spaces at U-M. As highlighted in Table 4.1. on page 67, the 2013-2014 first-year MCSP community was comprised of 59% White and 16% Black students, compared to 68% White students and less than 5% Black students within the U-M first-year cohort (U-M Office of the

Registrar Ethnicity Reports, 2016). As noted in students' narratives, engaging across backgrounds and perspectives was an especially pivotal way for them to learn more about their own identities, heighten their awareness of the prevalence of societal inequities, and develop greater empathy toward others (Nagda & Gurin, 2007; Stephan & Finlay, 1999). Despite students' "intentionality" around which curricular and co-curricular diversity experiences they chose to participate in, the diversity of the MCSP community often prevented them from completely opting out of participating in informal diversity experiences with their peers of different social identity backgrounds.

Although several students, such as Nate, found ways to self-segregate and create a "bubble" of peers who were similar to those they encountered in their homogeneous pre-college environments, they believed that they were able to develop friendships with a more diverse group of peers due to their involvement in MCSP. In this way, this study supports previous research that has highlighted the importance of structural diversity as an avenue for creating more opportunities for cross-cultural interactions that positively influence students' awareness of themselves and others (Chang, 1999; Bowman, 2012). Although previous studies have highlighted that White students often benefit the most from structural diversity (Gurin, et al., 1999; Saenz, et al., 2007; Saenz, 2010), the students of color in the sample also developed a greater awareness of their privileged identities, and more empathy for their fellow peers during their cross-cultural interactions in their classrooms and residence hall as part of their lived experience in the MCSP community.

Even though the majority of the students in the sample, regardless of their trajectories, reported gaining more social justice knowledge during their time in MCSP, it is important to note that their inward, outward, and forward growth often depended on their "receptivity" to social

justice education and the cultural norms within MCSP-affiliated diversity experiences. Several students, including Joshua, Tyler, Tim, Nate, and Olivia, reported that some of their peers were “hyper social justice” or “super progressive,” which supports literature that has explored perceptions among some of a “liberal bias” and tone-policing within social justice education (Applebaum, 2009). Although most students in the sample shared a similar political and personal ideology as their fellow MCSP peers, Joshua and Tim did not feel that their more conservative worldviews were always as accepted during social justice-related conversations. Thus, students varied in their receptivity to MCSP’s social justice-focused culture, which influenced their ability to take actions to create a more just society.

Bridging Awareness and Action. In relation to the third sub-question, “*How do students perceive that their participation in RLC diversity experiences shaped their social justice actions, and commitment to promoting social change?*” the students in the sample reported greater motivation to engage in inward, outward, and forward actions that promoted social justice. As described in Chapter Seven, “getting to know” their fellow peers, dialoguing across differences, and living within the diverse, open-minded, and social justice-focused culture of the MCSP community heightened their motivation to make a world a better place. However, it is important to note that many students discussed their intentions to engage in social justice-related behaviors, and only a few provided actual examples of when they currently engaged in these actions.

Two inward actions—educating myself and reducing bias—emerged as major themes in the data. 45% of sample reported that they planned to take additional coursework, and continue their participation in co-curricular experiences such as dialogues and community service activities, in order to develop more knowledge of societal inequities. A slightly higher percentage of students (i.e., 50%) were more motivated to monitor their biases of other social

identity groups. These findings support the self-directed behaviors found in past studies (Alimo, 2012; Nagda, et al., 2004; Zuniga, et al., 2005), and the literature on the influence of diversity experiences on prejudice reduction (Dovidio, et al., 2004). In this way, it is particularly encouraging to see first-year students take it upon themselves to develop more knowledge about social justice issues and self-awareness about their biased thought-processes. Instead of relying on others to teach them about societal inequities, they planned to continue their own social justice education (Cabrera, 2012).

In relation to their intended and actual outward behaviors, 59% of the sample reported that they either had shared, or planned to share, their social justice-related knowledge with others in their lives. Instead of keeping their newfound awareness of social justice issues to themselves, they actively shared information from their MCSP coursework with their U-M peers and family members. Moreover, several of the students posted their insights about social justice related topics on social media sites such as Twitter and Facebook, which allowed them to reach a broader audience. By educating others, they hoped that they, too, would be more informed about what was happening in the world.

Although they reported a heightened motivation to engage in inward and outward actions, it is important to note that only a few students mentioned translating their self-awareness into correcting their own biased language (Alimo, 2012). Instead, 77% of the sample reported greater motivation to “speak out” against their peers and family members’ offensive language. While it is certainly promising that they felt more strongly about interrupting incidents of biases, it is worth considering why they planned to direct more of their social justice efforts around biased language toward others, rather than themselves. The possible discomfort that can come along

with acknowledging how one's behaviors could perpetuate oppression could be one possible explanation (Goodman, 2011; Johnson, 2005).

Despite a heightened motivation to include others in their social justice efforts Students, of all social identities, wrestled with wanting to educate others and “speak out,” without coming across as “more righteous” than those in their lives. Even though they were able to engage in outward actions with certain U-M peers and family members, they expressed more hesitance about educating or challenging some of their hometown friends and relatives that they felt were more “close-minded.” In this way, they appeared to be struggling with the discomfort, and possibly conflict, that could come along with engaging across differences in social identities, educational backgrounds, and political beliefs. The social justice education they received during their time in MCSP brought many new insights about their roles in systems of privilege, power, and oppression, however, it may have also created a distance between themselves and those that were not as informed of these issues.

The “intended” vs. “actual” gap in their inward and outward behaviors was not surprising given that many were just learning about the concept of social justice. However, it was somewhat disconcerting that several students including Zachary, Nate, and Owen, felt that simply being aware was “enough.” Even though they did not elaborate on the reasoning behind their hesitance to engage in social justice actions, it is worth considering whether their privilege was a possible factor. It is likely not a coincidence that many of students that expressed hesitance were White-identified students, and males. Through “opting-out” of engaging in social justice actions, these students could enact their privilege by avoiding discomfort or conflict that could arise from engaging across differences, or could simply stay silent, or “neutral” as Nate

described, instead of actively taking steps to address societal inequities (Cabrera, 2012; Chesler, et al., 2003; Johnson, 2005).

Students' differing developmental processes may be another possible explanation for the gap between awareness and action. Several students' narratives revealed that their inward growth generally preceded their outward growth, which is highlighted in Broido's model of ally development (2000). Stephanie, Olivia, and Brandon, explained that their first semester was more focused on learning about different social justice issues, and that they did not feel as comfortable with engaging with outward actions, such as "speaking out," until their second semester. Given that these were all students of color, some of the students with more privileged backgrounds may have had steeper learning curves and needed more time to transition from awareness to action. In addition to their privileged positions in society as White, upper class males, Zachary and Owen's statements about "being selfish" may have also been tied to their psychosocial and cognitive development (Erikson, 1956; Piaget, 1985). As highlighted in King and Baxter Magolda's (2005) development model of intercultural maturity, the findings of this study suggest that students' development of social justice outcomes may occur in several stages, which may correspond with their social identity development (Hardiman, 1994).

Although they were still bridging the gap between their inward awareness and outward actions, many still expressed a personal and professional commitment to promoting social justice beyond their first year in college. In this way, many of the students saw themselves creating "small-scale" social change on a more individual basis through their person-by-person interactions in their everyday lives. During their next year at U-M, they planned to foster inclusive and equitable communities within their student organizations, volunteer experiences, and on-campus positions both within and outside of MCSP. Despite their uncertainty about how

they could create large-scale change as just “one person,” the fact that 77% of the sample planned to integrate their awareness of social justice issues into their future careers in the Business, Healthcare, Engineering, Law, and Social Services professions was quite promising. While many felt overwhelmed at the prospect of “changing the world,” they had still identified small ways they felt could “make a difference” in their future lives and careers.

Translating Social Justice Knowledge to Other First-Year Experiences.

The fourth and last sub-question was, “*How do students perceive that their social justice learning in the RLC translated to their other first-year experiences at U-M?*” Students offered several examples of how they transferred the social justice-related knowledge that they had acquired during their time in MCSP to their other U-M coursework, extracurricular activities, and peer groups. Several students, including Tanya, Ethan, Stephanie, Jenna, and Dylan mentioned significant “overlap” between the social inequities they learned about their MCSP-affiliated courses, and those they were exposed to in other U-M courses in disciplines such as Women’s Studies, Public Health, Sociology, Political Science, and English. As Ethan described in his case study, his knowledge of social justice often “built up” as a result of taking MCSP and U-M courses that overlapped in social justice-related content. Several students reported that gaining a “baseline” knowledge of social justice issues their UC 102 and UC 151 courses during their first semester prepared them to delve more deeply into exploring their own positionality and societal inequities during their other MCSP-affiliated courses, such as IGR and Project Outreach, the following semester.

In relation to their peer-to-peer interactions, a few students, such as Ethan and Ashley, became more aware of the lack of diversity within their sports-focused student organizations and other extracurricular activities, and hoped to encourage their fellow peers to be more inclusive of

other racial, gender, and social class backgrounds. Perhaps one of the most striking examples of transferring their MCSP knowledge to other settings at U-M was Tyler's and Jason's willingness to interrupt or challenge the perpetuation of racism, sexism, and heterosexism within their fraternities. Their awareness of their fellow peers' problematic behaviors and acts of "speaking out" had the potential to shift the culture of their Greek Life organizations toward being more inclusive and respectful of others' backgrounds. Along with sharing their social justice knowledge with those in their organizations, several of the students, including Tanya, took it upon themselves educate others that were not part of MCSP and from a variety of schools and colleges, which allowed them to cast a wider sphere of influence. Thus, the students in this sample did not confine their social justice actions to influencing just those within the MCSP community, but instead intended to spread their awareness of social justice issues to many of their fellow peers across campus.

Contributions to the Literature

Many studies have utilized quantitative methodologies when exploring the influence of diversity experiences on student outcomes, which has consequently led to a limited understanding of their individual experiences within these settings (e.g., Antonio, 2001; Bowman, 2010; Chang, et al., 2004; Engberg, 2004; Gurin, et al., 2013; Hurtado, et al., 2012; Lopez, 2004; Mayhew & Fernandez, 2007; Milem, et al., 2004; Nagda, et al., 2004; Nelson Laird, et al., 2005; Zuniga, et al, 2005). In this way, this study is unique because it utilizes a qualitative, multiple case study approach to explore how students with varying pre-college characteristics and engagement patterns, across the same set of curricular, co-curricular, and informal diversity experiences, developed differing social justice outcomes. Moreover, because the context is a social-justice focused RLC, this study captures the interconnected nature of

students' academic and social "worlds" (Tinto, 1996), and provides a more cohesive picture of how students' diversity-related courses, community service activities, intergroup dialogue experiences, and cross-racial interactions simultaneously influenced their social justice outcomes.

The finding that the dialogic conversations embedded in all three types of MCSP-affiliated diversity experiences played a particularly powerful role in students' inward, outward and forward growth is important. Many previous scholars on this topic have assessed the influence on curricular, co-curricular, and informal experiences on social justice outcomes separately (e.g., Alimo, 2012; Antonio, 2001; Bowman, 2009; Chang, et al., 2006; Holsapple, 2012; Nagda & Gurin, 2007), or only included a combination of two diversity experiences (e.g., Bowman, 2009; Denson, 2009; Lopez, 2004) in their studies. In contrast, this study captures the unique ways in which this particular RLC encouraged dialogic conversations (Gurin, et al., 2013; Schoem & Hurtado, 2001) in numerous settings. Students were not only able to share their social identity backgrounds and learn more about others' lived experiences in classrooms during their UC 102, UC 151, and IGR dialogue courses; they also continued the conversations in their living spaces through IRC hot topics and "SJ talks."

The multiple case study methodology also allows for a greater understanding of students' trajectories toward promoting social justice. Although Gurin, et al. (2002) and other scholars have highlighted that students' transition from high school to college is a critical time for their psychosocial development, very few studies have explored first-year students' involvement in diversity experiences in the same level of depth as this study. By starting at the beginning of their college careers, this study highlights the challenges they encountered, such as struggling to come to terms with their privilege, worrying about being perceived as "better than others," and

wrestling with how to translate their newfound awareness of themselves, others, and the world around them into action. Moreover, it captures their shifts from not being aware of the concept of “social justice” to developing a commitment to creating social change during the rest of their time in college and beyond. By putting these various “puzzle pieces” together (Baxter & Jack, 2008), this study offers a more comprehensive, integrated, and descriptive approach to exploring students’ inward, outward, and forward growth over the course of their first year in college.

Several qualitative studies had been conducted on students’ social justice outcomes, however, they have generally centered upon the topic of social justice allyhood development (e.g., Broido, 2000; Munin & Speight, 2010; Reason, et al., 2005; Storms, 2012) and Whiteness (e.g., Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Cabrera, 2012; Chesler, et al., 2003; Gallagher, 2009), with often a combination between the two (Stokes Brown, 2002; O’Brien, 2001). Instead of only focusing on privileged students, this study is intentional about highlighting the experiences and sharing the voices of students with a variety of social identities. By utilizing a sample that was half White students and half students of color with differing gender, social class, and religious backgrounds, this study highlights how students served as both “educators” and the “educated” during their MCSP diversity experiences.

While the findings of this study echo Reason, et al.’s (2005) observations that first-year students tend to primarily engage in individual-level behaviors, instead of campus and societal-level actions, this study offers a more nuanced analyses of the challenges associated with engaging in social justice actions. For example, the gap between students’ awareness and action suggests that intrapersonal factors may be influencing their concerns about how their behaviors would be received by others. Even though they “chose their battles” when deciding who would be receptive to their social justice actions (O’Brien, 2001; Reason, et al., 2005), the fact that the

majority of the students in the sample developed a stronger “small-scale” commitment to incorporating their social justice awareness into their future lives and careers is still quite a promising finding.

By utilizing a multi-disciplinary body of literature, this research sheds additional light on the various cognitive and affective processes that influenced students’ social justice outcomes (Allport, 1954; Dovidio, et al., 2004; Gurin, et al., 2002; Nagda, et al., 2004; Pettigrew, 1998). Because many of the students tended to describe their growth in a more cognitive way, this study highlights how the cultivation of emotion-based outcomes, such as affective empathy, may require more intervention beyond students’ first year in college. The following section will now explore how higher education professionals can apply the findings of this study in order to cultivate both cognitive and affective social justice outcomes among their students.

Implications for Practice

The findings of this study offer several implications for higher education administrators, faculty, and staff members. First of all, the fact that the students attributed their growth to diversity experiences both within and outside of the classroom speaks to the powerful influence that learning and living within a social justice-focused RLC can have on first-year students. Consistent with the mission of many RLCs, MCSP bridged the academic and social experiences of its students, and engaged them in interconnected curricular, co-curricular, and informal diversity experiences within its lived culture (Pasque & Murphy, 2005; Rocconi, 2011). Creating RLCs with a social justice focus may be one avenue for practitioners at other campuses, and there may be other ways to intentionally engage first-year students in diversity experiences within their classrooms, residence halls, and local communities.

In light of the fact that MCSP has already integrated a variety of “high-impact” educational practices identified by AAC&U (Kuh, 2008), which have included first-year seminars, service-learning opportunities, and the diversity of its community, there is perhaps yet another layer of “high impact” practices within the RLC. Table 9.1 below highlights the MCSP-affiliated curricular, co-curricular, and informal diversity experiences that helped students step outside of their “comfort zones,” experience cognitive disequilibrium, and develop new ways of thinking, feeling, and acting about social justice issues (Gurin, et al., 2002). As highlighted previously, many of these experiences incorporated some aspect of dialogic communication either within or outside of the classroom (Engberg, 2004; Hackman, 2005; Nagda & Gurin, 2007; Schoem & Hurtado, 2001; Sorensen, et al., 2009). Faculty members should consider ways to integrate more opportunities for students to share their own and hear others’ differing life experiences and worldviews into their curriculum. Moreover, student affairs practitioners could explore creating more informal spaces for dialogic conversations within residential halls, student organization meetings, community service activities, and other spaces on- and off-campus that would intentionally foster meaningful cross-cultural interactions.

Table 9.1. High-Impact MCSP Diversity Experiences

Curricular	Co-Curricular	Informal
UC 102 discussions	IRC hot topics	Cross-cultural relations
UC 151 course (SEM)	Ongoing “hands-on” service-learning activities	“SJ talks”
IGR dialogue courses (CIVIC)		

As exemplified in this list of “high-impact” practices, many were not one-time experiences, but instead took place over the course of a semester, or the entire year. Although some students participated in a IRC hot topic or “SJ talk” just once and still reported some changes in their social justice outcomes, those that were most affected tended to participate in these diversity

experiences on a more sustained basis within the lived environment of MCSP. In light of the recent nationwide attention on colleges' and universities' roles in intervening and remedying campus climate issues (Hartocollis & Bidgood, 2015), it is important to keep in mind that "one-time" diversity experiences may not be sufficient to influence students' social justice knowledge and behaviors. Instead, longer-term interventions may be needed.

Though students varied in which MCSP diversity experiences they found to be the most meaningful, the findings of this study suggest that the RLC's intentionality around involving students in several social justice-focused courses, multiple co-curricular experiences, and a diverse, open-minded, and social justice-focused community of peers positively impacted the majority of the students in this sample, regardless of their trajectories. However, the resistance of some of those who "joined for the wrong reasons" and/or came from more privileged backgrounds points to important considerations for whether diversity experiences should be required or voluntary. At times, their resistance to actively engaging in the course content during the required UC 102 lectures and discussions was detrimental to their own and others' learning. When it came to voluntary diversity experiences, the students in the sample sometimes chose diversity experiences that did not push them outside of their comfort zones, or avoided them altogether. Moreover, students' differing motivations for joining MCSP impacted their involvement in required and voluntary diversity experiences, which provides yet another layer of complexity in regards to how students' differing trajectories may shape what they hope to "gain" from their participation in SJE.

Instead of "taking a one size fits all" approach to students' engagement in SJE, colleges should keep in mind that students are often starting in different places in terms of their knowledge of themselves, their peers, and the world around them, and enter college with a wide

range of worldviews, ideologies, and motives in regards to promoting social justice.

Administrators, staff, and faculty should incorporate strategies to address students' resistance to SJE both within and outside of the classroom. Moreover, they may need to adjust their pedagogical practices in order to simultaneously attend to the needs of students that are just starting to learn about the concept of "social justice," and those that are further along in their social justice "journeys." As highlighted throughout this study, participating in dialogic conversations that involved hearing others' stories was particularly impactful for students with varying levels of prior social justice knowledge.

In connection to their overall growth, emotionally connecting to the injustices that others faced often appeared to be a steeper learner curve than developing cognitive knowledge of privilege, power, and oppression. Although previous literature has explored the gaps in individuals' development of affective empathy (Cikara, Bruneau, & Saxe, 2011; Dovidio, et al., 2004; Konrath, et al., 2011; Mathur, Harada, Lipke, & Chiao, 2010; Slovic, 2007), less attention has been paid to colleges' roles in cultivating compassion, altruism, and other pro-social behaviors across different social identities. Given the important role that empathy can play in improving intergroup relations (Batson & Ahmad, 2009; Stephan & Finlay, 1999), there is still a great amount of work to be done on college campuses to encourage students to tackle the important social justice issues of today with both their "minds" and "hearts."

Implications for Research

Because there were several instances of self-selection in this study, both in terms of students choosing to apply to become a member of a social justice-focused RLC, and their willingness to be a study participant, future studies should include control groups of students that were not accepted into MCSP, along with those not affiliated with any of the RLCs. At times, it

was difficult to untangle which outcomes students attributed to their MCSP-affiliated experiences, rather than the other courses, extracurricular activities, and informal interactions that they participated in during the course of their first year at U-M. Although the narratives of the twenty-two students in the sample allow for a rich description of their experiences within MCSP, utilizing quantitative measures of the social justice outcomes that emerged in this study would allow for a more robust measurement of the effects of participating in this particular RLC. Future studies should determine whether there were truly significant changes in MCSP students' awareness and actions compared to students in the control groups. Given that the first round of data was not collected until the end of their first semester, other studies should also incorporate the use of survey and interview data that is collected before students matriculate into MCSP.

Although assessing students' development fell outside of the scope of this study, subsequent research could involve reanalyzing or revisiting the existing findings to determine whether or not there were developmental patterns in the data. Moreover, in light of the possible temporal sequencing between students' inward, outward, and forward growth, future studies could incorporate a developmental lens to delve into a closer analysis of students' differing patterns of progression toward social justice outcomes, and to determine whether certain types of growth may precede others. Moreover, it would be useful to explore whether students' "openness" to engaging in SJE could also be connected to a developmental framework.

The findings related to the stronger growth in cognitive-based types of social justice outcomes suggest that additional research is needed on how diversity experiences can cultivate more emotion-based forms of empathy among students. Drawing upon the existing body of literature on empathy that already exists in the social psychology and neuroscience fields (Batson & Ahmad; 2009; Finlay & Stephan, 2000; Konrath, et al., 2011; Mathur et al., 2010) in order to

implement more quasi-experimental or experimental designs may be needed to highlight how empathy can be fostered through students' curricular, co-curricular, and informal diversity experiences.

In reference to the incidences of resistance in the study, additional research is needed to better understand how outcomes may vary based on whether a diversity experiences is required and voluntary, and to determine effective interventions for working through students' negative responses to SJE. In light of the gap between students' awareness and actions, future studies should further explore the discrepancy between students' "intended" versus "actual" behaviors, and develop other methods for assessing their behaviors beyond self-reported survey or interview data. Conducting an ethnographic or observational study similar to Armstrong's (2013) book, *Paying for the Party: How Colleges Maintain Inequality*, would be useful to gaining a better sense of students' interactions both inside and outside of their residence hall, and their lived experiences within MCSP.

Because it may be too early in students' college years to determine the true effects of participating in this RLC, future studies should incorporate the use of longitudinal data to assess their outcomes beyond their first year in college. In this way, it would be helpful to collect more data at the end of their senior year and several years after they graduate to assess whether their self-reports about integrating social justice into future lives and careers still hold true. Given that this study specifically focused on the experiences of first-year students, future studies should also explore the social justice outcomes of peer leaders and RAs who are in their second, third, or fourth year of involvement with MCSP. Being exposed to additional years of the "intervention" may lead to stronger patterns of inward, outward, and forward growth compared to those of the first-year students in their study. Similar to Bowman et al.'s (2011) assessment of the long-term

impact of diversity experiences thirteen years after graduation, futures studies should explore how MCSP alumni have incorporated their social justice awareness and actions into their interactions within their neighborhoods, workplaces, families, and other settings in their lives.

Conclusion

Through their involvement in an RLC that was designed to be a “model of America” that is truly democratic and diverse (Schoem, 2005), the twenty-two students in the sample encountered intentional and interconnected curricular, co-curricular, and informal diversity experiences over the course of their first year in college. Despite their varying trajectories in MCSP, the sample reported inward, outward, and forward growth, which they largely attributed to their dialogic conversations within and outside of the classroom, and their lived experiences in the social justice-focused culture of MCSP. Over the course of their first year, they developed a stronger cognitive and emotional understanding of themselves, their fellow peers, and the inequities in the world around them. Moreover, they translated their newfound knowledge of systems of privilege, power, and oppression into engaging across their differences in respectful and inclusive ways, educating others about social justice issues, and “speaking out” against injustice.

Many reported a shift in wanting to “change the world,” to developing personal and professional commitment to creating “small-scale” change. In her book, *The Next American Revolution*, Boggs (2011) discusses how powerful social change can occur by transforming oneself and those within their sphere of influence. Thus, it is quite promising that the majority of students in the sample left their first year with a heightened motivation to not only continue to educate themselves, but also spread their awareness of social justice issues to their U-M peers, hometown friends, and family members. As one of the first studies that has qualitatively

explored the experiences of students who were members of MCSP, it is encouraging that the majority of the sample's narratives reflected Schoem's (2001) articulation of MCSP's goals related to making "a positive and important impact on society" in some way:

The challenge facing America is whether we, as a nation, are going to be able to move significantly forward as a diverse society that is socially and economically just for everyone, across all of our different backgrounds. Here in MCSP our students are thinking hard about these issues, and they are beginning to learn how to live in a just, diverse community. I think they will look back at some point when they are professional leaders in fields such as Business, Education, Healthcare, or Law and say, "I had an experience for a few years during college where I learned and lived together with people from all different backgrounds. I learned skills for constructively addressing conflicts, I studied and worked on different community service projects...I want to make a difference in all of my communities—in my neighborhood, my workplace, my country, and the world." If that happens, I think we will have made a positive and important impact on society (p. 41).

Though the first-year students in the sample were in the early stages of their trajectories toward promoting social justice, it is certainly hopeful that many had already developed a stronger sense of responsibility to "make a difference," person by person, in their future lives and careers.

Appendices

Appendix A.

2013-2014 Institutional Context

2013-2014 was an unusual year at the University of Michigan in terms of the proliferation of student protests and other forms of activism in response to the current campus climate for underrepresented students. Space prohibits a full explanation of events and activism that took place on the U-M campus, but several are especially important to note. First, in early October 2013, over 150 students, staff, and faculty members convened in the Diag, the central thoroughfare on Central Campus, as part of the We Are Michigan student movement, which consisted of a two hour silent protest, or “freeze-out,” in order to draw attention to the low enrollment of students of color on campus. The Director invited students in his UC 151 course to attend, and several MCSP students were prominently displayed in pictures about the demonstration in the campus newspaper, the *Michigan Daily*.

Further campus climate issues came to the forefront when student outrage erupted due to a “World Star Hip Hop Presents: Hood Ratchet Thursday” party planned by the Theta Xi fraternity a month later, in early November 2013. The U-M administration was alerted to the public Facebook invitation for the party, which contained offensive language and images that reinforced negative cultural stereotypes about the Black community, and the party was subsequently cancelled. As a response to the fraternity party incident, and to mounting concerns

about the negative climate for Black students at U-M and nationwide,¹³ the Black Student Union launched the Being Black at Michigan (#BBUM) Twitter campaign in late November 2013 to highlight their experiences at U-M. #BBUM included students' negative experiences, such as the microaggressions they had encountered, as well as positive statements about their racial identity. While the #BBUM posts included a mix of the statements, the majority highlighted negative experiences at U-M (Huffington Post, 2013).

Then, in early December 2013, the Students Allied for Freedom and Equality (SAFE) created a movement under the hashtag #UMMockEviction, that involved distributing fake eviction notices to U-M students in six residence halls, including East Quad. SAFE distributed the notices in order to raise awareness about the current evictions of Palestinians in Israel, and to demand that U-M divest from companies, such as Caterpillar, Northrup Grumman, and Hewlett-Packard, that supported human right violations against Palestinians. Some U-M and MCSP students, including those in the Jewish community, felt offended and unsafe as a result of the eviction notices.

Winter 2014 Semester was also marked by student-led movements and activism. Following their #BBUM campaign during Fall Semester, BSU held a rally on Martin Luther King Jr. Day in mid-January 2014 outside of the Hill Auditorium after the MLK keynote speech by Harry Belafonte. As part of their rally, they listed and held up posterboards of their seven demands, which included: an increased budget for BSU, the availability of more affordable off-

¹³ In early November 2013, a group of Black UCLA students released a YouTube video that went viral on account of highlighting how UCLA had more NCAA championships than Black males. Following UCLA's video, students at other universities began to launch campaigns calling for increased minority representation and an improved campus climate. In addition to U-M's #BBUM movement, the University of Minnesota "Whose Diversity?" student group's issued demands to their President, Black Harvard students created the "I, Too, Am Harvard" photo campaign and performance to highlight the microaggressions they faced on campus, and Dartmouth students occupied their President's office during the 2013-2014 academic year to protest the sexism and racism on their campus.

campus housing near Central Campus for low SES students, the relocation and establishment of the Trotter Multicultural Center on Central Campus, expanding the Race & Ethnicity requirement to all U-M schools and colleges, access to emergency scholarships for Black students, more exposure to documents within the Bentley Historical Library, and increasing the Black student population to 10% of all enrolled U-M students. Following their demands, the United Coalition for Racial Justice (UCRJ), which was comprised of graduate and undergraduate students, organized a late night “Speak Out” in the Shapiro Undergraduate Library in mid-February 2014. The UCRJ “Speak Out” was attended by over 1,000 U-M and Ann Arbor community members in order to demand more representation and an improved campus climate for students of color.

Another student-led movement, #UMDivest, surfaced in mid-March 2014 when Students Allied for Freedom and Equality (SAFE) demanded that the Central Student Government (CSG) pass a resolution requesting that U-M divest from companies that supported human rights violations against Palestinians. When CSG voted to table voting on the resolution, SAFE staged a sit-in the CSG chambers for a week until CSG ultimately voted against the resolution. During this movement, tensions were particularly high among some students that identified as Pro-Palestine or Pro-Israel and/or Arab or Jewish, and several students reported encountering a hostile campus climate, including hate messages and death threats. As described above, the prevalence of student activism during the 2013-2014 academic year was a unique time in U-M’s history, and these various social justice issues were brought to the forefront during the sample’s curricular, co-curricular, and informal diversity experiences both within and outside of MCSP.

Appendix B.
Participant Recruitment Email

Dear _____,

Hello, my name is Rebecca Christensen. I am currently a Doctoral Candidate in the School of Education at the University of Michigan, and coordinate dialogues for the Michigan Community Scholars Program (MCSP). I am reaching out to you because you were identified as someone who could provide a unique perspective for my dissertation study. I am currently conducting this study in order to explore first-year students' experiences in MCSP, and at U-M.

If you agree to participate, I would like to talk with you once between now and when you leave campus in December, and once during Winter 2014 semester. **You will receive a \$25 Amazon gift card for each interview (a total \$50 Amazon gift card amount for your participation in both interviews).** Each interview will be arranged at your convenience, held on the University of Michigan campus, and take about 60-90 minutes. Please note that your participation is voluntary and if you agree to participate in the study, you may leave at any time. All information you provide will be confidential, and no identifying information about any study participant will be disclosed.

If you are interested in participating in this study, please email me at beckydc@umich.edu and complete this [WhenIsGood](http://whenisgood.net/jcmz9ka) so that I can schedule your interview: <http://whenisgood.net/jcmz9ka>. Also, feel free to contact me with any questions. Thank you for your time and consideration in taking part in this study. I look forward to hearing from you.

Warm regards,
Rebecca Christensen

Appendix C.

Pre-Interview Survey

Introduction

This research study will explore first-year students' college experiences in MCSP, and at U-M.

Procedures

As part of this study, you are being asked to complete an online pre-interview survey that will include questions regarding your background information and MCSP/U-M college experiences. The questionnaire will take approximately 20 minutes or less. Your answers to this survey will be used to provide background information for the interviews associated with this study.

Risks of Involvement

There is no risk associated with this study where the probability of harm or discomfort is greater than that encountered in daily life.

Benefits

You will potentially benefit from participating in this study by having the opportunity to reflect on your MCSP and U-M experiences.

Confidentiality

All data obtained from participants will be kept confidential. All questionnaires will be concealed, and no one other than the primary investigator listed below will have access to them. The data collected will be stored in the HIPAA-compliant, Qualtrics-secure database until it has been deleted by the primary investigator.

Compensation

There is no compensation for completing this pre-interview questionnaire. However, you will receive a \$25 Amazon gift card for each of the two interviews (a total \$50 Amazon gift card amount) associated with this study.

Participation

Your participation in this study is voluntary and you may withdraw or discontinue participation at any time without penalty.

Questions about the Research

If you have questions regarding this study, you may contact the principal investigator for this study, Rebecca Christensen, Doctoral Candidate in the School of Education at the University of Michigan, at beckydc@umich.edu or 510-304-4417.

Questions about your Rights as Research Participants

If you have questions you do not feel comfortable asking the principal investigator, you may contact the faculty advisor for this study, Dr. Jan Lawrence, at janlaw@umich.edu, or the University of Michigan Health Sciences and Behavioral Sciences Institutional Review Board (IRB Study# HUM00079071) at irbhsbs@umich.edu.

I have read and understood the above consent form, and desire of my own free will to participate in this study.

- Yes
- No

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To End of Survey

The principal investigator would also like to request your permission to read the statement that you wrote in your U-M housing application about why you wanted to join MCSP. This is the only aspect of your U-M housing application that the principal investigator will read. Your MCSP statement of interest will be used provide further background information about your reasons for joining MCSP. Your MCSP statement of interest will be kept completely confidential, and your identifying information will be concealed and protected.

- Yes, I give my consent to allow the principal investigator to read my MCSP statement of interest in my U-M housing application
- No, I do not give the principal investigator permission to read my MCSP statement of interest in my U-M housing application.

Q1 Name

Q2 UMID#

Q3 Email Address

Q4 What is your student residential status?

- In State (please list hometown in Michigan) _____
- Out of State (please list state) _____
- International (please list country) _____
- Other (please specify) _____

Q5 What is your intended/declared major at U-M?

Q6 Briefly explain your long-term educational/career goal(s)

Q7 What were your reasons for joining MCSP? (Please rank order assigning a score of 1 to the most important reason)

- _____ I wanted to live in East Quad
- _____ I wanted to live on Central Campus
- _____ I was interested in being in a more close-knit community
- _____ I liked MCSP's focus on community service/service-learning
- _____ I liked MCSP's focus on social justice
- _____ It was recommended by someone I knew
- _____ Other (please describe)

Q8 Before you came to U-M, what did you expect MCSP to be like?

Q9 Which of these expectations for MCSP have been met this semester, and which have not? Please explain why.

Q10 Please identify the MCSP-affiliated courses that you took this semester (Mark all that apply.)

- UC 102
- MCSP-linked Seminar (SEM) (please list course) _____
- MCSP-approved "Civic Engagement: Learning in the Community" Course (CIVIC) (please list course) _____

Q11 Please identify the MCSP-affiliated community service and social justice activities that you participated in this semester? (Mark all that apply.)

- Community Service Activities (please list sites where you volunteered) _____
- Action Team(s) (please specify) _____
- Social Justice Film Series (please list which films you saw) _____
- Dialogues (please list the topics) _____

Q12 Please list any other MCSP events/activities that you participated in this semester.

Q13 How often did you participate in the following MSCP activities this semester?

	Never	One time	A few times	Once a Month	2-3 Times a Month	Every week
Performed community service activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Attended action team meetings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Attended PACS meetings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Attended PB&U meetings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Attended (IRC) meetings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Attended dialogues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Attended social justice film series	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Participated in social events/activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q14 Please estimate the total amount of time each week that you participated in REQUIRED MCSP classes/activities.

Q15 Please estimate the total amount of time per week that you participated in MCSP-related activities that were NOT REQUIRED.

Q16 Outside of MCSP, what other extracurricular activities have you been involved in at U-M?

Q17 Please estimate the total amount of time per week that you participated in U-M extracurricular activities outside of MCSP.

[Scales about social justice beliefs/behaviors omitted because they were not used in study]

Q20 What is your age?

- 16
- 17
- 18
- 19
- 20
- 21
- 22
- 23
- 24
- 25+

Q21 What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Transgender
- Decline to Answer

Q22 What is your racial identification? (Mark all that apply.)

- African American or Black
- Asian American or Asian/Pacific Islander
- Latina(o)/Hispanic American
- Arab American or Arab
- Native American/American Indian/Alaskan Native
- White/European American
- Biracial/Multiracial (please specify) _____
- Other (please specify) _____

Q23 How would you characterize your socioeconomic background while growing up?

- Lower/Working Class
- Middle Class
- Upper-Middle Class
- Upper Class/Wealthy
- Other (please specify) _____

Q24 What is your religious/spiritual identification?

	Never	Rarely	Once in a while	Sometimes	Often	Almost always	Always
Race/Ethnicity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gender	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Socioeconomic class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Religion/Spirituality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q25 How often do you think about yourself as a member of each of the following social identity groups? (Mark one for each item.)

Q26 How would you describe the racial composition of the following settings? (The term “people of color” as used historically in the United States refers to people who are African American, Asian American/Pacific Islander, Latina(o)/Hispanic American, and Native American/American Indian). (Mark one for each item.)

	All white	Nearly all white	Mostly white	Half white & half people of color	Mostly people of color	Nearly all people of color	All people of color
The neighborhood where you grew up in	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The high school you graduated from	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Your place of worship (if applicable)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q27 How often did you volunteer in your community before coming to U-M?

- Never
- Less than Once a Month
- Once a Month
- 2-3 Times a Month
- Once a Week
- 2-3 Times a Week
- Daily

Appendix D. Participant Informed Consent Form

MCSP/U-M Experiences Study

Researcher

Rebecca Christensen, Doctoral Candidate, University of Michigan, Center for the Study of Higher and Postsecondary Education

Study Description

This research study will explore first-year students' experiences in MCSP, and at U-M, especially as it relates to their involvement in diversity and social justice activities. You will potentially benefit from participating in this study by having the opportunity to reflect on your involvement in MCSP and U-M, and discuss the aspects of MCSP and U-M that have been the most meaningful and/or useful to you.

Participant Informed Consent

You are being invited to participate in an interview that will be approximately 60-90 minutes in length to discuss your experiences at MCSP and U-M. Your participation in this study will involve two one-on-one interviews that will occur in Fall 2013 and Winter 2014 semesters.

Voluntary Nature of Participation

Your participation in this study is voluntary and you may withdraw or discontinue participation at any time without penalty. You will be compensated with a \$25.00 Amazon Gift Card for this interview, and will be emailed the gift card within 24 hours of the interview. During the interview, you will be asked reflective and thought-provoking questions. However, you have the right to decline to answer any question or to end the interview at any time. Due to the nature of this research, all interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed. The audio recordings and transcriptions will be securely stored and backed up on a computer in the office of the researcher and destroyed upon the conclusion of the study.

Risks of Involvement

Study participants may find that the interviews are enjoyable and provide a unique opportunity to reflect upon their experiences in MCSP, and at U-M. There is no risk associated with this study where the probability of harm or discomfort is greater than that encountered in daily life.

Confidentiality of Records and Data

Your confidentiality as a participant in this study will remain secure through the assignment of a pseudonym. A separate list matching participants' names with their pseudonym will be filed and secured and backed up on a secure computer in the office of the researcher. All information collected will remain confidential to extent governed as required by local, state, and federal law. No personally identifiable information will be used for purposes of this research study. All collected participant data will be destroyed following the conclusion of the study.

Contact Information

Should you have questions about this research study, you may contact:

Principal Investigator: Rebecca Christensen, Ph.D. Candidate, 610 East University, 2117 SEB,

Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1259, (510) 304-4417, email: bekydc@umich.edu
Dissertation Advisor: Dr. Janet Lawrence, Professor, 610 East University, 2117E SEB, Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1259, (734) 647-1977, email: janlaw@umich.edu

Should you have questions regarding your rights as a participant in research at the University of Michigan, or wish to obtain information, ask questions, or discuss any concerns about this study with someone other than the researcher, please contact:

University of Michigan Health Sciences and Behavioral Sciences
Institutional Review Board (IRB Study# HUM00079071)
540 East Liberty, Suite 202
Ann Arbor, MI 48104-2210
(734) 936-0933
email: irbhsbs@umich.edu

By signing this document, you are acknowledging that you have read and understand the explanation provided to you in this participant consent form. In addition, you agree that you have had all of your questions answered to your satisfaction and voluntarily agree to participate in this study. You will be provided a copy of this consent form, which includes a description of the research study, and one copy will be kept for study records.

Please sign below if you are willing to participate in this study:

I agree to participate in this study and be audio recorded.

Participant's Name

Participant's Signature

Date

The principal researcher would also like to request to view your UC 102 final paper to learn more about your MCSP experiences this semester. Please sign below if you consent to giving the principal investigator permission to read your paper. Your paper will be kept confidential, and no identifying information will be disclosed.

Participant's Signature

Date

Appendix E.
End of Fall Semester Interview Protocol
(Late November/Early December 2013)

Participant Pseudonym:

Date:

Time:

Length of Interview:

Before the Interview Begins:

- Go over the consent form with the student and ask if s/he has any questions.
- Collect the signed consent form and give a copy to the student to keep.
- Explain that the interview will be confidential, and ask the student to pick a pseudonym that is not his or her real name.
- Explain that the student will be emailed the \$25 Amazon gift card within 24 hours of the interview.
- Explain that the student will be invited by email to interview again in March, and s/he will receive a \$25 Amazon gift card for the next interview as well. Emphasize the importance of participating in both interviews.

Introduction:

- Thank you so much for agreeing to participate in today's interview. It will last for approximately 60-90 minutes, but you're free to leave at any time for any reason, since the interview is voluntary. Also, if you don't feel comfortable answering any of the questions, you may decide not to answer and we'll go on to the next question.
- Thank you for also filling-out the pre-interview survey. Throughout the interview, I'll be referring to some of your answers to the survey. In most cases, I will repeat your answers to the survey questions, and ask you to elaborate on them. Please let me know if you need more clarification about the original survey questions and/or how you answered the questions.
- Do you have any questions before we begin?

Pre-College/Hometown Experiences

1) (Refer to pre-interview survey about pre-college diversity experiences) Could you tell me a little bit more about the diversity of the community that you grew up in, and the high school you attended?

Probe: What kinds of interactions did you have with people that had different backgrounds than yourself (i.e., race, gender, social orientation, SES) growing up?

Probe: What kinds of backgrounds did your close friends in your neighborhood and/or high school have?

Probe: How accepted did you feel from your community? Did you feel like you "fit in"?

2) What types of community service activities were you involved in during high school?

Probe: What are some of reasons that you decided to get involved with these activities?

Probe: What did you learn from these experiences?

Social Identity Background

3) Let's now talk a little bit about your own personal background. In your pre-interview questionnaire, you mentioned that you think about your (list social identities) often. In what situations/contexts do you often think about these identities?

Probe: Do you have any thoughts about (list of social identities) that you don't think about as often?

MCSP/U-M Experiences

4) (Refer to pre-interview survey about reasons for joining MCSP) Thinking back to before you started at U-M, could you tell me a little bit more about why you decided to join MCSP?

5) What were your expectations for being involved in MCSP when you applied?

Probe: Do you feel like those expectations have been met this semester?

6) How connected do you currently feel to the MCSP community?

Probe: What has influenced your connection to MCSP?

7) The terms "diversity" and "social justice" can mean a lot of different things to people. What does the term "diversity" mean to you? How about "social justice"?

Probe: How did you decide on these definitions of diversity and social justice?

Probe: Did your involvement in MCSP influence your definitions in any way? Why or why not?

8) How would you describe your involvement in diversity and social justice issues in MCSP this semester?

Probe: Which experiences were the most meaningful for you? What do you think that you gained and/or learned from these experiences? (If you didn't have very many meaningful experiences, why do you think this was the case?)

Probe: Have you noticed any changes in how you think about social justice issues? If so, how did these experiences cause you to think about social justice issues differently? If not, why not?

Probe: Did these experiences spark any new thoughts about how you see yourself or others? If so, why? If not, why not?

Probe: Did these experiences influence how you act around others with similar and/or different backgrounds than yourself? If so, why? If not, why not?

9) (Refer to the pre-interview survey about MCSP experiences) What do you think you gained or learned from the other MCSP experiences that you were involved in this semester?

Probe: What do you think you learned about social justice and diversity issues from UC 102 or other MCSP-affiliated courses?

Probe: What do you think you learned from diversity and social justice issues from participating in the community service activities associated with MCSP?

Probe: What do you think you learned from any other social justice-focused MCSP activities that you participated in (e.g., dialogues, film series, action team events)?

Probe: If you didn't learn or gain much from your other MCSP experiences, why do you think this was the case?

10) Please describe whom you most frequently interact with in MCSP.

Probe: Are there differences in the MCSP students that you interact with inside and outside of East Quad?

Probe: How do these students' backgrounds differ compared to your own? How do their backgrounds compare to other students you interact with outside of MCSP at U-M?

Probe: Is there anything new that you've learned from your MCSP peers that have different backgrounds than you?

Probe: Have you had conversations about social justice issues with your MCSP peers? If so, when do these conversations generally occur, and what have you talked about? If not, why do you think you haven't talked about social justice issues with them?

11) Have you had any other meaningful experiences with diversity and social justice at U-M that weren't connected to being in MCSP?

Probe: If so, what happened, and what did you learn from those experiences?

12) Have you been able to use what you've learned in MCSP to any other settings at U-M?

13) What types of MCSP activities are you planning on getting involved in during Winter semester?

Probe: How about other U-M activities?

14) How do you see yourself becoming involved with social justice activities during the rest of this year?

Probe: If you don't see yourself being involved in these issues, why is that? What else would you like to be involved in instead?

Social Justice Attitudes and Behaviors

15) What do you think are some the most important social justice issues in our society right now?

Probe: Are you particularly passionate about any of the social justice issues that you mentioned, or are there any others that you care about?

Probe: What led to you to become passionate about these issues?

Probe: How much did you know about these diversity/social justice issues before college? How about since coming to college?

Probe: Have you talked about these issues with your family and/or friends?

16) What does the term "injustice" mean to you?

Probe: Are there any examples of situations your own life, or the lives of those close to you, which fit your definition of "injustice" that you would be willing to share?

17) What are your thoughts about the current state of equality and inequality in society?

Probe: In what ways do you think you have more or fewer privileges than others?

18) What is your vision of a socially just society?

Probe: What do you think needs to happen in our society in order for your vision to be realized?

Probe: How do you plan to contribute to this vision?

19) How do you see yourself “making a difference” in the future?

Probe: If you don’t see yourself making a difference, what do you see yourself doing in the future?

Appendix F.
End of Winter Semester Interview
(April 2014)

Participant Pseudonym:

Participant ID:

Date:

Time:

Length of Interview:

- Thank you so much for agreeing to participate in today's interview. It will last for approximately 60-90 minutes, but you're free to leave at any time for any reason, since the interview is voluntary. Also, if you don't feel comfortable answering any of the questions, you may decide not to answer and we'll go on to the next question.
- Explain that the interview will be confidential, and I've picked a pseudonym that is not his or her real name.
- Explain that the student will be emailed the \$25 Amazon gift card within 24 hours of the interview.
- Do you have any questions before we begin?

Introduction

Thanks so much for meeting with me today. I'm really looking forward to hearing how things having been going in MCSP and U-M since we last talked in the Fall.

MCSP Experiences

1) What was your involvement in MCSP like this semester?

Probe: What did you take for your Civic Requirement? Did you take any other MCSP-affiliated courses? What do you think you learned about social justice and diversity issues these courses?

Probe: Did you participate in any community service activities? What do you think you learned from diversity and social justice issues from participating in the community service activities associated with MCSP?

Probe: Did you participate in any other MCSP experiences such as dialogues, action teams, film series, social events, etc.? What do you think you learned from any other social justice-focused MCSP activities that you participated in?

Probe: If you didn't learn or gain much from your other MCSP experiences, why do you think this was the case?

2) Out of these experiences, which ones were the most and least meaningful for you?

Probe: What do you think that you gained and/or learned from these experiences? (If you didn't have very many meaningful experiences, why do you think this was the case?)

Probe: Have you noticed any changes in how you think about social justice issues? Is so, how did these experiences cause you to think about social justice issues differently? If not, why not?

Probe: Did these experiences spark any new thoughts about how you see yourself or others? Do you any additional insights about your social identities? If so, why? If not, why not?

Probe: Did these experiences influence how you act around others with similar and/or different backgrounds than yourself? If so, why? If not, why not?

3) How would you describe your involvement in MCSP during this semester compared to the last semester, and why?

Probe: What were the differences and/or similarities?

4) Were there any differences in your circle of friends in MCSP during Winter semester compared to the Fall semester?

Probe: If so, what were these differences?

Probe: How did these interactions make you think about social justice issues differently?

Probe: Did you have any new conversations with social justice issues this semester?

Probe: Do you see yourself staying in touch with the people you met in MCSP this year?

5) What were your experiences like with your peer mentor this year?

Probe: Were you satisfied with your relationship with him or her?

6) Overall, how do you think MCSP met your expectations this year?

Probe: Would you recommend it to a new freshman coming in next year?

7) How connected do you currently feel to the MCSP community?

I'm also curious to hear more about your other experiences at U-M this semester.

8) What else had you been involved in at U-M this semester?

9) Have you had any other meaningful experiences with diversity and social justice at U-M that weren't connected to being in MCSP?

Probe: If so, what happened, and what did you learn from those experiences?

10) Have you been able to use what you've learned in MCSP this year to any other settings at U-M?

Social Justice Beliefs, Attitudes, and Behaviors

11) (Read their previous definitions of social justice and diversity from the second interview). Is there anything you would change or add to your previous definitions of social justice and diversity?

Probe: (If they changed their definitions) What led you to change your definition?

12) How do you think you've changed in terms of thinking about social justice issues since joining MCSP?

Probe: How do you think that MCSP influenced your commitment to social justice?

13) Have you noticed any changes in terms of how you react to things that you consider unjust (e.g., discrimination, prejudice, stereotyping, etc.) since joining MCSP?

14) What does the term ally mean to you? Do you consider yourself to be a social justice ally? Why or why not?

15) How do you see yourself engaging in social justice issues next year? In the future?

Probe: What are you planning on getting involved with next year?

16) How do you see yourself staying involved in MCSP in the future?

Probe: Are you planning on returning to MCSP next year?

17) Do you think your involvement in MCSP influence any decisions regarding your major and/or career path in any way? Why or why not?

Probe: Do you have any new thought on how you see yourself “making a difference” in the future?

18) What are your summer plans?

Probe: Do you anticipate that you’ll have discussions about diversity and social justice issues with anyone that you know during the summer?

Probe: How would you describe your level of comfort with having these conversations? Do you think your level of comfort has changed since you joined MCSP?

19) Is there anything else you’d like to add about your experiences in MCSP and/or U-M that we didn’t get to discuss?

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