

HAIL, DIVERSITY, HAIL:
QUESTIONING THE CAMPUS CLIMATE

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the
Senior Scholars Program

COLBY COLLEGE
2011

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you to my interviewees for being honest and courageous, you have inspired me.

Thank you to Professor Mark Tappan, my tutor and thesis advisor, none of this would have been possible without you. Thank you for the many meetings, e-mails, text messages, wise words of encouragement, and continuous support. You have helped me find my passion for education, multiculturalism and social justice. I cannot express how grateful I am to you.

To Professor Adam Howard and Dean Joseph Atkins, thank you for advising me throughout this process as my thesis readers. Your guidance has always been appreciated and very important to me. Thank you for always listening to me and helping me find my identity and role in this work.

A special thank you to Pamela Colon who has been my role model and inspiration since I first arrived to Colby College. I have learned so much from you. Thank you for being all that you are and for always encouraging me (and for never letting me quit).

Thank you, especially, to Lisa Park, a true friend who stood by me throughout this process: listening to my frustrations, challenging me, and simply talking me through the obstacles. I could not have done this without you.

Finally, thank you to members of the Colby community dedicated to social justice; together we are building a better place.

~

I dedicate this thesis to my late brother, Stefan Mahabir, who taught me many things. When I was a child, he taught me how to read and write. As an adult, he taught me how to find pleasure in the simple things in life and how to be strong.

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PREFACE

Atop a Hill: An American Private Liberal Arts College

Colby College stood out to me when I was applying to colleges: its beautiful campus, the described close relationship between faculty and students, and the endless opportunities available within and outside the classroom were irresistible. I was excited to matriculate and begin my journey—I believed the College on top of a hill was truly an idyllic world. Founded in 1813, as the 12th-oldest independent liberal arts college in the United States, Colby has a rich history and defined culture based upon a “work hard, play hard” lifestyle—it attracts a *certain* type of student, and although I did not fit the mold, I did find a “place” for myself in the College.

Colby, like most institutions, keeps diligent track of “the numbers.” According to “Colby, By the Numbers,” found in the Prospective Students section of the website there are:

1,825: Number of enrolled students
62: Countries represented in student body
45: U.S states represented in student body
46/54: Male and female enrollment percentages
11.5: Percentage of international students
17: Percentage of minority students
55: Percentage of students who attended public high school
67: Percentage of students who study abroad
10-to-1: Student-faculty ratio
54: Number of majors offered
16: Median class size
32: Number of varsity teams
25,000: Alumni, living in all 50 states and 75 foreign countries

Yet what do these numbers look like off paper? What do these numbers mean? As a current Colby student, these numbers are arbitrary—it is unfortunate that we only have

17% of “minority” (whatever that is) students and its wonderful that our student to faculty ratio is low...but what is Colby really like? What do these numbers translate to?

Isolated in rural Maine, in the town of Waterville—Colby’s location provides many advantages as well as disadvantages. Colby takes pride in its outstanding academic program that makes it one of three highly selective-liberal arts colleges in the state (the other two are Bates and Bowdoin) as well as its active campus life that gives students an opportunity to lead and engage in unique ways within the community. The isolated location allows students to focus on studies as well as take initiatives to improve their quality of life. Yet, the area lacks diversity. The College must internally provide resources for the “17% of minority students.” With the closest city being more than an hour away, Colby becomes insulated and a world of its own.

My first semester here, for my English requirement, I took *The History of Colby College* and became fascinated with how the College developed the values we hold today. There is a profound history here: Colby saw activism as early as 1833, through Elijah Parish Lovejoy, abolitionist and the first martyr to the freedom of the press. Colby was the first all-male college to accept female students in New England. Mary Low was the first woman to attend in 1871 and was the class valedictorian in 1875. In 1887, Adam Simpson Green was the first African-American man to graduate from Colby. The “newer history” of Colby has not been well preserved but there continues to be a trend of social justice and a spirit of activism. In 1970, Charles Terrell led Students Organized for Black and Hispanic Unity (SOBHU) to “occupy” Lorimer Chapel to promote and encourage change for black students on campus. Then, Colby abolished its Greek system in 1984, after an investigation of campus life commissioned by the Board of Trustees to create inclusion on the campus (encouraged by Jacqueline Nunez’s ‘61

proposal). These events have served as inspirational for current students who seek to effect change on the campus pertaining to race and gender issues.

Colby aims to provide a well-rounded and rigorous education to its students. There are many academic opportunities during their tenure: a choice of courses from 52 major fields, ability to design independent study program (and further, a major), internships, and study abroad programs. Over two-thirds of Colby Students study abroad during their college career. Outside of the classroom: athletics, multiculturalism, humanitarian projects, volunteer programs and pursuing hobbies are just a part of how Colby students spent their time. Colby is a part of NESCAC, the New England Small College Athletic Conferences, and has 32 athletic teams and several club sports. Colby's multicultural center, named the Pugh Center after its benefactor Lawrence Pugh '56, houses 16 clubs devoted to different multicultural needs. Students also participate in organizations, such as 'Colby Outdoors Club' or a capella groups, for personal enjoyment. Student-run humanitarian projects such as Luzicare, has raised awareness and money for the malaria problem in Sierra Leone. The Colby Volunteer Center organizes over 10 volunteer opportunities for students to engage with the Waterville community.

Colby provides its students with the opportunity to participate in the governance system of Colby with 'three big boards' on campus that take charge of managing student life. The Student Government Association (SGA) is comprised of a President, Vice-President, their parliamentary board and dorm-presidents for every residence hall to create opportunities for student's to voice their concerns. The Student Programming Board (SPB) produces social events on campus such as dances, concerts, bingo nights, etc. The Pugh Community Board (PCB) is a smaller board in size, but that

has not hindered them for consistently programming outstanding multicultural events on campus. These three boards support the social life at Colby by programming events or supporting other clubs. The campus culture at Colby is largely student-driven. Students use what they are taught in the classroom, in meetings, and in daily experiences to effect change, be innovative, and produce a community.

I have briefly described what Colby is like on the surface, but it is a very complex community and thus, has a very complex climate. Campus climate refers to how inclusive a community is for its members. If it is a 'warm' climate, every member feels welcomed but if it is 'chilly' there are exclusionary factors. On the surface, it all may look the same, but different students experience Colby in different ways. In the following chapters, I will show how some students have experienced Colby, particularly with respect to race and gender, how those experiences generate particular attitudes about multiculturalism on campus, and what those experiences and attitudes reveal about the campus climate. Ultimately, my goal is to understand how to change the campus climate, to promote inclusion and social justice for all students.

INTRODUCTION

I Am Colby: Understanding My Identity

At the beginning of my Junior Year, the Associate Dean of Multicultural Affairs and Director of the Pugh Center, Noel James, hosted an event called “I am Colby” during the first-year orientation. Student leaders sat amongst the first-year students in Lorimer Chapel and one by one we rose and “declared ourselves” publicly: “My name is Sonia Mahabir. I’m originally from New York City and I am a Posse Scholar. I am this year’s chair of the Pugh Community Board and I love country music. *I am Colby.*” These few statements were to serve as a blanket introduction of myself to these new students in our community—it was a way to give them a taste of the many personalities that existed here. Each of my chosen statements has had distinct effects on my experience as a Colby student. As a Posse Scholar, I came in with “credibility” as I was immediately recognized as a leader. Being from New York and loving country music was almost a contradiction and demonstrated my open-mindedness to difference. My identity at Colby has been largely defined by my involvement with multiculturalism—specifically race and gender¹. These aspects of my identity² have led me to this thesis.

“Hail, Diversity, Hail: Questioning the Campus Climate at Colby College” combines what I have learned in my classes (formally as theory), through my engagement in extra-curricular (practice), and by simply being a female student of color (life). I have held a dual role within this thesis—I am a researcher as well as a ‘subject.’ I have analyzed the responses of my peers, studied this issue formally, but I have also

¹ To read more about my experience at Colby please see Appendix II.

² Colby places students in an odd position where they cannot bear more than one identity at once. Colby is not good at intersecting identities. Students do feel like they must make a choice.

been actively involved in the Colby community as well. This dual role has provided me with an interesting standpoint where I am able to analyze my own experience and understand Colby. As my senior year began to wind down (mid April), I found myself sitting in the Marchese Blue Light Pub (conveniently located on campus) with Heather Pratt, who is writing a thesis male entitlement and sexual assault. We talked about the effect this 'dual role' of subject and researcher has played reminiscent of DuBois' theory on double-consciousness. We do not attend certain parties (events, social gatherings, etc.) anymore because of what we've discovered at Colby through our interviews. We do not engage in the same way with our community because we've become attuned to what goes on here, and it isn't perfect. Our dual role has allowed us to look at Colby critically and changed who we are on this campus.

So, why am I writing this thesis? What understanding of student experiences and attitudes do I hope to form? How will this determine and create a portrait of the campus climate? I am writing this thesis because I have been disappointed by the lack of support given to students from underrepresented backgrounds. Our community's lack of responsibility has disappointed me. I am disappointed by what, as a student body, we condone by faculty, administration, and one another. Why don't we challenge some of the clear roadblocks to social justice? I am focusing on race and gender because of its role in my life as a student. In this thesis, I ask many questions in order to establish and develop an understanding of campus climate relating to the issues of race and gender. It is an investigation of student experiences and attitudes, which provide a window to understanding and observing campus climate. What is going on here, at Colby, with multiculturalism?

I focus on the experience of current seniors, the Class of 2011, which has also been my experience. This brief review highlights the events that have occurred in the last four years. My main source for information has been the Civil Digest of Discourse. Appendix III has the actual digests written during these events. Through my overview of the past four years at Colby, I hope to create an understanding of the campus culture as well as provide context for my understanding the data I have collected as part of this thesis project.

Our First-Year, 2007 – 2008:

I arrived to Colby early in August 2001, along with about 20 other students that were first-generation students or students of underrepresented backgrounds (A.L.A.N.A. students) for Preview Weekend. This weekend was designed to allow students who did not have any experience with college to become acquainted with Colby. First-year international students were on campus as well. This was the last year that Preview Weekend was held because of the “lack of interest,” but I do believe Preview was useful in introducing me to the campus and giving me an upper hand to negotiating the resources on campus to create the experience I desired.

This year can be described as holding “pockets” of multicultural inquisitions and incidents. Notably, it was the first year Campus Conversations on Race (CCOR) was brought to Colby and today it is one of the campus’ strongest programs. I participated in CCOR during the second semester of my first-year, and it helped me come to terms with micro-aggressions and racism in my life. Through CCOR, I initially found my voice to dealing with race.

The year began with rather disturbing events as an attack on a female occurred in mid-October, and Dean Terhune issued a safety advisory. This incident led to discussion on campus lighting—why wasn't more done to keep the campus well lit? If the campus administration were actually concerned about female safety, wouldn't taking little steps to improve the campus be necessary? (I remember the rumors that Colby didn't want to do anything to take away from the beautification of the campus). By mid-November, another attack occurred. Students were even more upset because the Kennebec Journal had more information than Colby provided their students with. Colby's lack of transparency was disturbing. What was the campus trying to cover up?

This incident gave rise to discussion about the lack of knowledge about Colby's Sexual Assault Policies, and the administration was questioned: are they doing enough? Several females said no, and expressed feeling unsafe through the Civil Digest of Discourse. Men engaged with the situation as well as they felt attacked, a discussion on male privilege was sparked when one student writes: "I may be male, and stereotypically less vulnerable, but that does not mean safety effects me any less." What was the role of men? What was the extent of male privilege at Colby? To respond to the situation, and provide a solution—the Colby Security begin their escort service in November, which was promoted by the Student Government Association (SGA).

These issues were further irritated when Students Against Sexual Assault (SASA) put up posters raising awareness that men indeed can stop rape, and they were defaced. Someone re-edited to say: "Women can stop rape – say yes" and added the caption: "Colby College: A Safe Place for Women?" After the incidents of the year, was Colby a safe place for women? I remember participating in a small but effective 'Take Back the Night' ceremony in April where we marched around the campus, it was only a

few of us, but I remember realizing that something was wrong here. Students Against Sexual Assault would become inactive the following year as the seniors who ran the club graduated.

The event that stood out the most during my first-year was the Cinco de Mayo incident, in which students created offensive t-shirts and events. The shirts used ‘Speedy Gonzalez’ as a mascot for the event, and on the back had a sign that said ‘Border Patrol’ and portrayed Mexicans jumping the border. It was very much a moment where I was baffled at student’s insensitivity. How could they not know that this was not okay? A male student brought up the micro-aggressions³ and ridicule of a culture created by the event on the Digest—he made the issue public. To respond to this incident and address how “racism passes for the status quo on campus,” students planned the *Rally for Real Multiculturalism*⁴. This event was inspirational as faculty and students spoke up on privilege, equality, and the culture of our campus. Change was requested.

I learned something very valuable from this experience: when a student of color raises concerns about ‘white privilege’ it drums up animosity on campus. White students responses to Cinco de Mayo were quite intriguing: “I wasn’t upset about Doghead” (a tradition on campus for St. Patrick’s Day,” “I know Mexicans,” “If you use Google for these images on Mexico...it comes up, so how am I wrong?” “Whites can’t help it if they are in the majority,” “I’m not racist, so I don’t have white privilege,” “Why are you attacking why people?” and one student vehemently argued that if an individual white person was in the company of black people she will face racism. All of these

³ Micro-aggression is the daily occurrence of a brief and somewhat common verbal or attitude used to humiliate or condescend. (Read more in Appendix I)

⁴ Read the Digest posted about the event in Appendix III, Rally for Real Multiculturalism

responses piled up and many of the initial concerns were lost on the Digest⁵. So how do these conversations take place effectively? How can there be an educational experience on controversial topics without defensiveness?

Sophomore Year 2008 – 2009:

During this school year, “everything exploded.” Legitimately. Students and faculty promoting social justice did not rest. The year began immediately with micro-aggressions when the Student Programming Board went ahead with an insensitive Luau theme for Loudness, even though several students voiced concerns against it. Two students posted on the Digest to express their hurt and frustration over the event⁶. SPB responded, and was later criticized for their insensitivity and the following “weak apology.”⁷ How did this happen so cavalierly? Why wasn’t the SPB taking more ownership of the event and the circumstances that surrounded it? Whose responsibility was it to remedy the situation?

Similar to previous incidents, the white privilege argument was brought up and met with fierce resistance from white students as “many things can be taken as a privilege” so why were we making this a race issue? It was disappointing, because many students did not take the concerned and upset students seriously, making them feel that shouldn’t feel hurt because it was just a “mistake.” I was astonished that students were actually denying their peers the right to be upset. It made me realize the lack of safe spaces at Colby. I was involved in many of the conversations and plans due to my role

⁵ As a first-year, I was also inspired to write on the Digest about these things. There is when it all began. ☺

⁶ Read the Digest posted in Appendix III, Luau concerns

⁷ Read the Digest posted in Appendix III, SPB’s apology

on the Pugh Community Board and I became depressed and hopeless, as it seemed that conversations were not improving. It was an overwhelming micro-aggression. Students were missing the point throughout the entire ordeal; some students even went further and created by more micro-aggressions by writing mock Digests where they were offended.⁸ A student added another layer to the issue as she commented on institutional racism: “SPB isn’t the problem, it is a symptom.” What are we being taught at Colby? How can we handle these issues? Who was to blame?⁹

This entire incident also led to students of other ethnicities to speak up on micro-aggressions, most noticeably, Asian students. It seemed that from every corner, students were unhappy with their experience at Colby, they were upset with how they were tokenized and how often their concerns were rejected. The year grew even more tense when for Halloween, students dressed as a “black man” and other offensive costumes. After this, SPB brought a comedian to campus who made racist jokes saying to one male student of color: “You must get a lot of snow bunnies” and to a female of color who left upset: “Why are you such an angry minority?”¹⁰ The campus was appalled. To respond, there was an increase in Race and Racism Committee Meetings – where a Multicultural Literacy course was developed (but was not put into action until two years later!) President Adams immediately addressed the community encouraging students to “participate” in community¹¹. The institution began to take a firmer stance on the issues in hopes to alleviate the problem. While this year was very heavy with racism, there were gender issues as well: female students began to speak up about how

⁸ Read the Digest posted in Appendix III, Vampires

⁹ Read excerpts of the Digest posted in Appendix III, smart comments about Cinco de Mayo

¹⁰ Several of my students of color interviewees claimed that they have been described as ‘angry’ although in all honesty, they do not feel angry, but frustrated. This stereotype wears them down.

¹¹ Read the message in Appendix III, President Adams’ note

Colby's involvement in a gossip website – JuicyCampus threatened their safety as it used their sexual freedom to put them down.

On November 6th, a sit-in against micro-aggressions was held urging the campus to 'listen.' Students, faculty, and some members of the administration participated. This sit-in took place in the middle of the student union, where participants wore all black, put duct tape over their mouths and held signs that explained to the campus that they have felt silenced due to the campus culture. It was met with mixed responses, some students who were not involved were upset about it stating that it was disrespectful, took things too far, and made people uncomfortable. Students were confused. Other students cited it as brave and getting the point across¹².

These events reminded the campus of the lack of opportunities to have discussion. To remedy this, "Dialogue, Not Debate" was organized and planned by two students¹³. The goals were to provide a safe space to talk about race and the campus community in larger mixed groups. Then, "*PC*" *Coffee* also began on behalf of the Pugh Community Board in the Spring Semester to provide students with an outlet for discussion. The PCB focused on different topics and it helped garner an intellectual environment that raised discussion.

Then the Easter Incident, April 12th occurred. In the Pugh Center, after a dance, two students of color were met with brutality by police officers and security guards. The event was captured on tape and showed the young men bleeding, being tazed, and helpless. There were other incidents of hostility towards students of color in the surrounding area as the night progressed—including a security officer intimidating an

¹² Read a Digest posted in Appendix III, The problem

¹³ Read the Digest posted in Appendix III, Dialogue, Not Debate

Asian female and a Black male. Dean Terhune sent out an ambiguous e-mail to alert the community that something happened¹⁴. This frustrated the campus as students debated if there were racist intentions and how no one completely knew what happened. It seemed that the administration was not protecting this group of students nor taking ownership of the community problems. In response, students organized a rally on Miller Lawn, where many people turned out wearing red in solidarity and support. April 12th is complicated because of the security aspect – how many students participated in the rally to acknowledge the racial undertones? How many were there as a response against security? An Investigative Report was released by campus hired Martin, President Adams is criticized for not paying attention to the report¹⁵. I truly cannot write about April 12th in full detail without writing a separate thesis. It was perhaps one of the most challenging events of my Colby experience. It just seemed like nothing could, or would get better. April 12th is still debated to this day. It was unresolved and many students are still waiting for an apology from the administration.

Junior Year 2009 – 2010:

I was the chair of the Pugh Community Board during my Junior Year; it was an empowering position that introduced me to the politics of Colby from a different perspective. There was an uncanny silence on campus this year: there was heightened awareness, but discussion on problems was minimal. Maybe because of the challenges faced the previous year? Maybe students were tired? Or maybe it was because there was a sense of pro-activity amongst the student body instead of the usual general reaction?

¹⁴ Read Dean Terhune's e-mail, Appendix III, Dean Terhune's e-mail

¹⁵ Read an excerpt from the Report, Appendix III, Martin's report

Community responsibility came into question as a brave student wondered why his sexuality was found funny.¹⁶ The lack of community responsibility was emphasized when another student posted on the lack of follow up on the creation of a Student Bill of Rights. It was also the first year the Student Government Board did not program anything in remembrance of 9/11 upsetting students from cities outside of New England: “if this happened in Boston would it have been ignored?” In January, when the Hurricane in Haiti occurred and two Colby students were on the island and witnessed the devastation, the campus pulled together under the leadership of the Goldfarb Center to raise support and awareness for the incident.

During the spring semester, dorm damage was a major issue on campus, the gender dynamics of the matter created a buzz. Were males mostly responsible for dorm damage? What was this aggression about? How can we point fingers? This later spanned to different areas of disrespect that men were blamed for, including harassment. The topic of sexual assault briefly surfaced at Colby. Some members of the campus wondered how much of this was assumption. Others argued that it was unfair. This sparked a different conversation about “political correctness,”¹⁷ was it damaging our community? I began to wonder whom political correctness benefitted. Certainly not me, as a female of color, political correctness created a lot more problems and a general “run around” of problems.

A new conversation on gender rose near the end of the semester when a student felt treated unfairly by double standards.¹⁸ This student went to Foss dining hall wearing Woodsmen chaps that exposed her hind legs, on her legs she advertised a ‘Mud

¹⁶ Read the Digest, Appendix III, Why is my sexuality funny?

¹⁷ Read the Digest, Appendix III, Political Correctness

¹⁸ Read the Digest, Appendix III, Double Standards

Meet' event. A member of the staff told her that if she dressed like that, she would get raped. This was met with a variety of responses: some in agreement with the poster and others responding that she was being naïve and she should recognize the values of our society where females cannot dress a certain way. What did this say about sexual assault? Is there ever a time when the victim was to blame? It was shocking because it seemed that students did not know how to even think about this issue.

I was proud of the year in general though because of my involvement with the Pugh Community Board. The Pugh Community Board had new visibility and there was more activity in the Pugh Center with events such as the Pugh Club Palooza and "PC" Coffee. Gentleman of Quality was also created to provide support for men's issues. The Pugh Center was becoming the true hub for multiculturalism that everyone envisioned.

Senior year 2010 – 2011

Since this year is still in progress, I cannot actually label it. It has been a complicated year to say the least, but the Colby community has begun to make positive steps in developing multicultural understanding. There were a lot of initiatives to support and research multiculturalism from the beginning of the year. Working on this thesis has led me to take an active stance on the issues that confuse and upset me. What can we do to improve our community?

This year the Student Government Association established support for multicultural affairs and supporting diverse students. This began to raise awareness in a new way, this time the concerns was coming from the SGA and not just the PCB and its constituents. The SGA President organized a September 11th remembrance immediately when the school began, set up a Task Force to address social class issues

on campus. Other official Colby organizations such as the Multicultural Affairs and Race and Racism Committees held public forums on Diversity and general meetings. A senior, Heather Pratt wrote her thesis on sexual assault and began to revise the policies. A lot was going on to bring these issues to light! Multiculturalism was a priority for the student body!

Activism and conversation increased when the new Associate Dean of Multicultural Affairs and Director of the Pugh Center resigned after only 90 days of service. This drew attention and raised awareness on the lack of resources at Colby. How were we doing in comparison to other NESCAC colleges?¹⁹ What did Colby need to retain students, faculty, and staff of underrepresented backgrounds? Student activism²⁰ rose in response and students hosted meetings to discuss the Colby community. Further, the definition of multiculturalism expanded as students began to raise awareness on mental health issues.²¹ What was multiculturalism exactly? Why did it always get conflated with race? What was the administration trying to achieve by focusing mainly on a visible difference?

Before the fall semester ended, one student questioned Colby's financial priorities. Why did it seem that athletics received more funding than multicultural affairs? This garnered student attention and some began to express that they didn't even understand what 'multiculturalism' was. President Adams began to be heavily

¹⁹ Read the Digest, Appendix III NESCAC Comparison

²⁰ No rewards for social justice: I often go into this rant, at Colby, working towards social justice is hard and it does not help you "get ahead" in tangible ways at Colby. It is understandable why people get burnt out in this struggle. Students do not see improved grades for their efforts or become celebrated by the campus (oftentimes they are stigmatized) and members of the faculty do not see rewards as well. It has become hard for people involved in social justice to sit back and celebrate themselves and their achievements because activism is almost frowned upon here. I think that this needs to be remedied.

²¹ Read the Digest, Appendix III, Mental Health

criticized for receiving a high paycheck when it seemed to some students that he did not do a thorough job. Money is important to the campus. The obsession with money seemed to hurt multiculturalism. Was it not a worthwhile investment?

During finals week, one student wrote about being sexually harassed.²² A senior female was studying in the Mary Low Coffeehouse when two first-year males entered to watch a movie for “class.” The female did not want to leave her study space because it was finals week and the library and most other study locations were filled. One of the males wrote her a poem calling her a ‘trollop.’ This frustrated her because it criticized her sexual freedom. Some students agreed with this student and felt that she was wronged. Then the perpetrator spoke up and it brought about even more issues.²³ Men and women did not seem to be able to foster a productive conversation on sexual assault and harassment. Many bodies of the campus also silenced it. How can we ever change and correct this very serious problem if we couldn’t discuss it without ridiculing it?²⁴

Before the spring semester began however, the Colby was met with another challenge when during a JanPlan trip to China; Professor Phillip Brown violated student rights by taking pictures of them in the bathroom. Area newspapers released the details as the college was obligated to protect their students. However, the administration was adamant on silencing the issue and not discussing it in any way. Everyone was listening, everyone was ready to talk, but there was no response. How can we ever move forward if we didn’t capitalize on opportune moments? This resulted in two students working together to program an intense Women’s History Month that addressed many issues. During the month there was a panel on ‘Gender, Power, and

²² Read the Digest, Appendix III, Sexual Harassment

²³ Read the Digest, Appendix III, His response

²⁴ Read the Digest, Appendix III, I am worried about the Community.

Dynamics.’ It began to voice and raise real issues on campus in an emotional way. There was a general consensus amongst the student body and faculty that more resources were needed. The creation of Male Athletes Against Violence (MAAV) was met with excitement on campus. These students organized to speak out against discrimination, hate, and break the stereotypes of athletes that restrain them from being inclusive. They were almost a contradiction here. Athletes were seen as the biggest perpetrators of intimidation—MAAV’s existence represented hope for a better Colby.

Students began to speak out more as one student reported a micro-aggression where she was called the name of other female black students who she looked nothing like by professors.²⁵ Yet one student challenged this student’s concerns requesting that she show more empathy. I began to become frustrated: how can all the issues at Colby be managed simultaneously, especially if it were students leading many of the discussions? Something was wrong here.

Community values came into question (again) when one student posted on an incident where her car was vandalized, “gay, fag, and fuck you” was written on her car. She immediately declared that Hate was Not a Colby Value and it led to an inspirational moment on the Digest as other students declared this phrase. The administration took this very seriously and a “Community Day” took place, however on that same day during breakfast an incident was reported where students were openly using the words “homo” and “fag” in the dining hall. However, unlike many incidents before, one student took ownership of the incident and apologized. Later in the month of April, on “Skirt Day” (suggested by the Senior Class Council as the first day of Spring and the appropriate first day of the year for females to wear skirts) female students felt

²⁵ Read the Digest, Appendix III, Micro-aggressions

objectified as a group of men sat in the academic quad and ranked female students on the outfits they wore. Students were upset and outraged about how this defined the community. Yet, that weekend these same boys threw a party off campus (they are rumored to be members of an underground fraternity that the administration insists does not exist here) and I was stunned at how many people were excited to attend this party. What did we teach at Colby? What was going on here that these boys were not going to be punished but instead celebrated and supported? I understand why students attended the party, but I dream of a Colby where students who engage in these despicable acts face administrative punishment, not a house full of students ready to party. I was especially concerned because how safe could this house be? If these men were ready and willing to objectify women in the daylight in public—what would happen at night in private?²⁶

This year in multiculturalism saw students working closer with Trustees in order to gain support and new resources. Currently, students and faculty are trying to bring a Gender and Sexual Diversity Resource Center to Colby and reaching out for support. Students and faculty have come to a point where there needs to be change on campus because things are not getting better and in fact, harder to tolerate. I have hope in Colby; I do think there will be change. We may not see this change for many years. We may also go backwards before we go forward, but I believe if we continue to address these issues—change will occur.

²⁶ Anonymity: I wrote about how student of colors cannot be anonymous at Colby. I did not study the advantages white students face by being able to be anonymous but it has come up in conversation pertaining to the Skirt Day incident in April 2011. These students were regarded as other typical white male students and their private identities are being hidden. There is a frat culture here that also remains largely anonymous. Why is the campus protecting these students who are blatantly breaking rules?

“Hail, Diversity, Hail: Questioning the Campus Climate at Colby College” asks: what is happening here? What are student’s experiences? How do they perceive race and gender? Why? What does it mean? Asking the right questions will lead to change. In the realm of higher education, Colby College is labeled a private, elite, small liberal arts, and rural with academics as the main priority. Celebrated for its rigorous curriculum, excelling students, and extraordinary faculty, Colby should be an environment inclined to providing *true* learning experiences for the community. Where does diversity fit into this spectrum? Is a priority for the college? Should it be? Focusing on mainly race and gender²⁷, I am concerned with understanding the “benefits” and “burdens” surrounding these issues—as well as the general experience and ‘problems’—at Colby in order to create a portrait of the campus climate. The campus climate, which is a way to gauge the inclusive nature of a college, will begin to show us where the change needs to occur what the change should look like, and how to make it happen.

Going beyond the academic experience, I examine social life and extra-curricular activities. This project was inspired by my personal time at Colby that has been significantly marked by distinctive events: some tumultuous and some inspiring. These experiences (and the retelling of the events) have left me perplexed about Colby’s culture. There is a lack of consistency in anecdotes and statistics from various resources on campus that suggests there are misunderstandings about the “student experience.” In depth examination is required to unearth the truth. Using student experiences as a window to understand campus climate, I set out to identify and assess the Colby community, and develop a “portrait” of the college.

²⁷ But actively recognizing that multiculturalism is not limited to these dimensions of identity.

My findings can be used to improve campus conditions and generate positive student attitudes towards multiculturalism. The purpose of this project is to develop an understanding of student's experiences with multiculturalism (with special attention paid to race and gender) in order to understand their developed attitudes towards diversity. Is diversity a subject of interest? What effects does multiculturalism have on student's lives? Are there more negative or positive feelings towards multiculturalism on campus? My active research combined with the knowledge I've attained through theory and literature, I plan to offer suggestions to the institution for improving conditions at the conclusion of this project. The remainder of this thesis is organized as follows: Literature Review, Race, Gender, Student Attitudes about Multiculturalism, and the Conclusion. The Conclusion consists of my suggestions and recommendations based on the findings from my interviews.

CHAPTER ONE: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

This Literature Review will give an overview of the scholarship available on: Diversity and Multiculturalism in Higher Education, Racial Identity, and Gender Identity. What is being studied in the field? What are the conclusions being made? To explore Diversity and Multiculturalism in Higher Education, I researched the Background of Higher Education Research, asking: What has been done in understanding this field of interest? What are the accepted conclusions and theories? Then, regarding Campus Climate: How do American institutions respond to diversity? Finally, in Current Experiences, I explore what is currently occurring at colleges across the country regarding multiculturalism. In my last two sections of my Literature Review, I assert that identity is important to this research. I examined Racial and Gender Identity, inquiring: What is racial identity? How does it impact students? What are the experiences? Likewise, What is gender identity? Why is there only a limited understanding about gender identity? What is the masculine and feminine culture? The literature chosen offers an opportunity to understand Colby in the context of race and gender.

How does all of this link in and relate to campus climate? My intentions with the 'Background of Higher Education Research' and 'Current Experiences' is to provide context for what is going on in college communities in the past and today. How is the campus climate shaped? How is it measured? What do we know? What do we have left to learn? With 'Racial Identity' and 'Gender Identity' I use it as a basis to

understanding that a student is in their environment and the experiences and attitudes that may come out of that. How do student attitudes and experiences contribute to identity and then looking at the larger picture, the campus climate?

Diversity and Multiculturalism and Higher Education

Background of Higher Education Research

Alexander Astin (1968, 1978, 1993) has performed extensive research to gauge the general experience for students in higher education. He established the understanding that after the initial decision a student makes (to go, or not to go); college becomes a place of change, growth and development. His research explored a myriad of topics to determine what matters to students, including: the value of college—is it worth the cost? Are students satisfied after graduating? etc. His research shows high levels of fulfillment as students claimed that their experience not only made them a better person, but more competitive as they were forced to mature through their experience. Their experiences can speak to the campus climate and how it engages students. In his later review of the college experience, Astin (1968, 1978, 1993) explored *how* college affects students. Students recognized the importance of being in a state of continuous growth and change. Additionally, college was cited as the first environment where leadership is developed, and this perhaps reinforces the idea that college is composed of the “best and the brightest.”

Astin (1993) also explores issues of diversity in his vast research:

One of the most controversial issues in American higher education these days is diversity. Many if not most universities have for several decades now been making efforts to diversify by increasing the representation of women and members of historically underrepresented racial groups in their faculties, staffs, and student bodies and by expanding curricular content to include more material from women, ethnic minorities, and

non-Western cultures. At the same time, many institutions have attempted to create a “multicultural” perspective on campus by sponsoring new student organizations, workshops, seminars, speakers, festivals, and other cultural and intellectual activities that focus on issues of gender race and culture (p. 78)

Across the country, the issue of multiculturalism offers a challenge for many colleges and universities. What can they do to properly serve students from underrepresented backgrounds? How can they actively maintain a “multicultural” environment? In *Student’s Success in College*, Astin (1978) claims that student’s actions in college (meaning who they choose to interact with, what they partake in, activism work) is most important for their development and matters more than who they are upon entry and where they choose to go to college. The struggle with multiculturalism on a national level affects each college’s unique campus climate. Students have the ability to change and grow during their college experience, regardless of past experiences as long as there is a healthy environment to have such experiences that is supported and promoted by the institution (Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, Whitt, et al., 2005).

On Campus Climate

An administration can gauge if their multicultural environment is thriving by assessing or climate of the campus. Campus climate is a term used to discuss how inclusive the environment of the campus community is. For example, if it is a “chilly” environment, there is a spectrum of discomfort regarding events, messages, symbols, core beliefs, overall attitudes, and perhaps more; “warm” suggests satisfaction and inclusivity. Universities rely on “campus climate teams,” Chief Diversity Officers, and the like to consistently “measure” the climate of the campus or to take the “pulse” of the campus. “Campus climates” can change dramatically over short periods of time it is important to actively keep track of the university’s response. Additionally, singular

positive and negative events can have a major influence on the campus climate and propel or diminish the “temperature” to “warm” or “chilly.”

It is important to use “methodologically sound, credible research” to measure these levels because of its sensitive nature. Experiences before and during higher education effect campus climate (Allen, Daye, Deo, Gottfredson, Panter, Wightman, 2008). “Campus climate” has also been referred to as a campus’ openness to diversity, research shows, that generally women and students of color are more “open” and engaged than men and White students. Openness to diversity is dependent on the institution policies—if there are higher levels of commitment, a supportive community will develop (Longerbeam, 2010). It is important to have “warm” campus climates because “virtually every college and university today feels the pressure to prepare students to live and work in a diverse world” (Sciame-Giesecke, Roden, Parkison, 2009 pp. 158). A positive experience on the undergraduate level is crucial because the experience will extend beyond this timeframe.

How does an institution create a “warm” climate on its campus? “Diversifying the curriculum is important on all campuses, but especially on those where there is little student and faculty diversity” (Sciame-Giesecke, Roden, Parkison, 2009 pp. 162). It is important to recognize the individual needs of students, and treat them as independents and not homogenous groups (Allen, Daye, Deo, Gottfredson, Panter, Wightman, 2008). Challenges arise as some disciplines, fields, and majors find diversity issues as crucial, while others don’t—but diversity must be a priority to all departments in order to fill the gap (Sciame-Giesecke, et al., 2009). Sciame-Giesecke, Roden, and Parkinson (2009) suggest that in higher education, there is a lack of precedence and concern for

understanding who students are as people, because faculty have never been trained to interact with students in this manner and it becomes an uncomfortable task.

It is here that the responsibility lies on the administration as: “Educational **policies** that support daily interactions of students with diverse peers and encourage curricular requirements for multicultural education” are shown to benefit the production of academically stronger students. Furthermore, students who have been formally educated about multicultural issues will become more keenly aware of social problems and inequality, resulting in a more democratically nuanced class of students” (Allen, et al., 2008 p. 32). Administrators must make a visible and continuous commitment to diversity.

Active and daily practices towards gauging “campus climate” can not only correct problems but also prevent them. For example, regarding race, Longerbeam suggests that “racial prejudice is a consequence of social ignorance that can be ameliorated through meaningful contact with diverse others” (2010). By determining and understanding these instances of ignorance and confronting them directly, problems will begin to diminish. Being proactive in forming relationships and interactions will prevent them. In addition, “reported findings have generally shown positive educational outcomes associated with racial diversity and suggest that students attending more racially diverse schools fare better on some outcomes than students attending less diverse institutions” (Allen, et al., 2008 p. 34). Therefore, if a campus has a “warm climate” and is able to fully diversify it will positively impact the students. Diversity does not only refer to race. “When students are open to interaction with others who hold varying perspectives, they may grow to appreciate and benefit educationally from those interactions and, in, turn, seek more frequent interactions with

diverse peers” (Longerbeam, 2010 p. 201). Creating opportunities for students to collaborate with one another will motivate them to seek out diverse experiences on their own. “Institutional support is present when institutions have a role in supporting the contact” (Longerbeam, 2010 p. 204). Ultimately for a campus to create a “warm” climate, it requires efforts at all levels of the institution. Students must interact with one another positively, faculty must incorporate diversity in their curriculum, and most important the administration must foster these relationships and keep track of the progress.

Current Experiences of Today’s American Colleges

What is happening on today’s campuses? Have diverse environments been thriving? How are problems handled? “Every year many incidents of prejudice and discrimination occur on college campuses, students come to college with personalities and attitudes that either become more open and sympathetic to diversity issues or become close-minded about diversity issues” (Cokley, Finley, Hall-Clark, Martinez and Tran 2010 p. 188). So, how do we help guide students into the right direction and ensure that there is a better sense of openness? How can we use campus climate to measure the level of inclusion? “Diversity experiences provide increased cultural awareness” as well as positively impact student achievement (Cokley, et al., 2010 p. 190). Positive diversity practices benefits the institution on many levels (as well as improves the campus climate). Currently, on college campuses there is a push for increased diversity acceptance and awareness through programming, policies, and interactions. Colby for example publishes a yearly ‘Diversity Report’ to examine the initiatives it has taken to promote multiculturalism.

Issues of race and gender have especially been a focus for universities as they are both “visible” differences that can be easily assessed. “Race and gender have been referred to as self-interest variables” (Cokely, et al., 2010 p. 192). This means, race and gender are tools that can be used to improve the campus’ image. What priorities does this create for colleges? What policies are developed? How can we use campus climate as a tool for helping colleges prioritize? Attitudes towards racial diversity and gender equity may be linked because of the similar underlying beliefs for racism and sexism (Cokley, et al., 2010). Race and gender are the main focus for my thesis because of their connections in theory and understanding.

In *Learning to Speak, Learning to Listen: How Diversity Works on Campus*, Susan E. Chase (2010) relies on personal narrative formed from direct conversation to capture campus climate. She presents the idea of “diversity on the table” which refers to the conditioning of discussion by fostering events within the community. Chase examines *this* moment in time for higher education, noting how the effects of the “post-racial” theory because of the election of Barack Obama. Chase also pays attention to the history of diversity at the college. This then leads to a remarkable set of profound case studies of studies at a college with the pseudonym City University.

Major issues explored by Chase (2010) are the presence of activism (is it effective?), institutionalized diversity (sets expectations but does not necessarily result in action), elements of a campus (student newspaper, student government, events, curriculum, website), and the perception of race and gender. Chase claims that students *have* power, but they must be taught how to use it. *Learning to Speak, Learning to Listen* takes risks by pointing out an institution’s reliance on “lip service” instead of actual achievement and encouraging forcing people out of their comfort zone. The book

highlights students groups that position members of the majority as allies or aims to create collaboration, such as Men Against Sexual Assault, White Students Resisting Racism, and the Multicultural Club (uniting students of color and international students). Chase's approach goes one step further than a typical case study as she presents a complete view of a campus and shows us what is working (2010).

Chase's message in *Learning to Speak, Learning to Listen* is captured in the following passage:

As she listens to her gay friend at the rally, Madison realizes how awful it would be to have to pretend she is someone she isn't. As she listens to her African American classmate, Hannah realizes that being frightened of him just because he is a black male constitutes racism. During the Kinsey workshop, Sydney gets a taste of what it is like to be the one who is different in a group. As he works on his sexism, Steven imagines that it must be just as difficult and exhausting to be a white person working on racial issues. As she thinks about the class privileges she takes for granted at home, Ramita takes the point of view of homeless people there. As she listens to students of color during the fishbowl exercise at RC, Melanie hears how painful their experiences are (p. 45).

Disadvantages that others face can be understood through the exploration of one's privilege. This research examines both the individual and the institution explaining: "Individual prejudice is harmful, but it reflects a broader system of injustice that operate even when individuals do not harbor prejudices" (p. 78). The reader begins to ask what are the injustices faced by students on campus? What type of campus climate is created? Why do they occur? How can they be challenged? (Chase 2010).

Ultimately, Chase (2010) provides a valuable lesson and perspective on diversity on colleges. Like many similar books, race is explored more thoroughly than other identity differences. Three unique ideas that are well explained are abstract inclusions, the issue of inefficient requirements by the college, and disconnecting (the idea that there are "other people's issues"). Chase provides an outline for institutions to make positive steps to improving campus climate, because Cokley et. al., 2010, argues: "it is

important that higher education institutions create diversity program initiatives that involve support by the entire institution from the highest to lowest levels” (p. 193).

Like Chase, Daryl G. Smith (2009) believes that higher education plays a critical role in achieving democracy and developing a diversity society. In *Diversity's Promise for Higher Education: Making it Work*, Smith argues for a campus climate that is “identity safe.” Smith uses language such as “Diversity *is*” to actively identify topics his wide audience can connect to: diversity is opportunities and challenges and diversity is our present and our future. Early on, Smith asserts that we as scholars and researchers we need to move beyond “old questions” in order to build diversity into the center of higher education. I found Smith’s commitment to all types of diversity (including invisible forms of identity and how they can create inclusion or exclusion) very helpful to highlight the gaps in most American colleges that equate diversity mainly to race.

Smith (2009) aims to teach his readers that everyone is a member of one community or identity at the same time, and can experience both oppression and privilege. Grasping this ideal can be useful for creating inclusive environments and improving the campus climate. Using the idea of cultural norms and assimilation, Smith targets multicultural language, by understanding the use of “too” (too black, too Jewish, too gay, etc.), privilege, and micro-aggressions; campuses can begin to take steps in the right direction. Smith challenges the work of other authors such as Fox (2009) by breaking down the idea that college mirrors the real world. He asks, are the changing demographics of the world reflected in higher education? Who is succeeding? Are all students engaged? Where? Do all groups perceive an institutional commitment to diversity (that are ultimately beneficial)? (2009).

Finally, Claude Steele's (2009) *Whistling Vivaldi* uncovers not only what challenges students of minority status but *how*, *why*, and the ultimate consequences. Steele presents new research and introduces the concept of stereotype threat. Stereotype threat has a major influence on campus climate. After examining a laundry list of problems faced by all involved with higher education including: does school serve all? What is the underperformance phenomenon? What are the implications created by stereotypes? Are the problems faced by students of considerable minority status necessarily academic, has personal issues been examined thoroughly? Why do students in the minority often claim to be unhappy and uncomfortable? Steele also offers suggestions to improve institutional practices.

Stereotype threat refers to ways in which concerns about condoning stereotypes of one's race, ethnicity, or gender can affect an individual's performance on academic talks, interactions with others, etc. Stereotypes result in racial segregation on campuses, a "chilly climate," and discrediting people (such as women) for their abilities. Steele (2010) agrees with both Chase and Smith: "Education is not equal in this society, in either access or quality" (p. 61) Higher education is effect by societal culture, and unfortunately racism and sexism is prevalent. Steele urges the reader to consider how important stereotypes are and how threatening they can be in society.

His research first began with examining testing pressures, an often discussed but under researched issue. Steele (2010) emphasizes the effects it has on 'ability,' as well as how worrying can be problematic, the idea of over-efforting and how standardized testing reinforces stereotypes because of stigmas of group identity. Steele speaks to individual students, such as Tim, who takes a class where there is only one other white student and everyone else is black—Tim begins to feel his whiteness, what does this

indicate? This transfers to issues faced by Colby, when white student are often hesitant to engage in multiculturalism (such as entering the Pugh Center) because they are scared of being the lone person and getting things wrong. Steele's (2010) research affirms that students in the minority may change goals because of low self-esteem. This adds another layer to understanding campus climate—what positions are put in? How does it make them feel? How do they react? What are the consequences?

An issue explored by Steele that can have a tremendous effect on colleges like Colby is “critical mass.” Colby is pushing to enroll diverse students (specifically those in the racial minority) in order to improve conditions. However, this is may be unreachable goal in the near future because “the number of minorities must be large enough to improve contingencies of the individual minority.” Having and creating a ‘critical mass,’ however, will greatly improve the campus climate. The population problem creates marginality, injustices and “setting cues.” So what is the answer to all of this, according to Steele (2010)? Psychological intervention that can reduce the prominence of negative stereotypes of a group's ability felt by an individual and thus they will see significant academic improvement.

Racial Identity

Race is “mishandled” in higher education, because there is either no campus climate of engagement or because people in the majority find it difficult to view racism as an “interpersonal injustice” (Fox, 2009; Tatum, 2007). Studied frequently and thoroughly, race is a hot button issue in the realm of higher education.

“We all have multiple identities that shape our experience” (Tatum, 1997 p. 90). The college setting has been described as the best place to begin to develop and explore

racial identity. The relationship between racial identity and campus climate is reciprocal—as they influence each other. It is an opportunity to gain clarity about who one is and how they fit into society. It is the first time, for many students, where the term ‘racial identity’ becomes a part of their vocabulary. There are many areas on campuses that work towards guiding students towards understanding their identity, including classrooms and especially multicultural centers (the influence these areas have contributes to the campus climate). Developing a sense of racial identity in college is complex and the type setting can influence the individual identity and experience; however, it is important to note, that for successful racial identity development the college must have a top-down strategic plan (Blincoe and Harris, 2009; Ortiz, 2009; Syed, 2010; Tatum, 1997).

What is racial identity? Who am I? Who does the world *say* I am? How am I represented? What has my social context been? How does our society construct and understand race and racism to form identity? Finding answers to these questions are the first steps to building foundations for supportive and inclusive environments. Experts describe ‘racial identity’ as how students begin to make meaning of what it means to be a part of a group defined by race or ethnicity and how one ultimately defines oneself. This recognition can begin to form as early as five years old—what parts of our identity captures our attention first? This becomes more complex in a society that bases discrimination and prejudice upon racial and ethnic differences. Assumptions and understandings of racial identity before college is not based upon experience but internalizations created and supported through television, newspapers and the like. Further, there are a lot of factors to consider when determining racial identity – individual characteristics, family dynamics, historical factors, and social and

political contexts (Allport, 1954; Delgado and Stefancic, 2001; Ortiz, 2009; Tatum, 1997).

As a society are we perhaps too preoccupied with racial identity? Its presence and the reactions it creates on college campuses ensure that the answer is indeed, no. Racial identity plays a major role in student life, for example consider the types of oppression shared by all students of color or the privileges enjoyed by white students. Being a part of the racial minority forces students to acknowledge their environment. In these cases, students of color more frequently mention their racial identity in formal and informal arenas. Interestingly, with all the progress that has been made in understanding racial identity, stereotypes and certain qualities affiliated with certain groups are still believed and practiced: being smart is attributed to white and Asian students and athleticism to black students. Even in college, attempting to change can cause social conflicts. This forces students of color to avoid situations where they may stand out. However, on campuses that have achieved a critical mass, there is more security in one's racial identity (Allport, 1954; Delgado and Stefancic, 2001; Ortiz, 2009; Tatum, 1997).

Understanding 'group memberships' provides an understanding for individual identities. On college campuses there are many benefits for identifying with a particular group, including a boost in self of esteem and forming a support system where everyone feels protected and responsible for each other's security. Unfortunately, being unable to find a group one can identify with leads to student's extending themselves or assimilating and somewhat suppressing their racial identity (Antonio, 2004; Syed, 2010). The experience and identity of multiracial students is often ignored and understudied and as a result, the students suffer emotionally and socially. These

students deal with issues of identity denial, choosing their identity, and “passing” as a specific and acknowledge race (Antonio, 2004; Delgado and Stefancic, 2001; Syed, 2010; Tatum, 1997).

Taking a closer look at specific racial groups there is a different experience for white and non-white students. It is important for white students to learn about and understand racial identity, even though the focus is more often placed on non-white students. One out of every three white college students surveyed by Ortiz, et al. (2009) defines whiteness as empty, bland, and without traditions. They are “bored” with their identity and unable to understand how racial identity fits into their lives. Developing multicultural language can positively affect white students. When white students have the privilege of believing they have a “normalized” and “good” identity, they do not have to think about their identity as often as non-white students creating barriers. They are generally comfortable in most college settings (Allport, 1954; Ortiz, 2009; Syed, 2010; Tatum 1997).

In contrast to white students, students in the minority often feel like they do not belong on college campuses: what does that say about the campus climate? This is caused by subtle and explicit “rewards” granted to mainly white students for their racial identity. On racially white homogenous campuses, students of color are forced to assimilate and identify with those around them. This causes problems because the system of identification is largely based upon emotions. Life becomes stressful for students of color on white campuses, as they must deal with loneliness, being overlooked, being asked to share the “black perspective,” being unable to find a safe space, and having to constantly protect and defend their racial identity. It is extremely important that these students are affirmed (Allport, 1954; Syed, 2010; Tatum, 1997).

The formation of racial identity on college campuses creates new experiences and opportunities for the institution, administration, faculty, staff, and the students involved. As well as effects and influences the campus climate. By understanding racial identity, we can understand how students are expected to behave and respond to the campus climate due to experiences that they may have.

Gender Identity

“Identity is a word that has been much overused, in many contexts, to mean many things. It is necessary, then to take care to consider carefully what this term encompasses” (Josselson 1990 p. 20). Josselson (1990), then goes on to explain that “identity is the interface between the individual and the world, defining as it does what the individual will stand for and be recognized as” (p. 20). Sax (2010) is also critical of our understanding of gender identity because “for many years the concept of gender was scarcely considered in theoretical work on human development, not to mention college student development” (p. 65). Similar to racial identity, gender identity also has a reciprocal relationship with campus climate. However, the work that has been conducted to understand gender identity (and its relationship to campus climate) has been challenging in many ways. Further, while the study of identity formation in men has been rather straightforward, understanding the process of identity formation for women has been largely ambiguous and challenging (Josselson, 1990).

Judith Butler (2004) has been praised and recognized for her work on identity.

She writes:

What can be meant by ‘identity,’ then, and what groups the presumption that identities are self-identical, persisting through time as the same, unified and internally coherent? More importantly, how do these assumptions inform the discourses on ‘gender identity?’ It would

be wrong to think about the discussion of 'identity' ought to proceed prior to a discussion of gender identity for the simple reason that 'persons' only become intelligible through becoming gendered in conformity with recognizable standards of gender intelligibility (page).

Is gender identity, explicitly a normative ideal or a descriptive feature based upon experience? (Butler 2004). Can a campus climate shape or influence how one identifies with their gender? Josselson (1990) suggests that identity is a stable consistent, and reliable for determining who one is and what they stand for. It allows one to present their life meaning to others—and as a result forms connections for understanding one's self view and their view by others. It is a way to preserve self and link what we've learned to who we are.

How does this translate to understanding masculinity and femininity? Butler begins by explaining:

The masculine/feminine binary constitutes not only the exclusive framework in which that specificity can be recognized, but in every other way the "specificity" of the feminine is once again fully decontextualized and separated off analytically and politically from the constitution of class, race, ethnicity, and other axes of power relations that both constitute "identity" and make the singular notion of "identity" a misnomer (p. 27).

In a more current research, Edwards and Jones (2009) argue: "A social justice theoretical perspective frames gender identity, for both men and women, as socially constructed in a patriarchal context and intersects with other social systems that advantage some and disadvantage others on the basis of social group identity such as race, class, and sexual orientation" (Keith Edwards, Susan Jones 2009). So it is important to understand masculinity and femininity against and working together, all the while recognizing a complete grasp of gender identity is somewhat impossible. Perhaps this is why there is a lack of language for understanding and discussing gender

issues and why they often become so political and controversial on college campuses. Understanding gender identity is important to improving campus climate because of how society is changing—while men were once the most served in higher education, this dynamic is shifting.

Understanding gender identity is challenged, as there are many misperceptions. For example, Sax (2010) explains that one may assume that a women’s development in college is largely based on interactions with others and their involvement with community more so than men’s BUT “relationships and a sense of connectedness are important for both women and men.” Ultimately each experience must be examined individually, but the lack of research and study is frustrating. Especially when issues of internalized patriarchy are suggested and it is nearly impossible to determine where the effects begin and end. (Edwards and Jones, 2009).

Focusing on the female identity. Butler (2004) claimed that women are viewed as the “negative” of men. Josselson went on to reshape this into suggesting that women are more complicated in orientation—especially considering involvements, aspirations, and relationships with others. A woman must have a balance relationship between who they are autonomously and in relation to others. (1990) Oppression makes it hard to articulate and understand their position. Women have been refined to subordination positions and men to domination roles (Butler, 2004; Edwards, et al. 2009). This identity influences how men and women may act, the experiences that will be had, and the campus climate that may be created.

It is important to understand how this sense of oppression is still evident in campus culture today. As a socially constructed phenomenon, gender is separate from biology and hormones but instead “as a set of social behaviors including feelings,

thoughts, and actions.” Gender is performative (Edwards, et al., 2009; Weber, 2001). A mis-education of gender can force males and females into restrictive gender role norms damaging the campus climate. For example, men have expectations that are complex and limiting that force them to be insecure about their manhood and can lead to violent behaviors. “Reasons for feeling like less of a man included personal characteristics (body size, lack of attention from women, and being sensitive and/or emotional) and experiencing forms of oppression such as racism, classism, and homophobia. As a result of these insecurities the participants felt a need to put on a mask” (Edwards, 2009).

In conclusion, “identity thus becomes a way of judging ourselves with respect to a typology or set of values that is meaningful to others with whom we identify ourselves” and identity formation occurs throughout the entire life cycle (Josselson 1990). Important and significant, Linda J. Sax’s work with *The Gender Gap in College* looks beyond academics and stereotypes to understand the role of gender in higher education. Her comprehensive book tackles the experience of both men and women and the consequences. This book was unbiased and included very recent research. Sax’s work not only ventures into a new and unique way of analyzing and research—it expands the field. By offering equal treatment in examination to the experience of men and women, the developmental stages can be compared and areas of improvement are easily located. In 2004, Butler claimed: “The consequence of such sharp disagreements about the meaning of gender establishes the need for a radical rethinking of the categories of identity within the context of relations of radical gender asymmetry” today, this remains true.

Asking the right questions will lead to change for the Colby College community. Through this literature review, I have gained insight into past and current approaches for comprehending and relaying multiculturalism and diversity in higher education. The term ‘campus climate’ is useful in this work because it creates a standard for measuring inclusivity. Yet, a community’s climate is based upon its members, exploring concepts of identity has created a language for discussing topics of race and gender with different types of students.

So what are the right questions? What do I hope to discover? First and foremost, what exactly is happening at Colby College? What experiences do students have? What are their attitudes towards multiculturalism and diversity? How does this affect the campus climate? What is the specific campus climate pertaining to race and gender? How does Colby function as a community? How is change implemented? What needs to be done to make the campus fully inclusive? The answers to these questions as well as the other inquiries that will arise because of these questions will clarify Colby’s current situation regarding diversity.

CHAPTER TWO: METHODS

Behind the Scenes: My Methodology and Processes

“Hail, Diversity, Hail: Questioning the Campus Climate at Colby College” aims to capture students’ experiences regarding race and gender and their attitudes about multiculturalism, in order to identify the areas on campus that needs improvement regarding these issues. Student’s experiences and attitudes serve as a window to understanding the campus climate at Colby College. Through my research and interviews I intend to gain an understanding of:

1. How (and perhaps why) experiences differ between students across racial and gender differences, what does it say and mean for the campus climate
2. Student attitudes regarding “burdens” and “benefits” of multiculturalism at Colby, as a reflection of the campus climate
3. How aspects of multiculturalism are perceived and dealt with at Colby College and how does it shape the campus climate
4. The role of the student body, faculty and administration in negotiating these issues and creating a positive campus climate

The major component of my research is my interviews. I focus on the interviews with sixteen Colby seniors, identified through their engagement with multiculturalism. I chose to interview students who did have some type of interaction whether it is through a class, club, or active curiosity. I have created four groups, based upon gender and race:

1. Senior White Females
2. Senior Students of Color

3. Senior White Males
4. Senior Male Students of Color

These students were asked the following questions:

- What role does identifying as a female (male) play in your social life? Academics? Extra-curricular?
 - How do you think it is different for males (females)?
- Have you experienced any problems/issues/conflicts concerning gender at Colby?
- What role does race play in your life at Colby? Social life? Academics? Extra-curricular?
- Have you experienced any problems/issues/conflicts concerning race at Colby?
- At Colby do you think multiculturalism is seen as a benefit or burden?
 - By you?
 - By your friends?
 - In your classes?
 - By your professors?
 - By the administration?

The first pair of questions focuses on gender, followed up by very similar worded questions pertaining to race. Using the terminology of “benefit” and “burden,” I am evaluating how student perceive multiculturalism in their lives and their impression of multiculturalism on other areas of the campus. Then they were asked to comment on:

- What resources have been made available for you in determining identity in terms of gender and race? How has your identity been shaped?
- What do you expect life to be like after Colby regarding gender and race? Are you prepared?

To conclude all participants were asked “How comfortable do you feel at Colby? How “at home” does Colby feel? Why or why not? What makes you feel that way?”

To analyze the findings from my interviews, I used Carl F. Auerbach and Louise B. Silverstein’s (2003) model in *Qualitative Data*. First, I identified repeating ideas, which are the “same or similar words and phrases to express the same idea” (p. 37). Then, I organized the repeating ideas into themes. *Qualitative Data* offers “Six Steps for Constructing a Theoretical Narrative From Text,” (p. 43) using their guidelines to

analyze my data. First, I established my research concerns and reviewed theory to support it. My literature review helped me find gaps within the current research and a point of comparison to understand student experiences' with race and gender at Colby. After conducting interviews with sixteen seniors, I compiled a list of the "repeating ideas" that expressed the 'popular' opinions and comments. To end this process, I organized my themes (the sections within the chapters) by grouping repeating categories.

Every interview had compelling ideas, points of view, and perspectives on multiculturalism at Colby. Through analyzing these interviews, I was able to identify the pressing issues in our community that affect the campus climate. The interviews were analyzed independently and then collectively compared to one another to locate trends. Analysis of the interviews highlighted the areas of interest in Race, Gender, and Student Attitudes About Multiculturalism.

CHAPTER THREE: RACE AT COLBY COLLEGE

Overview on Race

“Many white people experience themselves as powerless, even in the face of privilege. But the fact is that we all have a sphere of influence, some domain in which we exercise some level of power and control. The task for each of us, White and of color, is to identify what our own sphere of influence is (however large or small) and to consider how it might be used to interrupt the cycle of racism.”

– Beverly Tatum

I have been taught to think about race in relation to social justice. How can we create equality between whites and non-whites? What is the role of whites and non-whites for achieving social justice? How is race and social justice perceived at Colby? What about racism? What is the campus climate like for students of color? Students at Colby, non-white and white, male and female, seem confused and conflicted as they think about race. In interviews, they have expressed unhappiness with how they have been taught to handle issues of racism and the lack of education they have received. One senior white female expressed: “I have a bone to pick with the diversity requirement, it seems that it doesn’t do much at all to actually help me.” How does Colby educate students on race? How do students develop an understanding about race? One senior male of color shared—“You cannot understand racism, without understanding race.” What is the role and responsibility of students, faculty, and the administration? How do we measure success at Colby regarding race?

In this chapter, I consider three issues related to students experience with race at Colby:

- Talking about race: What are the conversations on race? How and when do they happen? When should they happen? What are the effects of these conversations?
- Racial dynamics: How do students feel at Colby? What determines this? How

- does the campus culture, influence the campus climate?
- Learning experience: How do students learn about race in and outside of the classroom?

The senior class at Colby has witnessed many incidents on campus regarding race throughout their tenure (see Introduction: *Colby in Review*). I personally believe no student can claim that they have been able to avoid the issue entirely, but certainly many have not engaged. My interviews with sixteen seniors satisfied and validated my notion that race is an issue at Colby that continues to frustrate and perplex the members of the community. In several instances, on issues pertaining to race, there are divisions in the senior class between white students and students of color. Race remains important to the campus, even though as one student exclaimed: “everyone keeps putting it on the back burner! Enough’s enough already, can’t we just get to the bottom of it?” There are many unanswered questions regarding race. I do not expect to answer and solve every problem on race at Colby, but instead continue to raise awareness—that is the first step to finding meaningful conclusions.

Talking About Race

Can a Colby student talk about race comfortably and with ease? Do they want to? Why or why not? What is helping and what is hindering the conversation? How do senior students feel when speaking about race? Have they acquired the skills needed to talk about race? Can we measure the campus’ success in educating students about race via these conversations? What is the campus climate pertaining to race? Reflecting on my conduction of interviews, I believe I strategically (but somewhat unconsciously) chose to ask my interviewees about gender first during our conversations, as to ease them into the topic of race. For many students, race can be a challenging conversation.

Conversations on race at Colby have been complicated by assumptions, political correctness, and anxiety. I was worried about engaging my interviewees *enough* and gaining their trust in order for them to share intimate information about their experience with race.

This led me to even more concerns: what if they didn't think race matters? What if they were "all talked out" about race? What if I accidentally offended someone and defensiveness sprung out? Out of the 16 seniors I interviewed: six participated in Campus Conversations on Race. Three mentioned discussing race as being a regular part of a class²⁸ they took and one came to new realizations during our interview. Luckily, all 16 *did* seem to open up and honestly shared their opinions with me²⁹. From our conversations, I have identified the following areas of interest: who is celebrated in conversations on race; the effect of Campus Conversation On Race's (CCOR) campus; the difference between racism and ignorance; political correctness; and internalization.

A female of color had the most to say about race at Colby. She did not hesitate to name the administration as the biggest roadblock for conversations on race—claiming their resistance and lack of acknowledgment as a problem:

“[White students] also get most of the credit. For the April 12th situation, I was up for 3 days straight with only about 6 hours of sleep...as were [many other students of color]...we planned the whole thing, the rally...and when we got up there and President Bro Adams and Jim said we'd like to thank X and X. All [the white students] did was get their friends and say wear red, they had a not so a major role. It was the students of color. X got on the microphone and it said 'it wasn't just me who did this I had a minor role and the students who did the work, you refuse to acknowledge them because of their color and that's problematic...all this change we try to bring is set back, by these 2 people with white privilege.”

²⁸ Singular, not necessarily within their major, and not necessarily for the Colby All-College Diversity requirement.

²⁹ Compared to sophomore and junior students, where only 7 sophomores spoke openly about race, and 12 juniors did.

This female student of color is referring to the administration's role in the April 12th incident: specifically, the administration's celebration solely of white students for being involved with racial issues. She was unsatisfied with the administration's treatment of student of color during this event, as they neglected to acknowledge the work students of color put into the rally and raising awareness. The white student who was thanked by the administration addressed the administration directly, and the administration had nothing to offer, they became silent in the moment instead of acknowledging the students of color, they never apologized. They allowed themselves to become an 'enemy' to racial issues for these students and many others. She was uncomfortable with how the administration handles and talks about race, in the same interview, we shared the same concerns about how the administration has been speaking about "the most diverse class ever." In her words, "they are referred to as farm animals. We have eight goats, we have nine sheep, and we have two cows. No, that's not okay." How can we accept the commodification of students that is occurring here?

From the language of my interviewees I observed that the administration's comments on students of color in the first-year class has created tension. The administration has been "condescending" towards students of color in this first-year class ("perhaps unintentionally?") through their blatant comments. This perpetuates an unwelcoming campus climate. Several students cited President Adams manner of speaking about students of color in the first-year class and in the same breath explain what a financial burden it has put on the campus this year. This sequence has created the idea that all students of color are poor. Although the students interviewed do recognize that in the first-year class, more students with socio-economic need were accepted and they were not all students of color. The language of the administration has

created a basis of understanding amongst the students.

All Colby students learn from the administration's example. When the administration is awkward and dishonest when it comes to discussing race, it trickles down to faculty and students further creating a 'chilly' campus climate. This came up clearly in many of my conversations, as students mimicked the language the administration used within their interviews. The administration is creating damage that can take years to amend. It is not okay that students of color may have to wait until their senior year to feel comfortable amongst their classmates and feel validated (more on this topic in the notes). Yet this female student of color brought up a good point: who is celebrated in race conversations? The students that have to have the conversation because of their visible difference or the atypical participant? She referred to CCOR as an 'I'm-not-a-racist card' (meaning "I took (am taking) CCOR so I cannot be racist"³⁰) because she is frustrated by how white students seem to receive an unequal amount of celebration and thus, support for their participation (Note: she does believe that CCOR has done tremendously important and influential work). Meanwhile, a student of color may have the same challenges for participation but are often overlooked because they are "supposed to be interested in this type of conversation." Race is always a difficult topic to discuss and everyone who participates must be acknowledged equally. The implication that the conversation is harder for white students than students of color is invalidated and causes problems. As a community, we must address it sooner in a student's college career.

Interestingly, regardless of racial identity, the students who felt most comfortable speaking about race *were* those who participated in Campus Conversation

³⁰ Two other senior students shared similar concerns as did about five sophomore and juniors.

on Race. Including the previous student and myself. CCOR has definitely been an important and effective part of our campus' ability to converse on race. CCOR has helped make the campus climate 'warmer'. A white female and a male of color both spoke enthusiastically about CCOR:

White Female: "I've been in CCOR and I've learned a lot through that and I want to take what I've learned to the next level and understand my privilege and try to figure all of this stuff out. I realize that it doesn't effect my day, it doesn't have to but that's all the more reason for me to learn."

"I want to take what I know, what I've learned and actually articulate it to other people."

"[My interest] started with CCOR, I did a group during the second semester of sophomore year, during the Easter Incident...and it got me thinking."

Male of Color: "I feel like a lot of [my growth]...has been through CCOR"

"Colby needs to step it up...students need to figure things out...I think CCOR should be mandatory."

This white female student expressed that CCOR created a change in her mindset since she came to Colby, and that it was enjoyable and rewarding to participate. CCOR opened the door to racial understanding for her, after the April 12th incident (she was taking CCOR that same semester), it helped her engage and understand in a new level. Compared to other students (bystanders, perhaps?) who did not take CCOR during that time, she is open to acknowledging that racial aspects of the situation. She is willing to discuss what went wrong and is unfazed to declare that race is a serious problem here. She described CCOR as wonderful and wishes it were mandatory for all students. She especially acknowledged CCOR for helping her realize her 'white privilege' that she didn't understand until she attained a vocabulary about race. I found this impressive. In most experiences with students and 'white privilege,' defensiveness is the first instinct.

It is unfortunate and challenging to the community. Similarly, another white female student speaks proudly of the changes she has undergone since she was a first-year student as well as 'white privilege':

“Being white at Colby affords me a billion and one privileges that you don't realize until you develop a vocabulary about race and these are things I didn't realize as a freshman, and I didn't realize until I began CCOR.”

Campus Conversations on Race is doing important work and helping white students speak about 'white privilege' in a productive way. Change and awareness is occurring amongst these students. Both students have continued to contribute to the progress of racial awareness.

The following male student of color immediately identified himself as a facilitator for Campus Conversations on Race: “I'm a CCOR facilitator in terms of extra-curricular...” Before CCOR, he already felt burdened to discuss race and educate others, but when he became a facilitator, it made this burden 'official.' He has always had to educate people about being a part of a different race and it has been frustrating. He appreciated CCOR because he wants to discuss race, and enjoys making race the center of his conversations. He never felt out of place before he came to Colby regarding his racial identity. Therefore, discussing race has become relevant and a new passion. His turning point occurred when a professor questioned his experience with race at Colby. Through this conversation, he recognized his frustration with his role as a student of color and his perceived identity on campus. CCOR has been an outlet for him in dealing with these issues in a productive way. By facilitating CCOR, he can use his experience at Colby and his relationship with race to create an open environment to discuss racial issues. This is done in hopes of “erasing some of the awkwardness” he has felt at Colby. However, he has noticed that now he resists having challenging conversations about

race outside of CCOR, as it is easier to have conversations with people who will understand his perspective. He has participated in CCOR since his first-year at Colby, and now he now reports he feels “burnt out.”³¹

The frustration felt by students of color to discuss race is shared by many class years. Senior students were especially interested in understanding the motivations behind unfortunate remarks made by students: are they motivated by racism or ignorance? Two female students of color shared these opposing thoughts:

First student: “I think people just say ignorant stuff sometimes, I don’t know...I *really* don’t think they are racist. I just don’t think they’re educated and forced to think about it.”

Second student: “All the ‘of color’ people are ready to discuss and they have something to say even though they don’t want to say it explicitly, but if you’re not of visual difference, you don’t need to pay attention. You’ll never have to think about it.”

“If all these students say things like ‘you’re pretty for a black girl’ or ‘if I ever brought you home my parents will be disgusted,’ stuff like that and they never learn and they are never forced to confront difference in a way that will make them grow and even if they don’t want to grow that’s fine. At least they’ve been exposed to it...I feel like Colby doesn’t expose students...if you want to stay in your bubble, you can stay racist or prejudice if you’d like to be racist or prejudice. And there are students here that would like to stay racist and prejudice, regardless of education”

“It should be—you expressed some anger against me so you need to work at improving yourself...I don’t need to fix it, I’m the victim in this situation.”

“Conversation is good...but every time if race is brought up and you look down or you never raise your hand...or you never decide to take these courses...or if as a professor you choose not to teach these issues...its a problem and racist.”

The first student and second student certainly have had different experiences and backgrounds to come to these opposing conclusions. Yet, both think it is an important issue to discuss. If we can determine a student’s motivation for racist remarks, can we

³¹ 7 out of 8 seniors of color report feeling ‘burnt out’ when discussing race at Colby, they do not know what more they can do to effect change. They are tired and frustrated.

achieve higher levels of progress? Two male students of color also question if it is racism or ignorance:

“When I hear people talking about race and it just doesn’t sound intelligent to me, and I know that sounds really condescending, but I feel like if they’re coming from a very not informed perspective, I want to set them straight. You can’t think about race in that way. There are some rights and there are wrongs...and there are gray areas where you think there are some rights and some wrong.”

“I have heard comments that are off putting about race. It’s not so much that they’re racist; they’re a bit ignorant about the situation they go off on stereotypes sometimes about a person. At times, it compromises the relationship between two people.

There is clearly no uniform experience for a student of color, but it is important to recognize that they all seem effected by unfortunate remarks. At Colby, a student of color’s experience with race is influential in determining whether they perceive their peers as racist or ignorant. From my interviews, I have noticed a trend where students who have had harsh experiences with race and racism feel that their peers are racist. On the other hand, students that have not have particularly negative experiences tend to attribute their peer’s offensiveness to ignorance. Regardless if unfortunate remarks are seen as racism or ignorance —all senior students believe that their peers cannot change unless they are open to receive education on race.

By his or her senior year, every Colby student has been a part of a discussion on race, even if ‘race’ was not the focal point of the conversation. However, students (there is a disagreement about how many – some say it is more than half while others claim it is a very small group) may not have had to engage, genuinely and deeply, in the discussion. Political correctness has been named as Colby’s greatest hindrance to conversations on race and is an agitator to maintaining a supportive campus climate.

Two female students of color share:

“I feel semi-comfortable when I’m in a group setting. I think maybe more recently there’s been more tension, or maybe I’m finally cluing in. But there has been more tension to multiculturalism and its not as collective anymore...I don’t know what the word is...I think its just that people are afraid to be outspoken. So things get buried under the rug and then when people get together it becomes ‘well this is the image I’m trying to project so just go with it’ and it gets very difficult. So in some ways that makes me more aware that there are things that aren’t being said on both sides.”

“If you want to talk about any inequality, you get a stigma, people feel as if they can’t be as candid. ‘There goes that angry black girl – don’t say too much.’”

For the first student, she recognizes that both sides seem to be holding back when there is conversation and it challenges her comfort levels. Political correctness is a problem for her because it seems things are getting ‘buried under the rug’ so people can attain a certain image and as a result nothing is solved. How can we expect to move forward if we cannot deal with who we are? This form of political correctness aims to protect the minority but instead creates larger problems as it silences. While many view political correctness as positive, she believes it is hurt. The second student agrees and believes she has been taught to be politically correct as a way to resist stigmas. Students of color face a harsh reality and reputation if they want to challenge inequalities at Colby. They are sacrificing some of their comfort and anonymity if they speak out against injustice. She believes that by being politically correct she does not disturb the status quo. Yet, she does not want to do that. She wants to force conversation. She wants people to speak or else there will never be progress. A male student of color expresses his encounters with political correctness:

“The biggest thing I see, that kind of bugs me a little bit, it is a general kind of ignorance about race, usually in the form of little comments or jokes and you can usually let them slide of the back, 90% of the time they aren’t malicious. They’re little comments that can rub you the wrong way.”

The way these comments are handled is a form of political correctness. These little comments, or micro-aggressions, are disregarded and never fully discussed because even those who recognize it as inappropriate do not want to deal with it. Since it is a micro-aggression the effects are not immediately seen. Students of color continuously explain that they want to resist causing problems—but by doing so it creates more problems. If we were a less politically correct community, maybe then we can call people out for stupidity? Maybe then we can have open and honest conversations without believing we're protecting others? Maybe then we can have a fully inclusive community.

Humor is a topic of conflict within the community; there is a fine but undefined line for it on this campus, especially after the comedian issues during senior's sophomore year. A white male provided context for why political correctness occurs:

“And you don't talk about it because it's like oh well that's not happening and its uncomfortable for people to talk about it...you hear a little thing and you don't know the entire context and you think about it. We're in a small community and you don't want to think people are talking about something you identify with.”

Students are uncomfortable. Some students are in denial that racism happens at all. Colby is a small community where everyone is talking in private circles instead of raising larger conversations to eradicate confusion and answer questions. Political correctness creates a wall in conversation on race between the individual and the issue. The concept of being PC protects those in the majority from ever having controversial or difficult discussions on race. At the same time, it puts a burden on those in the minority to find new ways to address the problems without breaking the “rules.” Race is already hard to talk about, so eliminating certain words, phrases, thoughts, and issues creates even larger problems.

At the end of each interview, every student seemed to draw upon what they had come to internalize after their experience on race. The following four stories show mixed emotions and inner conflicts:

Story 1:

“I feel like I should have a bad encounter with race like someone saying something racist to me...that’s the thing though a lot of the things people say are pretty racist so you begin to think it’s normal. That’s the way it’s always been so why is it weird. There’s nothing that sticks out in my head.”

This female student of color is uneasy and conflicted with her relationship with race at Colby. She questions why nothing explicitly terrible has happened to her? Is it a mark of the campus climate being ‘tolerant’ and cold? It is almost as if she feels she cannot claim to have had struggled because she doesn’t share the same experiences that other students of color had with racism. But even though nothing explicitly bad has happened, she still feels the pressures of being non-white. I believe that it is saddening that she feels this way. Colby promotes the idea that only explicit racism is bad.

Then, she wonders if something bad *already* happened to her, but went unrecognized as racist. She claims that she lacked a formal education on race, especially micro-aggressions. She realizes she has internalized a lot of racist remarks and accepted it—because she has come to believe that students will say hateful things anyway, so she might as well get used to it. At the end of the interview, she came to the recognition that she may have not thought about this issue in the right context, critically.

Story 2:

“...All this change we try to bring is set back, by these 2 people with white privilege who really don’t care [about students of color].”

This interviewee is angry at the administration. She believes they do not help fix racial issues at Colby and instead creates more problems thus damaging the campus climate. This relationship has caused her to internalize a disdain for institutional authority when it comes to race. She does not think they are doing an effective job and if the administration does not care about students she cannot respect them. She points out that two privileged people on campus hold an inordinate amount of power.

Story 3.

“After Colby? It’s terrifying; it’s absolutely terrifying...there are so many people that don’t think talking about race is important...you see it at Colby.”

This white female student especially fears for her future because she has recognized and internalized that race is important, talking about it is important, but knows that many others haven’t realized that as yet. She fears being uncomfortable in future situations. (Side note: when campus climates cannot be gauged and improvements made based upon them). She wonders if she will be a bystander or if she has learned enough, is she angry enough (can she ever be angry enough?) to challenge racism.

Story 4.

“It’s a pretty predominantly white culture. Since I’ve been here, I’ve had to educate people about being a part of a different race.”

“I do get frustrated at times, why don’t people just get it? Why aren’t they like the people [from my hometown]...it’s just easier to [have conversations with people who will understand and not challenge my thoughts without much reason or basis.”

These two male students of color have felt the burden to talk about race. One even questions ‘why don’t people get it’ as a result, he does not even engage in conversations on race with people outside of the circle he deems understanding of the issues. They

both have taken their internalized feelings of discomfort and burden regarding race and expressed it in opposite ways: education and complete resistance. This is a negative result of a ‘chilly’ campus climate where these students cannot find solace, and instead must deal with the burden of talking about race.

Racial Dynamics

Conversations are only one of several contributing factors to the campus culture pertaining to race. Other factors include the racial makeup of the student body, the social responsibility for students, “irritators,” and the dynamics between students of color and whites on campus³². Campus culture differs from campus climate because it is ‘what is going on’ and campus climate is the measurement of those experiences in order to determine, in terms of ‘warm and chilly,’ how inclusive the campus is. Campus culture is directly related to campus climate – because a culture is formed due to repeated habits. So, the campus culture speaks to what Colby is like. Analyzing this culture leads us to an understanding of the campus climate.

What is the ideal campus culture? What are the boundaries within Colby’s campus culture? How does the culture influence the community? How is the campus culture drawn upon attitudes, behaviors, traditions, and expectations? What role does academics play? How do students describe their social life here? Does campus culture only concern Monday through Friday or all seven days of the week, is it only defined

³² I will not be able to get into the unique dynamics with racial groups amongst other racial groups, but it is important to recognize that not all students of color have the same experiences—I touch on this a little, but it is too complex to do it proper justice. Every racial group within our community has different experiences within our campus culture. Colby lacks an understanding of differences between groups and thinks of all students of color collected, this is something that needs to be changed, further group mentality completely must be eliminated. Students should be thought of individually—more on this in the conclusion.

within these days? What occurs on campus during the weekends? Taking the pulse of the campus (measuring campus climate) can determine the strengths and weaknesses of campus culture. Through my interviews about campus culture I observed several important themes:

- Homogeneity poses a challenge to the Colby Community. One result of its effect is Colby becomes the first place for many students of color where they recognize and realize their "minority" status.
- At Colby, white students are typically "just students" while students of color must take on other roles within the community without necessarily wanting to or choosing to.
- Students, faculty, and the administration's ignorance about 'micro-aggressions' and 'stereotypes' have the most negative impact on campus culture.
- Race dynamics at Colby as defined by the campus culture brings out the "worst" in students of color.

Theme 1. *Homogeneity poses a challenge to the Colby Community. One result of its effect is Colby becomes the first place for many students of color where they recognize and realize their "minority" status.*

On more than once instance, I have heard a student of color state that they "didn't know they were a minority" until they came to Colby. Students of color respond to the homogeneity of Colby in different ways depending on their past experiences. The students that come from areas similar to that of Colby do not report being completely uncomfortable but do state that they are more cognizant of their racial identity while at Colby:

"I mean there are not too many people of color on campus, you have to keep in mind that you're fighting stereotypes."

"[Colby is] the first time I became very aware of my race and the fact that I'm not white. I've never felt marginalized because of it, but I have felt tokenized sometimes. Sometimes I notice that I am the only student of color in a classroom and if someone says something ignorant about race, I have to be that person, I have to be that angry brown girl that brings it up."

"I've grown up basically in white suburbia, so it wasn't as much of a shock coming here, kind of seeing how many white students don't understand or don't actively try to understand students who come from different ethnicities. It's been nothing new, but it's been frustrating at times. But I kind understand their

perspective as well, because I've grown around it.”

These students report being used to white communities but have detected a change once they have arrived to Colby. The campus culture's understanding and promotion of homogeneity causes students to recognize and identify more with their racial identity.

(Note: there can certainly be other factors such as age.)

Another student who comes from an area that represented her racial background is conflicted about her identity at Colby and her levels of comfort. She explains:

“Especially here, where there aren't a lot of Asians. The weird thing is though I never really felt it was a huge, I mean, a big thing here, I never really felt out of place. Growing up, I lived in a completely Korean community, and so coming here you think it would have been more of an issue. But surprisingly it wa— actually I'm lying, I mean in my first two years I was in a very low place here and I didn't have close friends, it was very different, it was hard and I wondered if it was because I was Asian. There was something fundamentally different. All my friends were white and I didn't understand their jokes, it was weird...at this point in my Colby Career, I only have one or two white friends, the rest I would consider 'racial minorities' or 'of color' and I don't know...it made a big difference it wasn't like I'm different, but it was a I'm difference but also a what's wrong with me not what's wrong with them? We're in a predominantly white community...”

“Colby has helped me to deal with a lot of things outside of my comfort zone and with a lot of things I'm not used to seeing. The time I spent here is that I have a lot more Black friends now and I know how to deal with New Englanders. You know what I mean?”

This student has been in a weird limbo with her racial identity at Colby. She does not feel, as an Asian, that she can strongly identify with “students of color” as she has been taught that that refers to mainly black students and brown students. She is conflicted and has trouble understanding the exact role race has played, but knows that it has caused tremendous amount of change, stress, and development.

One female student of color blatantly states:

“[In this homogenous community...] I hate that someone can call me a black bitch and nothing will happen. I hate that someone can dress up as a black man and nothing will happen. These are not things I'm expecting out of Colby

College, and not in a naïve way...the fact that X wrote 'nigger' on whiteboards freshman year and nothing happened...I'm not expecting these things when I leave this hellhole, that's right it's a hell hole."

The homogeneity of Colby has more than frustrated this student; it has made it an entirely uncomfortable experience. She has been placed in unfair situations and her race has been used against her. She explains that because it is a homogenous community, wrong things often go uncorrected. It is frustrating—she should not have to correct students or defend herself on a daily basis, it is not a safe space for her.

White students also commented on the homogeneity. One stated that it's easier for White students as they are able to blend in and be anonymous...another wished that "Colby wasn't so white and that students of color didn't have to stand out." Another student believes there are more "lines" that separate at Colby than she is used to because of white student's mindsets and how they conform (Note: And I think the same analysis can be applied to students of color). A white male commented that, being from a mostly white high school, Colby actually has more opportunities for diversity – especially in terms of befriending racial' students but he admitted, that Colby doesn't always allow you or force you to be in a position of being friends with different people. You truly have to go after it and step out of your comfort zone. One white male stated:

"There are a lot of white kids at Colby and I am one of many white kids at Colby and I'm pretty aware of that. So I don't know what I can do about that. One. Two, I don't really have that many friends that are not white, although there are many students here that are not white for central Maine. I've asked myself why that is and I can't come up with a good answer...I'm sort of torn because I know my friendship group lacks racial diversity but it's also unacceptable to reach out to someone because of their skin color."

The experience described by this student is common—there is segregation among Colby students. White students do not exactly perceive the homogeneity as a problem but knows that it creates issues for students of color especially. They can recognize

their comfort in being able to blend in. The last student feels responsible for creating an inclusive campus but knows that there is no proper way to do that. He acknowledges that this campus is not completely inclusive to all students of difference. The homogeneity of Colby's campus contributes to a 'chilly' campus climate.

Theme 2. *At Colby, white students are typically "just students" while students of color must take on other roles within the community without necessarily wanting to or choosing to.*

Similar to the previous concept, students of color expressed unhappiness about their multifaceted roles at Colby when it comes to race, they are unable to just be students, but instead claim to feel responsible for defending race and fighting for equality, educating their peers, and having to be careful as to what they say to set an example.

"I think, a lot of my friends are pretty smart kids who are critical, so they view multiculturalism as something to be pursued and they still feel they don't get enough of. But obviously there are others who are like 'why do we need to be concerned with this? Is it our place to make everyone comfortable? Can we even address all of that?' And I don't have a choice."

"I don't know if other people think about it the same way I do...but from conversations, it seems that for a lot of minorities it's a burden. It's really heartbreaking."

Some white students also recognized the complex role students of color face in a homogenous society. Out of the students interviewed who recognized the complexities, most were sympathetic, for example one stated:

"Students of color are expected to do certain things because of the way they look, because of their color. Being white you're expected to just sit in a classroom and be like everyone else, be a student. Students of colors are not always students first, they have to teach everyone else."

Another student considered it as "disempowering for white students," explaining that it becomes frustrating because her voice is devalued in some ways in initiatives involving

race; its hard to be confident as a white person speaking about race. So what does this all mean? If students of color feel like they have to take on a larger role, is Colby a fair place for them? Why do they feel like they have to take on this extra role? What are the deficits in the community that lead to it? What is the role of white students in promoting social justice? Should they be sympathetic to their peers of color who feel like teachers or do they feel even more burdened and out of place because they feel they cannot have a voice? Regardless, it is problematic because it places students in unfair positions and make them representatives for their race, even if they do not want to be. The inability for students of color to be 'just students' is a perfect example to understanding campus climate. If the campus was truly fully inclusive and welcoming – and thus, 'warm' students of color would not be in this position.

Theme 3. *Students, faculty, and the administration's ignorance about 'micro-aggressions' and 'stereotypes' have the most negative impact on campus culture.*

I am surprised by the lack of progress made on campus regarding this concept! 'Micro-aggressions' and 'stereotypes' have been regarded and named as having the most negative influence on campus culture. Noted before, Campus Conversations on Race has been improving this situation. It is unfortunate that there have not been more efforts to completely understand this issue as students of color have recognized it as a major problem. One student explains that she has to set an example with her friends. She cannot say certain things and has to phrase everything carefully so they won't think it's okay to say something that may later offend her. This is a small community. Things get around. Problems and comments here are often cyclical. Another student discusses that when she tries to explain micro-aggressions to her friends, they feel frustrated and attacked; this is a problem because it leads to *more* micro-aggressions. One student asks:

“isn’t it crazy that there are people like that?” How can we actually handle these small irritators that often will go unnoticed if we cannot talk about them? If students of color cannot address it without other students becoming defensive, whose role is it to address the issue? The female of color before who mentioned she was confused about internalization recognizes that micro-aggressions have been a large part of her college career and have been the most influential. Looking back she can identify where “things went wrong” and the toll it took on her. Ignorance about micro-aggressions and stereotypes are creating a ‘colder’ campus climate at Colby.

Theme 4. *Race dynamics at Colby as defined by the campus culture brings out the “worst” in students of color.*

To understand this theme, one must understand what is meant by ‘worst.’ Described by my interviewees, the ‘worst’ can refer to depression amongst students of color, and this depression may lead to outbursts against one another (and in some, rare cases, towards white students). The ‘worst’ can also be more extreme and refer to self-loathing and a sense of ‘baggage’ amongst students of color. The campus culture causes students of color to feel uncomfortable and thus they are negatively influenced and it also contributes to a ‘chilly’ campus climate. .

For example, one male student of color shares his frustration with loaded questions from Colby students. Everyone assumes that he is an international student, they ask, “Where are you from?” followed by a “No, I mean what country are you from?” when he responds New York. He was raised in the United States and finds it annoying that his skin color means to them that he has to be an international student, he must have a complex racial background that he should share with them for their entertainment. He feels like he is constructing a brand new identity every day at Colby

that is torn between who he is and who others want him to be. He now resists interacting with people who won't understand. Even if it is his friends, he explains sometimes their misunderstandings and just plain obliviousness can be a burden, even if they are open minded he still has to explain himself to them and it is unfair. He wants his friends to know how to support him without him teaching them how to be supportive. He then explains that it's especially hard because he begins to associate everyone who doesn't understand—friend or acquaintance—together. I have heard the counter argument to this in the classroom, white students who insist that students of color who resist engaging with them are creating more problems, but imagine how hard it must be when you have to construct a new identity to suit everyone around you.

Regarding self-loathing, it is also a very complex situation, that I cannot do justice in this thesis. Females of color are the most effected and the pressures are caused by the hookup culture and day-to-day relationships. One student shares that she feels she is unnoticed, being Asian is difficult, for other ethnicities skin isn't even a question—they're obviously a minority. She does not know where she fits in and what that means. Is she important? Her challenge with race used to make her wonder if something's wrong with her and this led to overwhelming cynicism. She is now trying to understand others. Another female of color clearly states that "being a female of color is problematic" for many reasons. In the hetero-normative hookup culture, if you are a female of color and you aren't getting the same attention as others, it makes you wonder if something is wrong with you. Does it have to do with race? She reports beginning to feel disgusted with self and falling into depression. She describes watching her white friends get more attention from males, and being complimented as pretty more often than she is on a regular basis. More than one female of color stated that when they have

been complimented in the past, the word exotic was used and it is not a compliment. Colby has been an unhappy place for these student and it has led to insecurities and questioning as to how they look—one student states, “I wanted to love this place, and I’ve tried. But I can’t if I want to love myself.”

Unfortunately these experiences that bring out the “worst” have put students of color in confrontational positions with one another. Due to the power dynamics of the community – it is easier for them to take out their hurt and frustration on one another. I think, because students of color are also lumped together instead of understood on individual levels it creates a lot of frustration. The Black culture, Latin culture, Asian culture, etc. holds many differences. There is not one type of Black student, Latino/a student, or Asian student—but being cast into this role can lead to negative feelings towards the community. Dealing with stereotypes in this manner creates anxiety.

Learning Experience

‘Talking About Race’ and ‘Campus Culture’ are both shaped by the learning experiences developed and created at Colby. The purpose for college is *education*. Do the learning experiences at Colby create a ‘warm’ campus climate? Colby’s administration is concerned with the ‘educational value’ of the college. We are a liberal arts school; all forms and types of education should be promoted equally at Colby. But is it? The learning experience can take place within and outside of the classroom. In the classroom, race is influenced and influences power dynamics, especially between students and professors. Outside of the classroom, students understand race by understanding concepts of privilege, apathy, discomfort, segregation, assimilation and ignorance. Learning experience sat Colby have left students with mixed feelings about

the future and determining how prepared they are to handle issues of race and racism. To analyze the connections between academics, understanding race outside of the classroom and preparation for the future, I looked at each group's (senior female of color, senior white female, senior male of color, and senior white male) unique learning experience. The differences and similarities between the groups show how Colby provides for different types of students. Where does the most learning occur? How is power expressed and transferred in the classroom? What are the challenges to learning?

Female Students of Color

Academically, female students of color as a group do feel more pressure in the classroom than any of the other groups interviewed:

“I am the only person that stands up to ignorance in my classes.”

“As an English major I haven't noticed anything in regards to grades being affected. But, in classes if topics such as the slave trade comes up, people will give me a side glance to make sure they aren't being hurtful.”

“People do say ‘dumb’ things and it is worrying to hear it coming from 18-22 year olds.”

“I've only read a few black authors and I am only one of two students in my major who is blatantly of color. In English, especially American literature—[race is] avoided completely...it should be discussed, but if I always have to bring it up and be the one to ‘give the okay’ that is unfair and not right. We're all involved in race”

“I don't want to be the one to always have to bring it up, especially because I'm open to everyone having their opinions.”

One student suggests:

“Imagine a white student being the only white student in their class. How would they feel? Race is not something many people are comfortable discussing here.”

Addressing the power dynamic between students and professors, a student shares a story of a professor being explicitly racist in class. A professor said the ‘n’ word in class

and felt that nothing was wrong with it and asked the only student of color in the class for support. The student felt oppressed and helpless: how could she tell the professor that no, it was not okay and the professor was wrong. After that she chose to only take classes where the professors care, she believes if she were in the natural sciences professors would not be compelled to engage. Another female student of color confirms this statement as she discusses being a science major and lacking education on multiculturalism.

Outside of the classroom, female students of color report their learning experience makes them stronger instead of necessarily more educated. They take the brunt of jokes and often feel ignored and forced to conform. Furthermore, their mindsets have changed as they have become more acclimated to the Colby community:

“It still gets frustrating but I understand their perspectives, they are doing what they do unconsciously, they haven’t had to think about it. It is never over racism, but it comes up in conversation. Almost as if it is forgotten that I’m there. One student once said in front of me ‘I like my women like I like my coffee, black and strong.’ He wouldn’t say it if I wasn’t there, so it becomes like, why are you apologizing? Certain attitudes won’t change, I’ve learned to face it better.”

“Asian people are almost becoming white here. Our identity is being removed.”

“An inherent problem of our community is that you can’t make people accept anything or understand.”

“There are little pockets of culture, even amongst white people, how can anyone be prepared to meet *all* of that. Being at Colby has helped me develop a mindset of ‘yeah they’re different but how do I respond to that.’”

“Students of color are asked to assimilate instead of being embraced. Differences are erased. It would be a benefit for all students to develop an understanding, after all this is a human thing.”

“It feels as if the administration pushes us to assimilate.”

“If I was a white student, I wouldn’t care because I wouldn’t want to. Our own community advisors don’t know anything about the community—mine doesn’t know what SOBHU stands for.”

“We’re denied things like multicultural housing because of segregation. But that already exists. Those who don’t assimilate are segregated from the community.”

After Colby, these students generally expect their lives to improve because of their new understanding, the challenges they’ve faced, and the opportunity to remove themselves from a homogenous environment.

In my interviews, females of color report pressure to defend themselves in classes by serving as representatives. Then, in social arenas they are made uncomfortable and have had to become stronger to deal with these circumstances, but they ultimately expect to have better lives after Colby. Their learning experiences have been inconsistent and do not generate many rewards for them; this is a reflection of a ‘chilly’ campus climate. Instead of being a student and learning, they must teach and strengthen themselves to deal with racism.

White Females

In the classrooms, white females have different exposure to academics but all seem rather disappointed with their experience. One student shares a story of an incident from her Mark Twain class where a student wrote an offensive paper about “a drop of black blood” that dealt with nature versus nature. No one actually spoke about it and there was only one person of color in the class. Why did no one care about what this girl said? Especially in an English class where it would have been a great atmosphere to understand race. If in the humanities, multiculturalism is not being thoroughly discussed, what can we expect from other majors? The Colby College classroom is failing in the promotion of social justice, multiculturalism, and inclusion. Another student explains that multiculturalism never comes up in the sciences, which is

impersonal. A final student explains that multiculturalism can be avoided academically it's like a "light switch being turned off, professors only focus on the line of sight, text as a text, they don't go any further than what they know, they don't make it a part of the world." What is the faculty's role? Should they be doing more? Should the administration be helping him do more? What is the role of the student in this classroom context?

Outside of the class, white females believe their learning experience only occurs if they are proactive in engaging and encouraging it:

"I learned a lot at Colby because I wanted to. Understanding privilege and oppression is a struggle, and it creates anxiety."

"I remember sophomore year, when the luau and comedian incidents occurred with SPB, I was directly involved. I had to be more aware regarding programming, it was a good thing in the long run but if no one addressed the problem, nothing would have been done.

"There are a lot of close minded people at Colby with a lack of exposure to difference. I want to educate and effect change. I don't think I've felt that before Colby and I don't know if I would have. I respect where people are coming from but I want more."

After college, white females report that they want to make a difference but they are aware that they probably will never struggle on a racial level. Analyzing their learning experience, white females at Colby are open to engaging with race but recognize that more can and must be done to help them in this process.

Male Students of Color

Male students of color tend to examine their academic experience by comparing it to other experiences. They measure the success of their experience by the level of exposure and the ways the education is expressed.

"It came up a lot in education courses."

“It becomes a burden in academia because they’re trying to meet quotas and are overly proud of the minorities they have. It’s a burden and not liberating. They’re just trying to satisfy numbers. If they don’t meet it, it becomes a burden.

“Being the only black student in class is off putting”

“I don’t want to be the person that represents my race in class because I don’t think like everyone else.”

“Sometimes in my Latin American Studies classes things come up that aren’t expected and they are things we don’t want to talk about. Class work can be a resource though.”

Male students of color did not report high levels of racial education outside of the classroom, but one student offers the following commentary on his ‘general’ learning experience:

“At Colby, there are times when people will see the color of your skin and that’s all they judge you on. Stereotypes, you know?”

“Stereotypes are a generalization, and it is unfair because things change through generations.”

Similar to the female students of color, two male students believe Colby has made them stronger:

“Life after Colby will be better because I’ll be a lot stronger. I don’t think Colby has prepared me for everything but enough.”

“I do feel comfortable here, I didn’t use to, and it took me a year to adjust.”

“Colby opened doors that were unavailable before, I appreciate Colby for that.

Another shares that he is wary of being discriminated in the job search because of his Colby experience. He believes that he will face racism and discrimination. He has heard about it a lot and it does appear to be a reality for him. A final student also feels that Colby student has helped him at all—“I don’t feel like coming to Colby has prepared me

any more for dealing with race..." Male students of color have had complex learning experiences. For them, it seems that they have often had to play offense instead of being able to engage with race in a productive way. They are frustrated and feel victimized.

White Males

Academically, white males are disappointed in the racial education they have received:

"After doing CCOR, I have been more critical on my classes. Who is a part of the class? What kind of racial identities are being represented? I think for many reasons, but especially that there seems to be a hesitancy and shyness on the part of the racial minority to talk about their experience. I'm not in that experience where I'm the minority."

"In the history major, in a lot of my classes the students are all white. Is there are a major that is more "color friendly?" Every major should be "color-friendly" or just plain friendly."

"There are so few men in these classes that matter. It's appalling. Men are going to be left behind here. There is a terrible stereotype that men do not have to talk about stuff, but it is all pretty relevant to men."

"Even things like privilege are loosely implied here. It's referred to, never fleshed out. How am I going to learn if no one wants to teach me?"

"Multiculturalism is conspicuously absent in class. I see people who look like me in my classes. The school may be making efforts but you don't readily see it and professors don't really promote it."

Outside of the classroom, white males like to male students of color do not report strong learning experiences. They comment on the segregation at Colby:

"There is tension here regarding race, it's a place with a low percentage of race, and it does seem like everything is against the minority. I don't know how it feels because I've never been a minority, but I can see the tensions build because of everything that's said and everything is difficult."

"You don't really interact with people from different races all the time, its unfortunate how people group together. It's segregated. I went to a small private school and it makes me upset how insulated it still is. The social groups are very confined and narrow and there isn't much diversity."

White males do report feeling prepared to deal with race after Colby on higher levels than any other groups due to their recognition of their privilege.

“The things I’ve gone through at Colby – classes, CCOR – have made me more prepared to deal with race. I have a better understanding, and sensitivity. I don’t know everything.”

“I have the understanding and knowledge to know when something is not okay and I didn’t have that education before Colby.”

“I believe that I can be respectful and keep my eyes open for intrusions.”

“Colby is doing an okay job preparing me. I mean there are such petty things that are taken seriously. Who is dating whom, who won this game – and I don’t know how I feel about a minority of students getting offended on campus because no one should be offended – but when you leave Colby things will be 8x worse. It is not okay for students to do that at Colby, but they should be taught how to deal with it at Colby. A lot of efforts come for students.”

“I haven’t had many issues or experiences that were in my face, so its hard to determine how prepared I am and will be. I’d like to say I am but I haven’t had to confront it. I regret that I have led a pretty insulated life. I’ve spent time with people like me, so when I’m thrown out into life after Colby, I don’t know how it’ll go.”

The white male’s learning experience at Colby is unremarkable. They feel that they have the most to learn but their needs are not met. Yet, because they have the most to learn, the least they are taught prepares them enough to make them confident. They feel more prepared than other students to deal with race. Something is inherently wrong here. These four male students that I interviewed do agree that they cannot be representatives for all of the white males at Colby—they claim that many are less open and others are more educated. So what can be done to create equal experiences?

For some groups the campus climate appears to be much warmer for them, but as long as one set of students feel isolated and uncomfortable it points to a negative campus climate. For example, although white males have had a pleasant experience and

feel included in the Colby Community, females of color have not – and we have to remember and consider the homogeneity of Colby’s campus written about in the last section. All of these things are taken into consideration when determining the campus climate.

Conclusion: Race at Colby

“People of color have to do this work as a matter of everyday survival. And so long as they have to, who am I to act as if I have a choice in the matter? Especially when my future and that of my children in large part depends on the eradication of racism? There is no choice.”

– Tim Wise

How many students are taught to think about race at all at Colby? Should social justice education be more pervasive here? In this chapter, I have examined how race is discussed, the campus culture, and the learning experience of students and explained how we should think about determining campus climate. By understanding these issues, we can create change. Students are interested!

Yet from my interviews, I’ve discovered that there is something missing in the education process—the diversity requirement is the only mandatory provision for learning but it is not doing enough. Students are unable to talk about race effectively because they do not feel their voice is valued and they do not know how to understand and evaluate others’ experiences. I think it is important to consider the role of responsibility in race. Whose job is it to start these conversations? To educate? To address misdemeanors? As a community, whom do we rely on to take responsibility to make this campus more inclusive to racial diversity?

Studying the campus culture, specifically the racial dynamics—the whiteness of Colby poses a problem, but why? Many places are dominantly white but can still

harvest an open community. Colby places a lot of emphasis on cultivating a critical mass to make students of color more comfortable, and while that seems promising, perhaps this emphasis is creating a problem? Perhaps there needs to be more focus on understanding the homogeneity here. In the next chapter on gender, the culture of conformity is explored, there is an interesting link between conformity and homogeneity at Colby—why is there a push for compliance?

In conclusion, there is a lot to consider and challenge the campus to understand and deal with race thoroughly and appropriately. I have hope for the future. I believe that we have slowly been making progress but we need to use our resources more appropriately.

CHAPTER FOUR: GENDER AT COLBY COLLEGE

Overview

In this chapter, I aim to draw upon the experiences of the sixteen seniors I've interviewed about gender. Their responses have caused me to think about gender in a new way and challenged me to question the basic constructs of gender in our community. The campus climate surrounding gender is 'chilly.' I determined this after my first few interviews: but how chilly is it? What does that mean? What can be done? I can say one thing confidently, not enough has been done for either women or men on gender education. There is discomfort between males and females—females report spending more of their time with other females by choice, engaging in female dominated activities because they are more comfortable. I analyze three issues in this chapter:

- Gender Roles
- The Hookup Culture
- The Gender Paradox

The Colby student body confuses me when it comes to issues of gender. The community lacks the language to discuss gender issues adding an extra layer of complexities when attempting to understand the campus climate. Silence takes the place of important conversations on masculinity, femininity, and their intersections. Is gender important to this campus? Abstractly it seems that it may be, but it is never explicitly defined. Where does complacency fit in? Regrets? What are the roles of males and females? How does gender roles influence our community? What is this hook-up culture that everyone is always talking about? What is the gender paradox?

Understanding gender will lead to a better understanding of the student body and the campus climate that shapes and influences students' experiences. The gender and power dynamics are troubling. It does not exist only on a student level; there are many issues and questions about the faculty and administration as well. I have gathered student's experiences and opinions on this as well; those will be discussed in the conclusion.

Gender Roles

Who is the average Colby student? A stereotype can be found in college review and admissions books e.g. Princeton Review, U.S. News, etc., spoken facetiously amongst students who believe they fall into the stereotype, and used as a generalization by "outsiders" to set themselves apart from the campus community. It states that the average Colby student lives 20 minutes outside of Boston, is rich, white, and preppy. This stereotype also tends to describe males. Stereotypes that exist within our community take away from our overall progress to inclusivity (making the campus climate less supportive!). The lives of male and female students are generally governed by gender roles: those who do not fit into these roles are placed into an uncomfortable and uneasy position. Gender roles promote the idea that there is an accepted way for males and females to behave within a certain environment. At Colby, these roles are often matched with character based 'labels' that can cause power dynamics and tension within the community. For example, male gender roles are often associated with athletic teams (think: lax bro) and female gender roles, are more complexly determined but just as prevalent. A male student explains it eloquently as he discusses that "a female has a certain space within the gym. They want to go but its hard for them, they feel as if

they're being watched. They have to be on the treadmill, and not lifting weights. It's their role there." Gender roles are highly restrictive and pose problems for both male and female students.

So what is it like, at Colby, for men and women? The sixteen seniors—eight male and eight female—interviewed reflected upon their experience with gender during their tenure and constructed a clear image of how masculinity and femininity is perceived on this campus. Among the seniors: a female of color actively described rejecting the binary of male and female because it makes her uncomfortable to consider conforming. A white female expressed that she loves being a female, then paused to explain she isn't exactly sure why or what that means—it's something she's fallen into the habit of saying. A white male shook his head in disdain of the "single track" males must follow. A male student of color claimed to fully understand his male privilege as an advantage. Their reflections about Colby's restrictive gender roles highlighted the following challenges:

- There is a culture of conformity; thus there is a lack of opportunities to construct one's individual gender identity.
- There is discomfort in analyzing gender, as it is so pervasive that students have difficulty processing the effects of Colby on their identity.
- Females feel judged at Colby on a large scale than men.

One white male begins by sharing the pressure he feels to conform to Colby's definition of maleness and how it has hindered him from understanding 'what being male' means:

"I have thought about what being male means a bit and I have trouble with this...because my mother would say 'I should always hold a door open for a female'...so I do and sometimes I feel bad about it. Being a male at Colby is interesting because my friends are trying to be aware of some of the ideas about being a man and what it perpetuates—men are tough and finish all of their food, men finish their beer when they start one...and they start one. And the word choice of some of my friends has been derogatory to women, which I'm aware of but take few steps to correct."

This male offers a few identities that define what a male is at Colby, however none of them are positive. Are men taught at Colby to behave negatively? Do all men feel this pressured to conform? He also comments on chivalry and how that creates awkward relationships at Colby.

In alignment with these comments, a female of color shares friend's story who struggles with male's behavior and in return, leaves the speaker worried about gender roles:

“My friend X, like, she, I don't know. Sometimes she'll dress really nice and she swears that every guy holds open a door for her. And when I say nice – I mean she wears a dress, makeup, the works. When she crosses through the door and says thanks the male feels rewarded. She said one guy practically puffed out his chest and said 'no problem.' So this will be fine, but Colby's a small community—a week later she was wearing sweats and ran into all the same guys and didn't receive the same treatment. It scares me to think that if I look feminine, if I fall into that role—I'll be treated a certain way. It scares me a lot more to think about that I wouldn't.”

What does this mean for the Colby student body? Do men believe that females should be treated as female if they meet the conventional gender role of feminine? Do some females strive to be feminine in order to garner attention from men? (Forgive me for the hetero-normal ideas of this section, but it is hard to avoid.)

On the brighter side, a female of color actively claims to reject these gender roles and has reported being comfortable with herself as she is and does not believe she has been treated differently by her peers—so maybe this idea to conform is exaggerated?:

“I just really reject the binary of this is what a girl is supposed to be and this is what a boy is supposed to be and for a long time I was really uncomfortable with that taught, but I guess because of [my education] I've become a lot more comfortable with myself and not conforming to gender roles...I'm very aware that I'm non-conforming, but I've never been treated differently for it.

Her education at Colby has taught her to not conform, so perhaps more students should receive the education that she does? Maybe it will help create a more comfortable climate and community at Colby?

Another female of color is frustrated about how these gender roles have been created, and other interviewees support her interpretation:

“What defines feminine? I mean even using the words feminine and masculine I feel like it’s like they are so founded on assumptions, its westernized. I don’t even want to use those terms...but I don’t know. It’s so complicated. It’s hard.”

She explains that masculinity and femininity is based upon assumptions—so how can we follow them so blindly? A white female agrees with her, and then goes on to explain that a lot of her development into being a female as Colby comes from her friends, “people around you will effect who you are.” She figures out her femininity through them. Men agree, and assert that sports teams play a large role in this: “guys on teams cherish it,” one student explains, participation in sports team is how the male identity is formed. These gender roles are restrictive:

“There is a single track to follow for men.”

“People still say ‘that’s gay’ and it forces people to ascribe to certain rules.”

“There are certain expectations for males, but I can’t say it’s as restrictive as the expectations for females. There is a persona that females take on that males don’t have to. Each gender has accepted personas.”

“The bro persona is taken on even if a guy doesn’t want to do it – they have to live in a different face.”

“There are strict gender roles for male and females: athlete, preppy, sleeping around...and your friends are found within these roles, if you don’t have a role you don’t have friends.”

“Females try to conform. There have been times when it was disturbing. What does it mean to look good here for a girl? Pearl earrings, Ugg boots, it’s like ‘Colby uniform time! Whip out your polo, I hope you

have a spare pair of pearls in your pocket.”

“Men have pressures to fit into stereotypes.”

“You see ‘man codes’ daily. It’s not good but it’s very present.”

“There are male specified majors.”

“There are more females than males in all my classes.”

“As a male, I associate with men more.”

Men feel restricted from coming into their own identity. The language of their peers, ‘man codes,’ unfounded rules to follow and expectations restrict them. As mentioned before, females feel forced to conform. It trickles down to even academics. The pressure to fit into stereotypes, or to identify with a gender role forces students into dissatisfaction with their college experience that conveys a ‘chilly’ campus climate.

Gender affects everyone. The pervasiveness of gender identity’s influence cannot be noticed on a daily basis but when asked, Colby students did recognize its effects. One white female is unsure of the meaning of gender identity and how it intersects with her sexuality. She has conflicted and questions how she views herself and how other sees her. A white male claims that its hard for him to “extradite how being male helps or hinders” him but he knows that it does. Another white male discusses a class he has taken called Boys To Men, where he has come to recognize the large role of gender. He explains “learning that we live in a male dominated society where men are privileged” was eye opening for him. If men and women were to switch lives – a female’s life would improve and a male’s wouldn’t, what does that mean for our community? It made him think about all the little things he did throughout his day and how it is gendered. What if everyone can reach that level of understanding? A male of color shares “I am aware that I am privileged to not think about my role as a male but I don’t know what that means without a female perspective...I wish I could be a woman for a day so I could

have a better understanding of what it's like." A white man shared his concern about the stereotype that men must not talk about things, and how that will leave men behind. How does maleness shape identity? How does femaleness shape identity? Men were more aware of the pressure they face to fit in than females.

One of the major issues regarding gender roles at Colby is the anxiety felt by females, who feel "judged" at Colby on a larger scale than males. Both males and females notice this:

"If men and women were to switch gender roles, females will finally get a break...hopefully."

"Men get away with a lot more than females do."

"As a female [campus leader³³], I feel that I have received more criticism, and that creates extra pressure."

"For girls, one really weird thing is girls will go get ice cream in coffee cups, instead of a bowl or use a salad bowl instead of a plate. And most guys don't. Is it a portion thing? Why do they do? Are they trying to hide something?"

"Males seem to be a lot more comfortable on campus, women try to impress *people*, and men only try to impress one another."

"In sciences, there are gender implications. Female professors have higher expectations for females and the opposite is true too...there is reliance though on males, they receive more. I expected the inequality ahead of time."

"Being female, you aren't taken seriously as an academic body. A lot of the things you say have no merit when you are compared to a male Economics major – this is looking across the borders."

"I've been the gender minority in classes but that doesn't hold me back, I've seen it hold back females."

"As a male I don't think I have to be assertive."

"There is more leeway for men in academics."

"Until recently, I felt really comfortable at here, but it was a false sense

³³ In an effort to protect the identities of my interviewees, I try to avoid including any identifying sport teams, clubs, or general classes taken.

of security. Men were brutal to me over nothing.”

“There are safe places here...gossip kills...the gym isn’t safe, some dining halls aren’t, and different parties aren’t.”

“Colby doesn’t do anything about men who say bad things.”

“I think there are a lot of things guys do that girls don’t like, but they don’t speak out about it.”

Females are uncomfortable at Colby and the males interviewed notice this. Females in leadership positions face more criticism than their male counterparts, in the dining halls females resist to expose what they are eating, females feel that they don’t have the same respect in academics, and across the campus in every sphere—men get away with more. Gender roles eliminate opportunities for equality at Colby. If students are struggling to figure out how to view themselves, they will never be able to figure out how to understand themselves in relation to others. In regards to gender roles, the community is suffering and the campus climate is ‘chilly.’

Hookup Culture

The hookup culture is “any sex-driven and motivated casual, meaning not in a relationship, interaction between a male and a female.”

Ambiguously spoken about by Colby students, the ‘hookup culture’ imposes complications and challenges to the community. Issues of complacency, double standards, stereotypes, sexual assault and harassment are not often discussed but create an uncomfortable environment for students. The hookup culture promotes uneasiness—males are more likely to recognize and explicitly discuss the challenges of the hook up culture. So, what is the hookup culture? It is hard to define. I see it as the way heterosexual (so already, a percentage of the campus is left out) interactions that are more than ‘friendly’ functions at Colby on an extreme level. Hookup implies sex,

kissing, and the like without an actual relationship or dating between the parties involved. The hookup culture refers to the behaviors, attitudes, discussion (or lack thereof), actions, and emotions surrounding this environment. It mostly occurs on the weekends and it is exclusionary and destructive. There is no way to completely understand this ‘culture’ without being directly involved in it at one point during one’s college career. My interviews touched on the troubles of complacency, the actual occurrence of the hookup culture, and one of the most significant negative outcomes of the hookup culture—sexual assault and harassment.

Considering complacency, one female of color is frustrated she explains:

“You got into Colby for a reason, clearly kids that go here are smart, but just like the level of disrespect that we have for our own bodies and for each other and the way that we compartmentalize our identities: who we are in classes, aren’t who we are on weekend...I wish there was a bridge between the two because you see yourself and wish you didn’t do something and it was so bad. There are gender roles here. There is a very distinct way to be a man and a woman here and it is destructive. We are complicit in them, and take them for granted, and do them without asking why?”

Complacency is reaffirmed in my interviews, as it seems that females are especially unable to speak about how they are treated unless they are forced. Complacency is a problem because students cannot create change in their community if they are unable to notice the problems. There are clearly problems because if when the students, especially the females, were pressed on the issue they had a lot to say. Why do females feel uncomfortable discussing what they dislike about the hookup culture? Perhaps they honestly don’t recognize what is going on.

Thinking about the hookup culture, we also have to consider drinking, double standards and stereotypes. The following quotes speak for themselves. Many of the incidents reported occur during the weekend when students are drunk. Men and women

are treated differently and it is almost shocking how they fall into their gender roles. I will follow up with these quotations in the conclusion on how we can begin to enforce change within our on campus:

“There are problems on the weekends. I’m a female and I still don’t get it, what motivates provocative dressing, is it embracing sexuality, or what we believe is expected of us by men? Are we just fitting molds?”

“The hookup culture is not liberating females, men are so derogatory.”

“There are certain expectations socially, during the weekends for females. It limits what we can and can’t do, it defines it, especially around other females – certain things are inappropriate. I’ve been in a relationship the entire time I’ve been here, but I have had friends that had ridiculous experiences. Females do a lot of things to be attractive, they conform, but they have a shitty time. They think they did something wrong. Regardless of the weather, it can be negative 10 degrees and females are wearing less clothing than they should.”

“Socially speaking women are at the bottom of the barrel, we are under the guise that the hook up culture is about sexual liberation. You may want to hook up, but you don’t want the repercussions. It’s about patriarchy.”

“The man seems to have the right to disrespect the female, even though he did the same thing.”

“I’ve been exotic-ized and eroticized here.”

“I actively try not to be around men, it’s so uncomfortable.”

“Females are hunted at Colby dances and other arenas, don’t get me started. I’ve heard about traumatic experiences, the names females are called, the double standards. Females cannot casually date here. Men have these weird codes that help them and only them.”

“As women, we are stuck, we don’t want to be too aggressive, but we want to take control.”

“The hook up scene at Colby is brutal on women and rewarding for men. The brutal ways in which females are viewed...and just everything...they aren’t supported very efficiently.”

“There shouldn’t be a stigma for females to want to have sex but there is a big one that’s silent and looming...girls do it too, they call each other sluts as a joke, but its not really a joke.”

“I’m aware of the behaviors at dances, the male aggressiveness. Females just feel so objectified. Guys think its okay to grab girls but its not really okay at all.”

“I think female life is harder, there is a big hook up and drinking culture here. For guys its okay to drink and hook up, but for females it isn’t. Females have to worry about their reputation.”

“There’s a different culture for males on campus. Men drive the social culture, specifically athletes.”

“There is a double standard for guys and girls. Once a guy came up to a girl at a party I was at and he said some mean things. So my male friends and I had to kick him out. He felt comfortable saying rude things to her; he thought we’d support him.

The hookup culture also creates a space for sexual assault and harassment.

Several female stated that they believe several females get sexually harassed or even assaulted, every weekend. It happens at dances and in dorms, and everyone just blames it on alcohol. One female even explained how on more than one occasion someone put their hand up her dress or “grabbed her ass.” The amount of females that have experienced sexual harassment at Colby is ridiculous, but what’s even more upsetting is how little people know about it. This semester, Heather Pratt is writing her thesis on Male Entitlement and Sexual Assault (please refer to her work for more information on this issue), and she shared this conclusion with me: “I have learned a lot of things, but one of the most significant things is that structural sexism creates an environment where sexual assault is allowed, and it creates silence.” Are men talking about it? Are females even talking about it? What does our culture teach? What is right and wrong? What does the media teach? What is *Colby* teaching us? As I wrote this section, I feared vilifying men, and I turned to a close male friend for advice, and he suggested to me that “College blurs the line of comfort between males and females, its weird because you see girls go to the bathroom in towels, and it’s almost as if, it’s like we forget that we’re in the real world—in the sense that we’re in a place that does not have real laws.” (How do we think *this* affects our campus climate?)

After we went over why a girl going to the bathroom in a towel shouldn’t be any

excuse for understanding boundaries, we discussed that Colby truly doesn't create a good structure for examining right and wrong. Colby has become an idyllic world for its students where they believe there are no evil and thus no rules. This along with Heather's point shows that Colby's education or lack thereof is problematic. While there is no excuse for men who incite sexual assault or harassment, perhaps there is more to it that we haven't come to understand yet? I do believe that there are many men here who will claim they didn't know something was wrong, and honestly believe it, but how long can that last? How can we educate every member of our community to stand up against sexual assault?

The Gender Paradox

A paradox is 'a statement or proposition that seems self-contradictory or absurd but in reality expresses a possible truth.' To understand the gender paradox at Colby, consider the following questions: What is the power dynamic between females and males at Colby? What is the balance and relationship? How can we understand it? What effect does it have? The Colby gender paradox expresses the idea that females "run" the campus during the weekdays; as they are more involved in academic and extra-curricular activity. In other words, Monday through Friday women are empowered and outperform their male counterparts in all aspects of campus life. However, men drive the social culture and are more comfortable during the weekend (social environment), which is considerably more "brutal" on females. What does this relationship imply? It invokes the idea that females do most of the work at Colby during the week, and then face a power struggle on the weekends. This is unacceptable.

Females are empowered at Colby through their involvement in extra-curricular

activities. More women are involved than men, so women don't feel out of place; in this case gender is enabling and not repressive. One female explains "women are taken more seriously than men especially in extra-curricular." Another agrees, "girls run stuff, females are taking over." Yet do they truly reap any rewards for this on an institutional level? Is the college taking care of its female students?

The gender paradox shows a portion of the problems females face here—they lack power. Their role is convoluted to taking on nurturing roles and caring spaces but they are not celebrated nor respected. Females also lack credibility in our community³⁴. When speaking to females about issues and instances of sexual assault for example, they will preface their narrative with an understanding of what they wore and how much they had to drink—this shouldn't matter. If a male does something wrong to a female, that is the bottom line, she should not be expected to justify her role in the situation. This can also be seen in the anonymity granted to men: if a female is excessively drunk at a party or 'hooks up' with a man, her name will be spoken in male dominated environments, but if a man does something harassing to females (four men sat on the lawn this past semester in April rating girls on their skirts, objectifying them) their identities are being typically protected. Who does our campus stand up for and defend? Granted, there may be some exceptions to this—but in general it seems that men are not held to the same social standards. The gender paradox creates anxiety amongst the

³⁴ In regards to social life, I think it is important to comment on the lack of credibility held by females. I'll share a story: Last year, X was very involved in the social night life and due to this there are rumors about her and some people do believe she is a party girl and "slutty." This year, X, was walking with a young man. He put her hand up her skirt. X knows that there is no way she can tell people about this without having to justify and explain how much she had to drink and what she was wearing. X feels like no one would care or believe her anyway. X feels like it is a hopeless situation. Females here cannot speak out against men safely, yet if females have bad reputations it will stand. There needs to be more empowerment for females and opportunities for them to feel secure emotionally, mentally, and physically.

female student body as they begin to become complacent to what is going on socially because they cannot easily change it.

Gender at Colby

I find it important to note that my chapter on gender is less than half the length of the chapter on race. I think this may have to do with the fact that students do not know how to talk about gender or they are scared to or they don't fully realize the problems yet. I think the campus is only beginning to make new progress on gender even though the problems have been recognized before. Currently, regarding gender, the campus climate is below is 'chilly,' uncomfortable, and unwelcoming. There is a new awareness and recognition being placed upon these issues. I believe change is coming for male and females at Colby.

The culture of conformity, like the homogeneity of Colby noted in the race chapter, constructs a dangerous environment that removes opportunities for individuality and change. If we fall into 'roles' we will begin to let things pass that should not be accepted. It also creates a sense of disparity in students that cannot conform. I think the difficulty in understanding for gender is actually seeing how it translates to their daily life, its pervasiveness makes it near impossible to understand how it functions. Yet, one thing is clear there is an imbalance in power, as females seem to have a harder time than males socially.

For the campus to make significant and long lasting improvements regarding gender, there needs to be a thorough evaluation of complacency, double standards, stereotypes and sexual assault and stereotypes—what is going on in the hook up culture? Why are some students comfortable falling into their stereotype? Is there

really just a general naïveté here? How can we be more proactive in understanding all of this?

In this chapter I provided context to understand gender. In the next chapter, I discuss student attitudes towards multiculturalism in general reflecting on both race and gender. How did their experiences create certain attitudes? What about intersections of race and gender?

CHAPTER FIVE: STUDENT ATTITUDES ABOUT MULTICULTURALISM AT COLBY COLLEGE

Overview

I was conflicted when deciding what to title this chapter. I wanted to discuss and acknowledge the multiple aspects of multiculturalism. It is not just limited to race and gender and I didn't want to enforce that belief through my work. In this chapter, I explore what makes Colby, Colby. Then I further explain how that leads to student attitudes. It becomes a quest to understand how others define multiculturalism—and how this contributes to campus climate.

The first topic of interest is the Colby Bubble, what does it include? What happens in it? How do students respond and act within it? What is being discussed? I then go on to explore Colby Politics—primarily the administration and the institution. Following that is an examination of the role of Colby Athletics. To conclude, I review my system of benefits and burdens and share student's stories in order to construct an idea of the many lives students lead on this campus that result in a myriad of attitudes.

The Colby Bubble

“The Colby Bubble” is powerful and able to engulf every student without them even recognizing it, as a student states: “Colby is a bubble and people don't realize it.” The Colby Bubble refers to campus happenings, how things are perceived here, and it is what controls student attitudes and ultimately, the campus climate. What do Colby students notice? What do they care about? How do they think multiculturalism falls into this vision? We are in a bubble in the middle of Maine. To capture the experience

of being in the bubble as a senior, a student states: “in college you essentially live with a group of people. Colby is in complete isolation. Who makes up your class year can determine what you learn. The population on the campus is important.”

In this section, I will include stories that define the Colby Bubble. This year, regarding multiculturalism, the hot button issue has been that the “first year class doubles the minority percentage at Colby.” Students hear this and although they aren’t quite sure what it means, they repeat it. At first, in the beginning of the year the difference was noticeable but then as time went on and things didn’t change much in the campus culture it was clear that increasing the numbers of visible minorities didn’t fix Colby’s problems. Colby cannot achieve a critical mass with just one class year – if the trend continues, perhaps it will make changes. What would that even look like at Colby? Another student explains that she is tired of how multiculturalism is “exhibitionist” at Colby—“everyone is putting on a show.” At Colby, multiculturalism is only recognized when it’s “supposed to be,” such as during Black History Month or Women’s History Month. Multiculturalism is outside of the mainstream culture at Colby: performances, activism work, functions, and events are outside of “normal” Colby life. If the typical student wakes up at 8am for breakfast, stays in class or studies or participates in extracurricular from 9am-4pm, and then goes to the gym at 4pm, followed by dinner, and then studying—when do they have time to think about multiculturalism? When can they embrace it? The way Colby is structured and set up is problematic for progress on diversity initiatives: “people participate because they’re either represented or interested, and most people are able to avoid it—multiculturalism is separate here.” To offer an example to illustrate the divides at Colby between multiculturalism and “average” life, one student shares: “you hear how students apply

through SGA for money and only get a third of what they're asking for. Its like diversity isn't important to anyone, you hear of other events getting full funding."

Money is a problem here, the administration often argues that the reason there is a lack of support for multiculturalism is because there is not enough financial support. One student asks "if there's a focus on money amongst the administration, why are they producing unhappy alums that have no ties to the community and won't give back?" Another student is frustrated because it seems the administration "waste money—we bought new banners for the *Reaching the World Campaign* were they necessary?" The administration told students time and time again 'no' when it comes to multicultural issues. They have basically told these students that they are not important creating an unpleasant and unwelcoming 'chilly' campus climate.

Multiculturalism is limited in the community—it is narrowed down, according to a student. "Multiculturalism means a lot more than we make it to be, than we let it to be." Another student asks what does multiculturalism even mean? She answers her own question by asserting: "it should be about acceptance." She continues to explain that for many students "it's easier to tolerate multiculturalism than to embrace it. Sometimes there feels like there isn't any progression." Why is that? Multiculturalism means unequal things to students on this campus. When students spoke of their experience with race, white students usually used individual pronouns (I, me) while students of color spoke more collectively (we). When students spoke about gender, females often spoke skeptically, while men were more affirmative in their responses. Multiculturalism is hidden on this campus—it needs to get out of the Pugh Center to more spaces on the campus so everyone can embrace it. One student shares, "being involved with multicultural issues has given me personal growth and fulfillment—it's okay to be

different.” Multiculturalism has positive effects on students here.

It is important that all students can develop equal understandings about multiculturalism. For the students who feel mistreated at Colby in regards to diversity, “no resources have been provided [for them]. Colby works hard to bring students of visual difference to put them on a *website*, and once they’re here it’s like you an go and leave now, we’ve already gotten your pictures.” They are becoming bitter and feel as if “[their] voices are never heard, and they have no agency.” To counterpart these thoughts a white student explains that “Colby has undergone a significant change in its goals for multiculturalism, Colby brags about making people prepared and teaching others, but what is actually happening? Learning about multiculturalism is important, having diversity is important, [students of color] provide this campus with more than they realize.” There are misunderstandings here that must be resolved.

One white female student speaks about the bubble with frustration: “its hard here to explain the issues, because it’s hard for people to articulate. If it doesn’t effect their lives, they don’t have to care so it doesn’t matter—it’s typical student elitism.” She concludes by stating that it’s easy for white students to just say, “what’s wrong? Colby is great. Why are they complaining? Because they don’t see it.” Another white female student expresses that “Colby for better or worse! The good things about Colby, and more importantly, the bad things about Colby have taught me a lot about life and the world.” Yet the bubble infringes upon student’s lives in unnatural ways, one student explains: “I don’t understand it sometimes. All my friends are from Maine or outside the New England bubble; I’m talking South of Mississippi, south of DC. How did we find each other?” A lot of seniors share similar stories about their friend groups, it’s either mainly students from New England or students strictly from outside of New England.

Friends are important here. The bubble's homogeneity creates discomfort, it's a place where there are students with "backwards hats, athletic jersey bros walking around with a large group of spandex, Ugg boots, pearl earrings wearing Massachusetts girls" according to one white male; and he feels out of place so he believes for people even more distant from the New England culture it can be harder: "through very brief encounters with disadvantages I can imagine how tough this place can get." There are many different people and circumstances within the Colby bubble.

In the Colby Bubble, many white students claim to have anxiety to understand and students of color want to be understood. This dynamic manifests itself in multiple ways within the bubble. One white student explains that after taking CCOR, "understanding privilege and oppression is a struggle, it creates anxiety." Another white student states, "there is a balance of being understanding and aware and actually knowing when it is okay to relax and take down the walls." An example of how this anxiety is displayed is through language. One student shares: "it is strange to me how caught up students are with language: 'African American, I mean black.' It's like come on, as long as your intentions are right. If you read it one way, why say something else." No one wants to have opinions anymore.

Students of color want to be understood. One student explains that there is a "difference between tolerating and embracing, at Colby its more about tolerance than embracing, that's a problem...not many people want to discuss how I feel." Another student claims, "When I speak, I think its being judged," he wants students to understand how they offend him and incite this insecurity in him. Students of color do appreciate the struggles they've faced at Colby because its made them stronger and they've learned a lot, one student says: "overtime, I gained appreciation for Colby, its

not a utopia, but in some ways you can make it a safe haven.”

In the Colby Bubble, big campus incidents still feel unresolved, especially the April 12th incident:

“April 12th was bad, plain and simple. The administration, the situation, everything. Bad. And it’s still bad.”

“At Colby, as a whole it’s really tough to see who cares, but people cared about April 12th. I think people love the scandals and issues, but for others I know its like ‘here we go again.’”

“The thing that happened my sophomore spring was weird, April 12th? Yeah. The fact that it, all the students were of color. Was it by chance? It was weird. Just that it would come to that point. I wasn’t there I don’t know what happened. But blood on the ground. These are students in Maine. This was an awakening that there are problems.

“April 12th was a standout moment, it was not good. Everyone recognized it.”

“I haven’t really dealt with race issues. The whole April 12th issue, after the dance was eye opening. I didn’t even think such issues existed on campus. A bunch of things happened with that one incident, isolated. But a lot of stuff happened that year and it was outrageous.”

“There were too many big campus incidents during my first two years and not much follow up. It made me hopeless to be quite honest.”

“Sophomore year was a hot mess—but I’m kind of glad it happened because something needed to happen so we could move somewhere. Bad things happen so we can make a push, but it seems to have fallen through here.”

“All of the progress is stopped with the digest, it’s awful there’s so much racism and nothing is solved.”

These hot button issues still create problems on the campus—alums ask about it, the only group on campus that isn’t responsive has been the administration. When asked about April 12th—they provide a pamphlet on Security procedure and refuse to talk about the racial aspects. What does this mean? When there is people of color involved it will always be a racial issue. The Colby Bubble needs to have stronger levels of communication if there is a desire for community and a ‘warmer’ campus climate.

The politics of the College is navigated by the administration, led by President William Adams, nicknamed ‘Bro.’ Supporting the President is the Dean of Students, James Terhune; the Dean of Faculty, Lori Kletzer; and the Vice President of Administration, Douglas Terp. The administration operates at a distance from the student body as many of my interviewees noted that they “aren’t sure what the administration does or the effect it has on [their] lives.” To write this section, I mainly analyzed my interviewees’ thoughts on “How does the administration treat multiculturalism?”

“Multiculturalism is something we have to pay attention to, [the administration] tries to pay attention, but multiculturalism becomes conflated with racial diversity here, multiculturalism isn’t only about race but the administration makes it that way because it’s a visible difference. They are misguided at times.”

This first student credited the administration for making valid attempts to understanding multiculturalism, but claims that they fail because they focus on race. This student draws attention to the idea of ‘visible’ differences, is race the main type of diversity that the administration cares about? If so, why?

“I don’t have much experience but I do go here, it’s my interest, and in my head I’d like to think that they’re interested. They’re educated people. But this college is a business first and foremost. There isn’t a lot of room for multiculturalism, diversity, or even love. It’s all about numbers, statistics, revenue, assets. There’s not much of a need to care about multiculturalism.”

This second student recognized that the College functions as a business so there is a concern for statistics and representation. Is there room to deal with and represent multiculturalism as an “experience?”

“The administration pushes assimilation. They’re a joke, and only a few students are in the know – and they are a “minority” on the campus that is willing to question the system. If only more students knew the controversy—there are rooms here, but not support.”

This third student revealed that the true nature of the administration is hidden—they promote assimilation and cause tension. The administration has provided basic needs for underrepresented groups, but have failed to support students. This again notes a sense of increased worth on appearance.

“Colby has a lot more to do, especially the administration.”

This fourth student states it simply: the administration as the leader of Colby has a lot of work to do regarding multiculturalism.

“The administration treats multiculturalism as a burden. Everything is political. They don’t understand privilege, and they have a lot. They don’t get it.”

This fifth student was frustrated with the administration citing that their lack of understanding and awareness poses a challenge to accepting and promoting multiculturalism.

“Bro is weird when it comes to diversity, almost dishonest. The administration values multiculturalism and it gets competitive with numbers and comparisons.”

Interestingly, this sixth student finds President Adams’ treatment of multiculturalism as almost “dishonest.” Has the college’s competitive nature disenfranchised students?

“Administration thinks about what we need to look good: percentages, events, etc.”

“The administration is proud to boast numbers.”

The seventh and eight students reaffirm the idea that the administration is obsessed with appearances, having the opportunity to “boast numbers” helps the school, but there is little value on the quality or actual action.

“In a philosophical level, it’s a benefit. The burdening part is they are

challenged and forced to recognize with a multicultural student body there is more responsibility.”

Wisely, this ninth student understands that the administration is unaware of their responsibility. Multiculturalism *can* be a benefit—but supporting multiculturalism is a challenge.

“I hope the administration views multiculturalism as a benefit, they are putting a lot of effort and time to making change, to change the racial dynamic. But for them it comes down to the percentages that goes on the cards: so and so from here, you know? I wonder if what they’re doing is a benefit to them on that level or on another level of student body interaction.”

“Administration’s motives are confusing – what do they want to achieve?”

This tenth and eleventh student is critical of the administration as they questioned their motives. Who is benefiting from the administration’s actions and policies?

“The administration tries to make sure multiculturalism is a part of the social learning experience. I don’t know much about it, but I know people are trying to make them go through with more policies. They have an interest in it, in that their goal is to make it a benefit but sometimes I think its weird that we try to make multiculturalism a benefit – we need to be educated and get these other cultures in there but why do we look at it that way, why can’t it just be more of a part of our community.”

The twelfth student wondered if there is something inherently wrong with how multiculturalism is treated. Does the administration know what they are doing?

This student found it weird that there are efforts to make multiculturalism a benefit; it does not naturally play that role.

“I do not believe that the administration has a serious commitment to supporting students from abroad or minorities. But I’ll say both [benefit and burden] because the administration has a lot to win by being able to proclaim where students come from and the diversity of their background. The problem is creating a diverse population, but the more pressing problem is dealing with students now that they’re here

and supporting them more efficiently. We can't forget that we have a large group of students here that need to be supported. They view it as a benefit in the wrong way, supporting students is potentially looked as a burden."

The thirteenth student was frustrated with the administration claiming that they do not support the students of underrepresented backgrounds that are already at Colby, but instead focus on raising numbers.

"Um, the administration needs to treat multiculturalism as a benefit, it's the diversity revolution, if you're not diverse your rankings get lowered and you're viewed as a bad school. I imagine it's hard for them to deal with."

"Students need to play a more active role in the decisions administration makes because they are not getting it they don't know what the students want."

These fourteenth and fifteenth students commented on the image of the school and the function of the students. Is the administration keeping up with the diversity revolution? Should students have a more involved role with the administration?

"Administration looks at it like how it reflects on their image and they want the best image so they have that in mind but they don't want to sit there and open the doors to anything, so they're trying to walk a thin line. It's self-serving and a show. I feel like they just want to have enough to be like "we're not racist"

This final student observes that the administration seems to do the bare minimum: show that they are not racist but stay true to their agenda and play.

An overwhelming amount of interviewees claimed that the administration treats multiculturalism as a mere benefit if it can improve the image of the campus. These students were concerned with the efforts of the administration and wondered if they knew what they were doing? The administration dictates what long term change happens at Colby. If they are unsuccessful in meeting student's needs it causes unhappiness, and frustration.

Colby's size also poses problems:

"This year people started caring more about retention rates for diverse students, a lot of kids do leave – could it just be central Maine? It's hard to be here"

"Colby is a really small school with a different dynamic, there is the ability to go out of your element and interact with people who wouldn't normally be a part of your friend circle. But only if reaching out makes you comfortable."

"In this small and microscopic community, you need to make sure that everyone feels respected and they respect themselves. So when people come into new ways of thinking its important. They shouldn't think their perspective is the most important or the only thing that matters."

"It's a small school, things get around."

Colby is a small school and there is not much privacy or secrets. This creates a culture of caution because "everything gets around." Colby can be successful if every student feels respected, but when students do not feel included, or the campus has a "chilly" climate—problems are emphasized and amplified.

Colby Athletics

The athletic culture at Colby has been the subject of much debate in recent years. Does it pose a real problem for multicultural progress? Oftentimes athletics and multiculturalism is pitted against one another, but the students do not have a problem with one another but the inequality of how both are treated. Athletes are often victims to stereotypes, especially male teams. These labels creates an intimidation and predatory, damaging their image.

"The athletics here, it is another world, its own culture. I mean so many eyes get turned to them: tests being passed down, cheating, and the Adderall."

This student is upset that the athletic culture affords certain students advantages. There

seems to be an acceptance on the campus that athletes engage in “cheating” behavior—because of their history and preservation they have access to old exams and networks to locating study drugs. It gives them an unfair advantage.

“At Colby you can be as comfortable as you want to be, it depends on the bubble you want to be in. You can go through the day without discussing difficult issues; you can just hang out with your friends if you wanted to be. Most bubbles are dictated by athletics.”

If most of Colby’s social groups are structured around athletics it causes more segregation and leaves people out. Colby may not condone fraternities, but athletes have often been compared to the fraternity culture.

“One of my major problems is that athletics are too important here. Nothing is scheduled at 4pm because there are sport practices. Athletics are a negative influence on this campus. The culture that pervades sports at this campus is unacceptable. Athletics costs the school money, so why do we let it get away with that? I hate that we put so much on the idea that donations will come from alumni. The culture surrounding sports is negative. I don’t think there has been enough research on how athletics have caused detriments to gender and race. It is one of the essential problems here.”

The point this student makes, that athletics is very important and it can be seen through the fact that nothing is ever scheduled at 4pm to cater to athlete’s shows this. Maybe the solution in improvement is working through athletics? The student commented that there must be more research to understand athletics—not enough has been done to understand their role because it is so pervasive.

“One of the main problems is the hook up culture and athletics and this is coming from a white male, I really haven’t thought about it in the context of race and gender.”

Even as a white male, this student acknowledges that he is uncomfortable with the role of athletics. It is a separating culture that creates a culture of “insiders” and “outsiders.” He also indirectly points out that athletics also implies *male* athletics as reinforced by the following quotations:

“Men drive the social culture, specifically athletes”

“Male athletes have the most power socially at Colby.”

“A lot of students here carve out who they are through athletics, I play X. People I guess all carve out identity by what they participate in. I guess X really has had such a big influence on me. All the things I do definitely were influenced by the construction of masculinity—How to Act as a Guy. I’ve been trying to get away from the identity I got caught up in – jock. I’ve begun to hang out with people I haven’t before, because I have more time. But it’s impossible to not be shaped by others.”

Does athletics cause conformity? It seems to influence groups of people, especially men.

If it were influencing students in positive ways, would it even be a problem?

However, can we improve the role of athletics without damaging the positive aspects athletics provides?:

“Playing X made me feel comfortable. I have built in friends. My experience as a non-athlete would have been difference. I couldn’t see myself here if I wasn’t playing a sport.”

“You hang with your friends in athletics.”

“I do have a great group of friends, the X team.”

Athletics comforts these students and gives them a group to socialize with. They are comfortable with who they are in relation to their sports identity. More research is needed to understand the role of athletics, but it cannot be ignored that students do see a conflict.

Through statistics, I cannot speak confidently on how athletics affect the campus climate, but through my own experience I do believe athletics – especially male athlete - create a ‘chilly’ environment, as it is isolating, and the group mentality can lead to ‘bad behavior.’ Yet athletes are a symptom of the problem—at first, they are victims in the ‘chilly’ climate that teaches them this is okay. They are no longer victims, however, when they spend more time in the Colby community and begin to realize their effect but do no do enough to challenge it. I’m not sure if athletes recognize how they are viewed.

I'm not sure if they care. I'm not sure if they've internalized a "god-complex" that forces them into oppressive roles. More research must be done.

Benefits and Burdens

When I composed the question for my interviews, I was curious to evaluate whether students accepted or rejected multiculturalism. This language eventually transformed into the understanding of "benefits and burdens." I asked each interviewee to determine if certain areas of the Colby community treated multiculturalism as a benefit or a burden—themselves, their friends, within their classes and by their professors, and the administration. I felt this was important to create a portrait of the students' worlds.

I believe it is important to understand Colby in terms of benefits and burdens because it offers a new way to understand multiculturalism and its effects. How is multiculturalism perceived? I think it's hard to speak openly about multiculturalism, but through this language my subjects have helped me create a portrait of Colby. In this section, I have created five portraits of 'types' of students based upon my sixteen senior interviews that cover the benefits and burdens they have seen and felt. Understanding these student's experiences, will help us to understand Colby. No experience has been the same and each story highlights an aspect of Colby that may have gone unrecognized or unnoticed.

Portrait One. *The Concerned White Student*

"Multiculturalism will only benefit me personally because it allows me expand my horizons and to exchange with people who are experience

something different than myself. I would not view multiculturalism as a burden, personally.”

Multiculturalism has not been a burden for this student, but his³⁵ desire to understand privilege and oppression has been a struggle, it creates anxiety. Being a senior, this white male thinks that Colby has undergone a significant change in its goals for multiculturalism. Multiculturalism has made his Colby experience a good thing and he thinks:

“Because I came from such a homogenous community and in every way—in like religion and race and sexuality—it’s just very much like this is <state name> culture. Experiencing multiculturalism at Colby has really changed the way I think about the world. Meeting people like students who are international students and people who are not white and who are not wealthy and who are not you know, all the same has really changed. It’s been a huge benefit to me as a person and has been a benefit to a lot of the people I spend time with.”

Multiculturalism can be a burden to those who feel like there is not enough of it, or if they are the poster children. For him, it is an additive to the community as it provides a learning opportunity.

At Colby, it’s hard to tell who stands where on what issues and then it’s hard to explain issues to students who have a hard time articulating what they are thinking, she believes:

“Colby is a small and microscopic community; we need to make sure that everyone feels respected and respects themselves.”

Most of her friends here are white. (It really does depend on whom you are surrounded by, as there is segregation between understandings.). She gets frustrated with some of them (they are more so acquaintances) and refers to them as “typical student elitists”: students who believe race and racism doesn’t matter, it does not affect their lives so they don’t have to care—it is a burden for them. Her “real friends” were chosen:

³⁵ I interchangeably use male and female pronouns to protect identities between paragraphs

“People who take those things very seriously and feel like it’s important to them—to participate in those activities or to speak about multicultural issues. Social Justice Groupies. That’s what we call ourselves. I give the example of, a lot of my friends graduated last year, and you go out on the weekend and everyone is like ‘yeah! Woo! Raging!’ and then you’re talking about like, the negative implications of international volunteerism and it’s like 2am on a Sunday morning, and it’s just like that’s how the people I spend time with were. Multiculturalism isn’t a separate thing: it’s like what we live with, what we do.”

He claims:

“I think at Colby, multiculturalism is, this is going to sound really weird, but it seems very like exhibitionist. Like at Colby, multiculturalism is something we put on as a show. Like you know, everyone gives the example of we need to celebrate ‘African American month’ or like we need to, these are multicultural performance and activities and multiculturalism is outside of normal Colby life. It’s like a program. And it’s funny because I think there are a group of people at Colby who participate in multicultural activities because they’re interested or they’re represented, you know like ‘I’m gay’ or ‘I’m Hispanic’ and I want to go to these activities, but there are people who like can avoid multiculturalism, I think you can do that at Colby, which I think is kind of weird. I think it means that multiculturalism is kind of separate of Colby as a community. Like this is the Colby community, and the multicultural community is around it and is self-selecting. Like I’m going to be multicultural. I’m going to acknowledge that I’m different and go to that club and be different there.”

She cares. Her interest to effect change at Colby began when she took Campus Conversations on Race if she didn’t come into Colby with these concerns. For example, CCOR effected how she viewed classrooms: she would enter rooms and observe who was a part of her class: what kind of racial identities is being represented. She wonders if the lack of racial diversity in class puts extra pressure on the token student—she has noticed a type of hesitancy and shyness amongst them. Is it connected? She wants them to feel comfortable and talk about their experience because she understands that it will be a benefit, the experience of others is a good learning tool. She is not in the experience where she will ever be a racial minority. She values multiculturalism and recognizes that it is a necessary part of higher education. If people don’t receive it here, their

ignorance will trickle down into society. She questions what does that mean for the future? It's interesting to her because everyone is intrigued by the scandals and issues until it becomes a "here we go again" burden. We have to deal with this again. We have to talk about this again. We have to be made uncomfortable again. She finds a lot of student attitudes to be unfortunate.

He is disappointed with classes, explaining:

"I think my Education classes like you definitely consider multiculturalism, and that's what we speak about. But some of the other classes I've taken it's been really frustrating that like you think of a light switch and people just turn it off and it's like I'm only here to speak about my own line of sight, like the things that I live and the things that I see and I can't consider any other perspectives, and I can only look at a text as a text and not look at a text as a part of the world. So I think sometimes, in some of my English classes, this is the book of the dead white man. Like what is this that we're reading? And people shut off. And you can definitely choose to avoid multiculturalism academically based on what major you choose and what classes you're taking."

Yet he wonders, if sometimes for professors, it can be burdening to evaluate their students all the while considering their backgrounds: the disparities they may have had with social classes. He hopes they put more thought into how they are grading.

When it comes to the administration she does not know much about this but believes:

"They treat multiculturalism as a burden (and sometimes as a benefit). They are proud to boast numbers"

She has come to this conclusion after hearing other members of the community, students and faculty speak with contempt when they discuss the administration. She thinks about the April 12th incident. It was handled very poorly. Why does everything have to be so political?

"The administration doesn't get it, they don't understand privilege—they treat it as a requisite, as an obligation that is sometimes beneficial and that sometimes is a burden. This is something that we need to do, at Colby, to make ourselves look good. We need to say we have X

percentage of students who are international students and we have this event every year that celebrates international students, and the same thing for students of color, and athletes and you know whatever, and you celebrate and advertise those individual segments of our population. But there are some people, like the administrators who show up at the Posse Retreat, for example, these are people who really care and engage and have really reached out to these programs, and to the leaders of these programs. You know the faculty members who may teach German, but participate in CCOR, or who are teaching English 115 but are at the Posse Retreat. These people are engaged but I think, when you hear about these things where people are applying for funding for multicultural events to the Student Government and getting a third of what they requested, because as she expresses “we don’t fund multicultural affairs, we don’t do these kind of things because it’s not as important and booking the \$50,000 concert for SPB. You know some people just think, yeah we have to do this to make Colby look good but we’re going to do it to an extent, so it’s just a segment and not like the whole of Colby. Like this is something we’ll do outside, we’ll give you a certain amount of money for this event, but it’s not like as important as some other things.”

Further she continues,

“The problem isn’t getting kids to Colby; well the problem *is* getting kids to Colby I’m not going to say that, there is a problem with developing a more diverse population. But the more pressing problem, right now, is dealing with students now that they are here and supporting them officially. Because students are here, and understanding and observing the recent statistics on retention rates is appalling. I think it is a problem to keep enrollment rates diverse. It is a challenge to build a diverse campus; it looks good on paper, but its important to strengthen it.”

He is starting to understand and as a result he wants to continue the work he has began at Colby. He does not think they have fully come to understand that, and asks: “we come here to learn, but does everyone get that opportunity?” He believes it is important to address everyone, and perhaps relieve some students of the burden they carry. But ultimately, it is hard to look at the administration as a whole because there are many outstanding leaders. He concludes by asking and answering a question: “How are you going to run a student body? Educate them.” He believes that we need to be educated and “get other cultures into the mix” but why do we look at it that way—as if we’re injecting difference into the college? Why can’t it just be more of a part of our

community? He believes when basic multiculturalism plays a major mainstream role in an environment such as higher education it creates an environment that does not have anxiety about such incidents. Sometimes being at Colby is a burden—its hard to integrate “common sense ideals” if the area isn’t diverse. His recognition of privilege is enlightening; he observes that in most cases multiculturalism is a benefit. He is optimistic about the Colby community.

Portrait Two. *The Student of Color who sees the Burdens*

This student of color explains that “a lot of days multiculturalism is a burden” because of the extra effort she must make to communicate to get a point across. She recognizes herself as a representative of her race. She also finds himself to be completely unique to the student body—“no one is even remotely like me.” Yet she enjoys being active on this campus. She knows that if something major happens, she will be asked to participate. She is a visual minority, and it is a benefit because she can be a part of changes. If she were a white student, she wouldn’t care because she wouldn’t have to. She is proud of her moral compass.

This burden transpires to his relationships with his friends. He believes that his friends are complicated: some will understand and others won’t. He is very conscious of his language and how he phrases things. He believes his friends feel this burden. It gets tiring for him, especially feeling offended or countering offensive remarks. The burden has become so heavy that he has almost began to give up: “there are perspectives that won’t change.” He recognizes, that at Colby, race is abstract thing for people to grasp and it makes it hard for him to have conversations. He only turns to people who will understand but that sometimes feels selfish. But conversations are burdensome—he

does not want to have challenging conversations when it is somewhat easier to talk with people who will be able to relate. He describes multiculturalism as an extra load:

“It’s like carrying an extra back pack for me. It’s not liberating as much as it should be. I’m not like wow I’m a student of color that feels great. I’m proud of it but it comes with a package. You want to break stereotypes or hide behind them, and not speak for entire race.”

He reveals insecurities: “when you talk you think its being judged.”

Her peers play a major role in her life and how she understands others. She has “politically correct friends” who will “put on the understanding hat when multiculturalism comes up.” She has gotten tired of entertaining expressions of understanding, having others agree even if they don’t agree but do not want to come across racist or ignorant. She feels that the culture here is burdensome and makes people fake. However, some of her friends do have a genuine desire to understand (but are still burdened)—they don’t see how being a minority can affect someone, and they don’t understand why they sometimes feel attacked.

Generally, regarding his friends, he chooses not hang out or associate with ignorant people. He admits though that he knows his friends see it as a burden, it is weird for others to be around him because they are accepting of who he is, but when important things are happening, they will not participate.

This experience does continue and expand into the classroom. She does not think her grades are being affected (even though she knows others believes they are). It becomes burdensome, when in classes, especially around <people of color issues>; people give side-glances to her to make sure it isn’t hurtful. What’s even more difficult is when “dumb” things are said and it’s worrying. She feels underserved in her major. She acknowledges that in some classes where race should be a focal point—it is avoided completely. This causes her to become frustrated with the professor; did they have a

lack in their education? She is burdened by her desire to incite discussion but also of the stigma of always bringing it up. If she brings it up she legitimizes the conversation, and that is unfair and not right—“we’re all involved in race.” Multiculturalism should be beneficial in the classroom she explains, “I’m open to everyone having opinions.” She is here for an education, so multiculturalism must be a benefit in classes for him to be content. She believes that if he was in the sciences, her professors wouldn’t care and she wouldn’t engage.

This student of color is also tired of the administration who “would like to see the benefits,” yet it is also a burden for them, because they have to referee all the issues, maintain and improve the diversity of the school, and be careful as to how they approach things—they do not want to insult. His world is burdened by other’s lack of communication, understanding, and the walls that they put in place to separate themselves from him.

She always try to counter stereotypes people will have about her, she explains, she is not trying to prove anything but he wants to highlight things that are not stereotypical about herself and that becomes burdening. She seeks normality. He, however, doesn’t think its too overwhelming. She finds it a challenge to persevere but it makes him become stronger. To deal with it, she has learned to build a vocabulary.

Portrait Three. *The Female Student of Color in the Middle*

She says:

“On my life at Colby, multiculturalism, you know it’s definitely both, it’s definitely a benefit and a burden. You know, people should understand each other, people should know where people come from and it’s obviously relevant to our everyday life. But at the same time, the principal behind multiculturalism is nice and all but sometimes I do feel like exhausted by our school, being like *MULTICULTURALISM, MULTICULTURALISM, DIVERSITY!* We need to be more aware!

Sometimes it's so exhausting to sit there. You go to all these talks and all these panels in hope of gaining some insight into multiculturalism or finding some way...what does that even mean though? Multiculturalism? Is that recognizing difference? What does that mean? [Sonia comments] So it's the acceptance of difference and experience. Hm. Or of the difference of experiences, so not like even accepting them? Just being close to them and experiencing them. I'm more geared towards a subjective view; multiculturalism for me, there is a component of acceptance. It's good to experience stuff, it starts with experience but multiculturalism needs to be taken that one step further into acceptance, that is what true multiculturalism and diversity is for me. The inherent problem in that is you can't make everyone – you can make everyone experience stuff – but you can't make them understand and accept. In a class, we were talking about the difference between tolerance and embracing it, and it's the same situation. This campus tolerates more than everything. I hate to be cynical but I feel like people tolerate more, it's hard to accept things. It's hard to adopt things as your own and put yourself in someone else's shoes. There are a lot of cultures out there—how do you even try? I hate this but it sends me into this downward spiral of like what's the point then? Changing one community of a time? That's the hope. There are a lot of things that follow that whole idea of experience and trying to understand and accept.

The administration, hm, I don't really have a lot of experience with the administration, so I may not be completely entitled to give this answer but I go here, the thing is I'd like to think that at heart a lot of people are interested, especially educated people who understand that this country is in a different position. I definitely like to think at heart, they have that kind of intentions to support multiculturalism. But like anything this college is a business first and foremost for anyone. In a business there isn't a lot of room for multiculturalism, diversity, love. When it comes to the administration, whether we like it or not, they have to treat it as numbers, as statistics, as things that can bring more revenue to this school, as assets, a need. They may not want to but it's something that has to be done for the sake of this school. I feel like if I consider it a burden, I believe they have to, but it's also an opportunity for them to make more money. It's definitely not something a lot of people are comfortable talking about, so when you do push the issue, it's like—I don't know it feels like there isn't much progression. We talk, we talk, we talk and it seems like we are right back to where we are two years ago. It can be a burden. I'm sure they think of it as a benefit but it's more so in the sense of an asset.”

Portrait Four. *The Hopeful Student of Color*

Multiculturalism is a benefit for everyone! We need to understand different cultures! This student is enthusiastic.

“I definitely see multiculturalism as a benefit, the way I see it is, Colby is a great school, a great institution, so I think the need to have people from different backgrounds, races, ethnicities, and the like really feeds into the experience of the people here as they can share moments with people from different backgrounds and get out of their prep school type safe haven. It also allows all sorts of people attend a great school, and connect people who would have not initially met and share aspirations.”

Multiculturalism is something we have to pay attention to that the school tries to pay attention to, but multiculturalism becomes conflated with racial diversity.

Multiculturalism isn't only race. Racial diversity is an aspect of multiculturalism, but other factors matter—in terms of socio-economic background, regional background, and diversity of sexual orientation. She explains, “Multiculturalism means more than we make it to be.” It means more in a good way, but we narrow it down in a bad way and that becomes a burden in her eyes. Multiculturalism is especially benefit for her. She comments:

“We'd have less conflicts if we understood each other's cultures. It boils down to misinterpretation and lack of understanding. We're always trying to think about others.”

She is usually comfortable with issues such as race at Colby, amongst her friends, multiculturalism is seen as a benefit.

This student also attempts to surround himself with friends that are smart and critical, who view multiculturalism as a benefit that is important and must be pursued but they don't get enough of it. But at Colby, according to him, all your friends will not be this way. He has friends that question why they need to be concerned? They ask is it their responsibility to make everyone comfortable? For them, it is a burden. In his classes, he has had professors that are good about dealing with multiculturalism, but he knows he has chosen specific classes. He questions:

“Maybe what we read in class that's considered multiculturalism isn't what we should be reading. We don't get the full stories. We read

narratives that are fake and forced; they aren't multicultural in the sense that they don't help people understand one another."

She considers the administration in terms of motivation, she refrains from saying that she thinks they believe multiculturalism is a burden, but she think their motives are confusion:

"What do they want to achieve? The administration looks at multiculturalism as how it reflects their image. They want the best image they can possibly have, but they don't want to sit there and open the doors to anything. That's their mentality, so they're walking a sort of thin line is their mentality, but more or less its all more self-serving and a show from the administration. I don't feel like it would, I feel like they just want to have enough multiculturalism so that it looks good."

Returning to her original thought, she explains that the administration gets a lot of crap for multiculturalism. They try hard to diversify the campus (she acknowledges the benefits to the administration by doing so) but they are burdened by their lack of understanding. The administration appears misguided at times, because in their minds racial diversity is the only one to pursue.

"But Colby being a school in Waterville, Maine it's not easy getting students to come. So when schools like Williams and Amherst have succeed in recruiting and attaining students of color, it forces Colby to keep up...I definitely feel like [multiculturalism] is a benefit, I mean it reflects poorly on the campus if they don't have a good multicultural standing, and it shouldn't just be like 'oh a token few people.' I guess at this point to really bring it in is to force it, but it needs to feel less forced and more fluid and more just natural. I think if Colby felt more welcoming and opening, diversity would flow naturally."

She believes Colby will improve if it can capture and create a student body with a multiplicity of experiences. Motives are not malicious.

Portrait Five. *The White Student Newly Acquainted*³⁶

³⁶ Multicultural exposure comes too late: I touch on this briefly. I think that it is important to understand that by this I mean, students want to engage with multiculturalism but do not realize the

“I think it’s a benefit because I mean, I think people at Colby don’t necessarily step outside of their comfort zones a lot, so it could be a benefit potentially if more students engaged in multicultural opportunities that are available at Colby, which I feel does not happen at all. I feel like people may feel burdened invited to “PC” Coffee—like ‘oh I should go but I’m not going to.’ I feel like it could be more of a benefit, but some people perceive it as a burden. I personally, I don’t think it’s a burden.”

To open up, this student immediately admits that he hasn’t really dealt with racial issues. The April 12th “issue” after the dance was eye opening to him. Before that he didn’t even think such issues existed on campus. Looking back, he remembers that a lot of things happened around that one incident, but also a lot of things happened that year—he describes it as outrageous. It is tough at Colby, from his point of view, where he only recently began engaging in these issues, he doesn’t know if he can consider multiculturalism as a burden or benefit. He suggests that maybe if he encountered it sooner it would have been more beneficial. He discusses his peer’s efforts to foster conversation. He is disappointed that people don’t respond well and how that becomes burdensome, as unfortunately the general Colby student body does not have a large investment in multiculturalism. There are plenty of events that aim to cultivate multiculturalism and community, and he along with most of the student body is guilty for blowing it off.

Regarding her classes, which she cannot blow off. She reveals that multiculturalism is conspicuously absent in classes. She sees a lot of people who look like her in classes and only recently did she begin to sit around and notice that there are only white people here. She is aware of the school’s efforts to improve the appearance of

value and purpose of it until the end towards of their college career. I think a lot of this comes from class preparation and the way multiculturalism is marketed. It becomes a chore for most students.

diversity, but she doesn't readily see it. What's more disappointing is that professors don't really promote it either.

This is an attitude carried by the administration. He explains honestly, that the administration treats multiculturalism as a burden. There isn't a lot of diversity at Colby and when April 12th occurred, their attitude was uncomfortable and on edge—"it was like they wanted to avoid it and pretend it didn't exist, they didn't handle it well." It became one of those "oh great, *this* again" moments. He is disappointed in their lack of communication and openness:

"I don't know, even in Bro's State of the College Address the other night, I thought it was weird because he was like, well you know we've been able to increase our admissions of traditionally underrepresented minorities, up to 24% this year, but at the same time that's meant that we've taken a hit with financial aid and have had to spend a lot more money. And I was like that's a really weird thing to say-I mean I guess it's maybe honest but I thought it was like a weird thing for him to say. But I think the administration values multiculturalism, but I feel like they get competitive just like with numbers and comparing to other schools: like how many students are from this country and this background and so I guess again benefit and burden."

Colby will be a better place for this student, if all arenas of the college engaged in diversity, and he was not introduced during his last year.

Benefits and burdens provide a new context to think about how we can understand student experiences attitudes and how we can understand their experience. As seniors I believe these students can provide a very interesting and important perspective on Colby's campus climate. Student attitudes are influenced by numerous factors on campus, ultimately based on their experience. In the next chapter, I will explore the changes Colby needs to make, inferred by student experiences and attitudes.

CONCLUSION

Overview

I have been conflicted when determining how to frame these “conclusions.” I think, to some extent, multiculturalism at Colby is inherently contradictory in many ways. By this I mean:

- Colby is cyclic. Many problems are the same but go unaddressed and are thus never resolved. HOWEVER, the needs from year to year will be slightly different, the key to “solving the problem” may change.
- Colby is conflicted about its multicultural strength. There are resources but they are over glorified. Colby *can* look wonderful on paper (unless it is stacked up against our sister schools that have very similar demographics), but in reality there is a problem on campus.
- Colby’s student body is more conservative than they tend to realize, want to accept, and can comprehend. The liberal front creates many roadblocks for multicultural progress.

Therefore, it is hard to write these conclusions without omitting something valuable.

The bottom line is **there is a lot of room for improvement regarding diversity at Colby.**

In the following chapter I will:

1. Offer suggestions pertaining to race at Colby.
2. Offer suggestions pertaining to gender at Colby.
3. Offer “general” suggestions regarding student attitudes at Colby.
4. Comment on my experience, evaluate my peer’s experience, and conclude by offering final thoughts on the role of multiculturalism at Colby.

Suggestions Regarding Race

Colby College is a difficult environment for students of color. It is even further challenged because voicing concerns about the difficulties is often minimized, challenged, and condescended. The campus culture at Colby is destructive. It is in desperate need of reexamination and reevaluation. In classrooms, students of color

report higher levels of anxiety, frustration, and silence. Socially, political correctness silences and limits progress towards creating an inclusive environment. There needs to be more education for every member of the community. I suggest the college revise the academic requirement to include more opportunities for discussion. These requirements should take place within the first year of a student's college career. Aleah Starr of the class of 2011, has proposed discussion labs for first-years led by seniors under the supervision of faculty. This combined with the proposed Multicultural Literacy class created by the Education Program and Multicultural Affairs Committee and Race and Racism Committee will give students more meaningful exposure.

Colby should also take more measures to enforce safe space for students. Creating more ally systems between students as well as students and faculty can do this. There needs to be higher levels of trust within the community. It is unacceptable that students of difference feel unable to express discomfort without being criticized. There must also be a functioning outlet to do this, as the Colby Digest of Civil Discourse is not working. The community has many resources that can be used more effectively—for example, I was very disappointed to hear stories of Community Advisors³⁷ (Hall Staff) that did not know **anything** about multicultural support. How can they effectively support a student of color? An LGBT student? A victim of sexual assault? Or any student of underrepresented backgrounds? Colby may consider training students outside of Hall Staff on these issues and locate them within the dorms. Students of color have also petitioned and requested multicultural housing. This does not have to be

³⁷ I have been told that more efforts are being put into CA training. However, I think it will also be important if CAs are expected to engage in diversity initiatives outside of their formal training by taking CCOR, fulfilling their Diversity Requirement *before* applying to be a CA, being a member of a Pugh Club. A little exposure actually leads to full exposure because the community is so small. There should also be direct questions in the actual interview process.

exclusively for students of color. I believe it is very important that Colby reconsiders this. This will take pressure of students who feel out of place or victimized within their dorms. I have heard stories of students that basically “lived” in the Pugh Center because their room was an uncomfortable environment for them. If students have to worry less about where they are living they can function better academically.

A final suggestion for improving the campus culture will be the implementation of regular campus “town hall” meetings that include various members of the community. This will bridge the gap between students, administrators, faculty, and staff. This can lead to lower levels of disrespect on various levels and better communication. I think there isn’t a complete level of understanding between these groups and the campus does lack a community feel. This may be a major reason of why the campus culture is disturbing. Effective and thorough resources must be provided.

Not every student of color at Colby faces the same challenges but many students of color report seeing pressure to assimilate and sacrifice their identity to find comfort at Colby. More effort must be put towards understanding the individual experience and not just looking at collective groups—it is important to understand that different groups certainly have different experiences but the individual experience is equally, if not more, important. I suggest that Colby administration devotes more time and attention to observing and analyzing the student experience. The administration, on more than one occasion, has implied to me that compassion is not a priority in multicultural affairs. It has to be. At the heart of this issue are students—students with emotions, who have been hurt and burnt by the institution. Understanding what went wrong in their experience can begin to solve the problems, especially the micro-aggressions that persist at Colby. Umbrella solutions have not been effective. Further,

one group at Colby that has been especially underserved and needs more individual support are females of color. Colby lacks visible and approachable female of color role models. From my research, females of color are struggling at Colby without much care or attention received. I suggest that Colby creates a support group for these students or, as seen in below, in the gender suggestions section in this chapter (Re: Gender and Sexual Diversity Center), a division within a Gender and Sexual Diversity Center focused on Females of Color, the support can be in the form of a counselor, groups, and the like.

The administration is not only the face of the institution, their attitudes, values, and direction trickles down to students. I suggest that all members of the administration go through a more thorough and interactive sensitivity training as a group. Reading a book is not enough. Believing that it is enough is ridiculous. This will, hopefully, increase the administration's understanding and awareness. Is multiculturalism a priority for the administration? It does not seem to be. The lack of support on behalf of the administration is a micro (if not macro) aggression. If the administration is truly committed to multiculturalism they will begin to explore understanding their privilege and explaining the importance to students. They cannot just say that diversity is a priority for them. They have not spoken about multiculturalism well! It is unacceptable and must be changed. Students of color bear the burden of multicultural work and they do not feel like students first. I suggest that these students receive more academic support and awareness. It is important for faculty to understand the unique situation they are in and offer guidance and support. The easy solution to this problem, however, will be more resources in the form of counselors, a

Pugh Center Director, and a Chief Diversity Officer. This will dissipate the burden placed upon these students.

Finally, the mentality of students, faculty, and the administration at Colby is disturbing. It is highly discouraging for students of color to be constantly told that “things will be worse for them in the real world so they might as well learn to deal with it.” This mentality is not only discouraging but also wrong. Colby is an elite college. It’s students are the leaders of tomorrow and are in the 1% most privileged people in the world—therefore the mentality *should be* Colby must be better than the real world. Colby is a great environment to learn how to eradicate racism and effect change. I suggest that the “us versus them” mentality be crucially challenged. Colby is supposed to be a community. I suggest more open conversations are held about this topic and the responsibility of a student. Every member of the community must hold themselves to higher standards.

Suggestions Regarding Gender

Gender is complicated at Colby. In this section I will offer suggestions for females, males, and then in general.

To improve the experience for females at Colby, empowerment is key. I suggest that Colby administration conducts surveys and focus groups to determine the state of Colby females. I think this must come from the administration and have their support and guidance because Task Forces in the past have worked hard to only be ignored at the end. If the administration is heavily involved, perhaps the work of a Task Force or a group will be more effective. To immediately empower and support females Colby needs a Gender and Sexual Diversity Resource Center. It will be a place for females to receive

education, support, and provide a safe space at Colby. Females do not have many safe spaces at Colby. It will be an environment that teaches them wellness, self-help on many levels, as well as remove the ambiguity of right and wrong on the campus. I think a fully funded and administration supported Gender and Sexual Diversity Resource Center (that can and should also serve LGBT students) can create change at Colby. It will end the weird power dynamic and silence around these issues. It is needed because it has become frustrating how many incidents occur at Colby and go unreported and unsolved. I am aware that Colby, like every other college, does not want the image of “Rape University” but the silence around the issue creates even more problems. I think it is especially telling that after the Phil Brown incident (taking pictures of female students in the bathroom), and the silence that surrounded it, two male students still felt comfortable being involved in the video-recording of a sex of a first-year female. This female did not report the incident. These students went unpunished. I believe the administration’s is responsible for this.

I believe that the mishandling of the Phil Brown incident as well as the continued silence on these issues enforced the sense lawlessness on this campus. The administration handled the Phil Brown incident poorly. I am completely aware of the importance of sensitivity towards victims and the privacy issues but after everything was revealed through public news publications, Colby should have done more to show that this is not acceptable behavior on the campus. Colby should have provided current students with a peace of mind. Colby chose to instead completely brush the incident under the rug. The administration did not even provide counseling for the victims. Enough is enough. I have come to learn that many females do not even recognize that they are being sexually harassed or violated because of Colby’s lack of support and

education. I have been particularly confused about the role of insecurity—is it a main problem or a symptom of the problems at Colby? Insecurity poses many challenges for the general female population. This can be seen through their discussion of where they feel safe, eating disorders, how they function during the weekends, and through the way they talk about these issues. This is something else that can be addressed through a Center and it must be addressed. I suggest a heightened level of insecurity awareness. Discourse on this is nonexistent but can be effective to creating change.

Colby cannot be a “party school” and safe for students at the same time. There is a lot of drinking here. This is because Colby is located in rural Maine, and it perhaps cannot be avoided. I think to make Colby safer for females on the weekends when most parties occur, more open conversation must occur. Taking away hard alcohol was effective in keeping students out of the hospital but not ending sexual harassment and assault. I think if there was more conversation on how to drink, the culture of drinking, and behavior while drinking can evoke a new way of thinking amongst the student body. Colby also is essentially lawless because of the lack of strong, visible, and effective policies. This must be revised. The Student Programming Board (SPB) was created with the intentions of curbing alcohol use and giving alternative solutions. I think its interesting that SPB along with Campus Life basically extended the weekend by acknowledging the partying that occurs on Thursday. It is complicated now because Thursday is still a popular day for education events but competes with SPB’s recreational events and CA’s patrolling. I do think the amount of people drinking on a Thursday has risen because of this. It seems like Thursday has been legitimized as the weekend. I also think the role of SPB must be revised. Are they actually countering drinking by having entertaining events that encourage appropriate behavior or are they

creating environments for abuse? Students have reported that more drinking occurs on dance weekends and they have seen more sexual harassment and abuse take place or begin at dances. Dances are fun but something is inherently wrong with them.

The male culture at Colby is dominated by “man codes” and expectations. The creation of Male Athletes Against Violence (MAAV) this year has been wonderful at challenging stereotypes. It also recognizes the role that athletes play on our campus. It is a major one. The divide between male athletes and non-athletes though must be acknowledged. Non-athletes seem to have challenges finding male friends and opportunities to fit in. I think organizations such as Gentleman of Quality (GQ) can do more to provide a space for men. Male bonding must be done in productive ways and should not reinforce male stereotypes, it should pay attention to gender issues that men face—insecurity, academics, entitlement, etc. I do not think eating chicken wings and watching football is enough—men need to talk. They need to feel comfortable talking. They need to see that the power they have and work together to create change for themselves. It is also important that more work is done on an administrative level to understand what men are thinking, what they are taught, how they are taught, and what this can lead to. I think men are particularly defensive on this campus and that derives from something. Publicly vocalizing concerns about sexual assault and females has shown me how defensive men can be—this is disturbing. Yes, men can be sexually assaulted to. But using that as a reason to minimize the female experience is not okay. Further, men have been in denial that sexual assault exists. More education and communication must occur! In general, it is important that students recognize that there is life after Colby. They will not always be in an environment that has a weird atmosphere of “lawlessness.”

General Suggestions Regarding Improving Student Attitudes

To generally improve the experience of students and their attitudes, Colby needs a Chief Diversity Officer. It is *not* okay that more work is not done to understand students. Furthermore, it is unacceptable that things are so unbelievably cyclical at Colby and the bulk of the works fall upon the already busy students and professors. Their efforts unfortunately have not been enough because they cannot be long lasting without administrative support. It is very frustrating to know that the same problems have been occurring for years here, effecting new groups of students and has been denied support. Colby needs to better preserve its history of multiculturalism—so students are not always beginning at square one. This will hopefully end the cyclic nature at Colby. The administration does not seem to know and understand everything that goes on at Colby and it is hurting them. A Chief Diversity Officer can fill this gap.

The lack of understanding on part of the administration is creating an overcomplicated first-year experience. By this I mean: first-years are receiving too much but useless information. What are the first-years taught regarding previously mentioned these issues? Where do they receive their education? The entire first-year experience must be reevaluated. It needs to be simplified and redirected. There needs to be more concrete and direct ways to raise awareness. There most importantly, needs to be a focus. The education must be more intimate. “The stage needs to be set early,” students need to be exposed early, in order for Colby to produce well-rounded and aware students. I think this can be achieved in numerous ways—take advantage of the dorms for smaller group conversations, COOTs.

Additionally, for students of underrepresented backgrounds, I think if the former Preview Weekend is financially unbeneficial—a Welcome Week during orientation

should be in place. This can occur several events during the first few weeks of school that are student led and can introduce resources. I think Colby should also set up peer mentors. There can be many different types of mentors: Study Buddies to help first-years negotiate academics during their first-year, a friend to talk to about emotions and learn about resources, a student that has a completely different background to learn about embracing differences as well as identifying similarities in circumstances that seem completely different, or a combination of any of these. I think older students would be proud and happy to help.

Using the key insights from my “Benefits and Burdens” section, I offer the following suggestions:

A student explains that her anxiety about understanding privilege and oppression is a burden.

Analysis and Suggestion: To become more inclusive, Colby needs to allow students to make mistakes and show them in their path to understanding it will not be smooth. The more comfortable students are the more they will engage and not resort to defensiveness. There should be more efforts taken to create and develop safe-space for every student in every location of this campus.

A student observes that multiculturalism can be a burden to students because they have opportunities to engage with multiculturalism but may not choose to participate. She also describes multiculturalism as a benefit as it creates an opportunity to learn.

Analysis and Suggestion: Colby has issues with over programming. I used to get upset with students who told me that they were too busy to attend multicultural events, but in their reality—they are. To make these events more accessible, I think students need to be challenged to rearrange their priorities, if faculty, coaches and other influential figures on campus show that these events are important, maybe more students will engage?

A student identifies that multiculturalism is put on as a show (and that's a burden).

Analysis and Suggestion: Multiculturalism needs to feel more genuine to be beneficial.

This needs to begin with the administration. Colby needs to stop “tolerating” multiculturalism and “embrace it.” The difference is embracing means understanding and bridging differences which will be effective.

A student explains that there are certain aspects of Colby where multiculturalism is a burden and a benefit. It really does depend on who you associate with and what you do. He thinks that it can be a burden for white students because their opinion is not as valued as students of color when it comes to racial issues.

Analysis and Suggestion: I think there is a lot of ownership of issues on this campus by underrepresented students because they do feel hurt and they want things to go as they vision. I think there needs to be more work on coalition building and working on things as a team. It is hard to be an activist, but every member of the community is needed to effect change. Represented groups fighting for social justice creates an impact.

A student of color explains her frustrating that multiculturalism at Colby is minimized to race and that creates a burden.

Analysis and Suggestion: Multiculturalism is more than race; I think that is beginning to surface with the new focus on gender this semester. The administration looks for visible differences to prove diversity—but diversity can entail a lot of things. This definition needs to be transformed. Further, usually race receives the most attention because it is problematic here and there are not enough resources for everything to be handled at once—bring more resources!

A student of color recognizes herself as a representative of his race and she is tired and feels burdened on a day-to-day basis.

Analysis and Suggestion: I do not think Colby will gain a critical mass anytime soon unless it leaves rural Maine. This school attracts a certain type of student from a specific area, and that is understandable. To solve this problem, there needs to be more

sensitivity awareness and training. Education begins in the classroom, not enough is being done.

A student believes that multiculturalism has not been approached and handled in an effective way at Colby, and he is conflicted about the benefits and burdens it creates.

Analysis and Suggestion: She has a very good point. I think Colby needs to stop what its doing and have a honest and thorough discuss and plan what it wants to do. I hate to say that to create an inclusive campus we need to begin at square one, but we do. I think we are going in many different directions and it is scattered. I think Colby needs to pause to some extent, reevaluate and prioritize.

A student of color has been very involved and she identifies that there is a burden in this; because it is how others view her, her peers at Colby cannot look beyond that identity.

Analysis and Suggestion: It is easy to be stereotyped at Colby. I think this identity should not have a negative association. I think social justice workers need to be celebrated and rewarded by every member of the community, especially the administration. Often the administration seems to make them the enemy.

A white student sees multiculturalism as a benefit because he has had many opportunities to learn.

Analysis and Suggestion: To make Colby more inclusive, every student needs to be challenged at this level. They should be constantly learning.

A white student demands community, and believes that it is a burden on other students that there isn't one.

Analysis and Suggestion: Creating inclusivity cannot be done without a sound community. This student suggests events that will bring students that who would have never met together. Yet to achieve this students must be receptive and open to this. I honestly believe Colby students are only interested in events that are related to work or play. So this should either be something tied to academics or be done in a creative and widespread way.

A student believes that it is unacceptable that not more has done to ensure that multiculturalism is completely a benefit at Colby and does not feel burdening to members of the community.

Analysis and Suggestion: To create an inclusive community, every student needs to feel responsible. We cannot force emotions out of students, but we can continue to provide opportunities for them to discover this and become self-motivated. I think more needs to be done to gauge where everyone is in their understanding. From there—change can be more effective.

A student realizes how much he has missed out during her time at Colby, and how multiculturalism could have been more of a benefit if he had more exposure to educational opportunities.

Analysis and Suggestion: Apparently traditional means of advertising has not been enough. The influence of his professor piqued his interest, so perhaps if the diversity requirement is reviewed and occurs earlier on in a student's career they will be able to spend a substantial amount of their four years at Colby engaging and creating an inclusive community?

A student explains that he has felt burdened because he cannot be who he is and embrace his identity while at Colby.

Analysis and Suggestion: How can we create safety in identity? How can we let students learn about who they are? I think identity is very important and the culture of conformity is disturbing. Individuality must be celebrated. I think if Colby stopped tokenizing students or making students feel targeted for one aspect of their personality, generally students will be able to be who they are effectively.

The student of color of color explains that he has had to work to make multiculturalism a benefit at Colby for himself and others.

Analysis and Suggestion: MORE RESOURCES ARE NEEDED!

The student thinks multiculturalism is not something many people think about unless it is directly introduced to them.

Analysis and Suggestion: Orientation needs to be revised and influence must begin sooner and in small groups.

The interviewee believes multiculturalism becomes a benefit when it can help the campus' image and appearance.

Analysis and Suggestion: This begins with the administration and the Diversity Statement and how multiculturalism is perceived. The campus must make institutional changes.

In general, I think there are many little steps that Colby can begin to take to improve the state of multicultural affairs. First, the relationship between students and faculty needs to be improved. More members of the faculty must be engaged. If they are working at an institution of higher education, they should see purpose in developing a professional, respectful, and understanding camaraderie with their students. Second, Colby needs to make multiculturalism more mainstream—it should not be limited to the Pugh Center and be found in different environments on the campus. There needs to be a better understanding of how student's identity is developed and Colby must recognize the role they want to play within it. Differences must be bridged through better communication. Resources, protocols and strategies should be easier to find and more accessible through an online database. Finally, the Diversity Statement must be revised and improved. I do not think it says anything of importance and it excuses itself from responsibility. Colby as an institution cannot take a firm stance and understanding on multiculturalism without first changing how they perceive diversity.

In Conclusion

It has been hard for me to be passionate about multiculturalism and not lose my energy and enthusiasm when it seems that so many of my peers reject it. I have felt a

personal need to think about this and effect change because I am concerned about the future of underrepresented students in these environments. I want there to be inclusivity. Colby will be my alma mater and will always be a part of me, so I want to be proud of it. I cannot be proud of it unless there is change. As noted in the race and gender section, homogeneity and conformity are key issues that are parallel to one another. These issues hinders progress and must be addressed.

As a senior, I worry sometimes. I claim that I have seen change and things are very different since my first-year, but how true is that? If it were true would things be this cyclical? Am I being cynical? But what if my sphere of people at Colby has just changed since my first-year to include people who “get it?” What if I’ve just gotten better at surrounding myself? Is progress occurring here? I think everything I suggested in this conclusion is great, but evaluation is a key step. Colby needs to take more steps towards measuring what students think feel and what is working. Evaluation must occur so we can know what changes must be made and if we are wasting money. It is very important. Colby should be worried because from my project there is a lot of discontent. If this pattern continues what does that mean for the future of this campus? Multiculturalism needs to be mainstream, there shouldn’t be a separate multicultural community, but it should be felt and embraced in every arena.

Colby deserves to be diverse. It deserves to have a multicultural community because it is an amazing campus. Charles Terrell ’79 (Chapel Takeover, class president for two years, SOBHU president and current Trustee) said in an interview with Colby Magazine: “I worked so hard to change things at Colby because I loved it.” I too love Colby, but I am unimpressed with its priorities. Colby needs to figure out what it wants to do and where it wants to go. Priorities must re-directed. This year, I began to

wonder that maybe the problem is too much focus is placed on “changing students” and encouraging their growth and development into accepting and embracing multiculturalism and this has damaged the multicultural community that exists. This community needs to be support. Instead of converting the campus, maybe this community needs to be given more resources—but would this create segregation?

There needs to be a middle ground. At the end of the day, students and faculty cannot accomplish this alone; it is up to the administration to provide help. The members of the community who have done this work—students, faculty, and members of the administration—must be rewarded for their dedication to social justice. Colby rewards member of the campus for various things, but social justice efforts go unnoticed. This does not encourage anyone to engage. I repeat, the lack of support at Colby is a micro (if not) macro aggression.

It is very clear that a main problem at Colby is communication. There is not enough. The communication that occurs is unproductive and ineffective. I think Colby needs to go back to the basics. I think the poor communication affects every area of the campus—look at the Colby *Echo*, their portrayal of diversity has been traditionally poor. It was so weak in the past that students created their own publication. Yet the *Echo* is important to the community because it reaches alums, trustees, and members that aren't here on a day-to-day basis. To improve communication, we need to figure out how to have effective dialogue and create safe space. Without it, we cannot succeed.

I have a mixed relationship with the administration. There are many members that I appreciate and believe are truly committed. Yet they have the most power to create change. If they commit themselves to this issue, things will change. Students of underrepresented backgrounds have been told more than once that we don't matter to

administration in numerous ways. We are told if our concerns are legitimate they will be taken care of but then they just wait us out or we are ignored. The administration needs to figure out what they want to do. I think they put in a lot of work to get us here but do not follow through. Colby is a great place to be but it is a hard place for students of underrepresented backgrounds. If the administration committed to providing for us, it would not have to be this way. They need to take ownership of their shortcomings as it will make them stronger and more trustworthy: transparency + accountability = trust. I want to feel and believe that the administration supports me and wants to provide for me. Colby claims that they are being financially conscious to protect the future of the college, but can this lean budget work towards providing for students? There are many things that do not make financial sense at Colby: what is money being spent on? There are new official banners every semester; students receive big prizes (I-Pads, Jet Blue gift cards) during a Bingo game; every single leaf that falls from a tree is picked up immediately; the athletic center has four physical therapists. But administration is telling us that we cannot afford to have legitimate resources for the students of underrepresented backgrounds? These students should be worth more than banners, a Bingo game, the campus being immaculate, and these students outnumber athletes. The priorities are off here.

I undertook this project to explore student experiences and attitudes and why they differ. I know now that this was somewhat of an impossible mission. Attitudes differ as experiences differ. Every experience is based upon choices of conforming, self-education, and awareness. Students' feelings will change. Yet I can confidently say that something is wrong here and things must change. Colby is behind the world. We are failing on many levels and we can do more and we should want to do more.

APPENDIX I

Diversity Definitions: A guide to my general thoughts of “multicultural” language

A

Activists intentionally work to effect social change. Often structured to support or oppose an idea, concept, or function, they can be perceived as controversial.

Angry minority can be interpreted in two ways: it can describe a group of people who feel that they are being discriminated against and it can also refer to the stereotype that if a person of color is vocal about their mistreatment, they are “angry.”

Apathy is the general attitude of not caring due to a lack of interest, passion, emotion or excitement. It is destructive because it can create frustration and a divide in understanding.

Assimilate essentially is the act of conforming although it may result in the sacrifice of one’s customs, values, and attitudes.

Awareness is the general consciousness held by an individual or a group. On a campus, regarding multiculturalism it is the responsibility of every member to educate his or her self on a social level in order to create an inclusive community.

C

Campus climate measures the degree to which the members of the community feel included.

Complacency occurs when there is a high level of contentment and satisfaction combined with unawareness. Ultimately this is a problem because the false sense of security limits the ability and opportunity to challenge and create change.

Chief Diversity Officer is an administrator who focuses on diversity’s function in the campus, assessing problems and creating solutions, in order to develop a fully inclusive community.

Criticized as an attack, at Colby it is a challenge to comment or vocalize an opinion that is not in full agreement and support with something because it will be “criticized as an attack.” i.e. If a group of students sit-in in the student union after dealing with incidents holding signs that say listen and requesting that the student body do more to make everyone on campus comfortable, their actions will be considered an attack. This leads to defensiveness and as a result it is hard to make progress on the initial opinion.

D

Diversity is often used interchangeably with ‘multiculturalism’ and it is a political term that describes the identifiable differences between members of a group. While I consider multiculturalism to speak to one’s experience, to me, diversity implies numbers and statistics.

Double standards suggest that there are different principles, rules, and values for one group of people than another without proper reason. It is a bias.

E

Embrace is the term I prefer over ‘tolerate.’ This means to accept willingly, to adopt, and to take in completely. It is the attitude I prefer towards multiculturalism because it is the key to the influx of inclusion.

Equalities ensure that there are fair opportunities for all individuals regardless of their personal qualities.

G

Gender is a social construct that refers to the characteristics that set apart and distinguish male and female.

I

Identity is the term used to describe one’s individuality in terms of conception and expression or affiliations. It is used in psychology and sociology. It is one’s “self-image.”

Ignorance refers to a lack of knowledge. It is often the excuse used to justify an offensive comment or action. However, after a certain amount of time, ignorance is no longer an excuse because everyone has an opportunity to educate him or her self.

Inclusive community refers to a social group of any size that attempts to include everything concerned within the group, ensuring physical, emotional, social and mental safety and stability.

Inequalities are social disparities that produce injustices.

Inferior refers to the idea that one is in a lower position, relative to another. It is another term regarding power.

Internalized sexism occurs when a female takes in and believes the stereotypes and ideas about her sex without realizing it. It is a form of oppression that results in a lack of confidence and authority for women.

J

Jungle fever is a slang term used to describe a white person's attraction to people of color.

M

Marginalized occurs when an individual or a group is placed in a minimized and inferior position regarding power.

Micro-aggression is comprised of two words: 'micro' meaning extremely small and aggression which is any offensive attack. Therefore a micro-aggression is an extremely "small" offensive attack that has large effects, and in my opinion the term itself is a misnomer. This is marked by subtle insults and demeaning implications. It is the daily occurrence of a brief and somewhat common verbal or attitude used to humiliate or condescend. It is not necessarily intentional or unintentional but it projects hostility, derogatory and negative racial insults towards people of color. i.e. "I can't tell any of you apart because you are black," "Why don't you speak American?," "Just by looking at you, I don't think you can be trusted."

Minority is a sociological group that is not in the dominant position, and is located inferior to the group in the "majority." The word 'minority' can be condescending and offensive as it implies power (or the lack thereof).

Multicultural Affairs is the broad term used to encompass the various forms of interaction with diversity. At Colby, it is an official term.

Multiculturalism refers to the appreciation and acceptance of multiple cultures within a specific place. Multiculturalism offers an outlet for exploring difference equally, and without the promotion of a specific value or belief.

O

Oppressed is one who is burdened with unjust restraints because of power dynamics.

P

Political Correctness (PC) is the act of avoiding expressions or actions that may be interpreted as insulting, exclusive to people who are discriminated against because of their gender, race, culture, sexuality, ability and age. To be "politically correct" one must take notice of their statements in a public setting. However, while being PC may be well intentioned, it severely harms a community because it harms the ability to foster discussion.

Powerless means to be helpless. i.e., Many students of color feel powerless in class when their professor speaks of slavery and looks at them as an expert, even though they may have no knowledge or direct relation; yet since their professor is in a position of power, they are unable to speak out openly against this indiscretion (if they do it can jeopardize their grade).

The Posse Foundation identifies, recruits, and selects student leaders from public high schools to form multicultural teams called "Posses." Posses are groups of 10 to 12 students from diverse cultural and economic backgrounds who support each other and ensure that each member succeeds and graduates from college. Posses also work to increase interaction among diverse campus groups. The concept of a Posse works for both students and college campuses, and is rooted in the belief that a small, diverse group of talented students—a Posse—carefully selected and trained, can serve as a catalyst for increased individual and community development³⁸.

Pugh Community Board is an organization whose primary purpose is to provide direction on the ways the Pugh Center advances the College's goals regarding multiculturalism. The group programs lectures, concerts, performances, exhibitions, workshops and special events for the entire community. Programs are offered in the Pugh Center, and in other locations as well, such as the Coffeehouse, Page Commons Room, and occasionally, the field house for major events. PCB programs seek to affirm cultural differences and educate the community on multicultural issues³⁹.

R

Race is a socially constructed term that is used to position an individual into an (pointless) identifying category in order to create power dynamics. It is not scientific or anthropological. It is not the same as ethnicity. Currently, general race options may include: White, Black or African American, American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, 'Other,' and 'Two or more Races.'

Racism is supreme prejudice held by a person in power.

S

Sexism is discrimination based upon stereotypes about one's sex.

Sexual assault / harassment describes actions or words of a sexual nature that are unwelcomed and inappropriate. This can include rape, discrimination, abuse, and bully, etc. It is taboo to speak openly about this issue.

Social Class is the economic arrangements of groups in society. In the United States the groups consist of the upper class (rich), middle class, and lower class (poor). Social Class is also used as a basis for assigning power

Social justice recognizes, understands, and values equality for all humans as a basic human right. It is the idea that society must be based upon principles of equality.

³⁸ http://www.colby.edu/administration_cs/student-affairs/deanofstudents/posseprogram/

³⁹ <http://www.colby.edu/pcb>

Stereotypes are beliefs held about a certain social group or type of individual by a wide majority based upon prior assumptions.

Student of color is another term for racial minority that I prefer because it does not put one in an inferior position. It is any non-white student.

Student of Difference is a substitute for the word ‘minority’ ultimately referring to students that do not represent the common demographics of the college. While realistically (and hopefully) every student is uniquely different, this word groups all students that have an identifiable difference from the majority population.

T

Tolerate is the act of ‘putting up with.’ This word is often used to express how one should treat multiculturalism—with tolerance. However, I have a problem with this because merely tolerating multiculturalism does not allow one to have a complete experience. It is not something they ever have to necessarily interact or recognize. By merely tolerating, one plays it safe.

Transparency implies honesty, clear communication, and accountability. Privacy is important but without transparency it is hard to build trust.

U

Unintentional insensitivity occurs when one’s ignorance causes them to act or speak in a way that disregards other’s feelings.

W

White privilege is the unrecognizable advantages that white people experience because of their white skin color on a daily basis.

APPENDIX II

My Experience, About Sonia

First Experiences with Race

I was forced to recognize the effects of racism on my life during the spring semester of my first-year at Colby College. The revelation, as I like to refer to it, would lead to a college experience devoted to multicultural affairs and a consuming desire to continuously widen my scope of knowledge. In a session of Campus Conversations on Race (CCOR), a sophomore shared: “Micro-aggressions happen so often that you become powerless against them, you begin to feel bad about yourself, but you have to just put on a smile and keep on going when you’re here. No one else understands.” Despite attending Colby for only a short amount of time, I understood completely. I began to openly cry in front of my CCOR group. I was dismayed to learn that my emotions weren’t singular but felt by every student that has been oppressed, silenced, and ignored on this campus. Instead of continuing to tolerate the inequalities I experienced, I decided to educate myself and strive to create a more inclusive community. If Colby truly wants to embrace and honor its claim of having a “strong commitment⁴⁰” to diversity, the campus climate must change so no student becomes marginalized.

After I was introduced to the word ‘micro-aggression’ I became fascinated with the language of multiculturalism: what does it mean to be a minority? How do we define race, gender, and class? What is political correctness? Does diversity inflect the same notions as multiculturalism? Why does white privilege cause so much defensiveness and

⁴⁰ Colby’s Statement of Diversity

anger? When the concept of social justice was introduced to me the following fall semester in my Education classes, I was given the opportunity to learn theory and develop my own understanding of how inequalities and equalities function and shape our society. The Education Program's focus on social justice presented me with the resources to critically examine Colby's community. Was there hierarchy amongst the student body that caused segregation? What were the administration, faculty, and staff doing to create an equal experience for every student?

Reflecting on my first-year experience with CCOR, I was challenged to take action to raise campus-wide awareness. My group was filled with interesting (but somewhat controversial) characters: the student that attempted to defy Jane Elliot⁴¹, an international student whose passion for racial issues was at times overwhelming, an abundance of Posse scholars, a first-year male that criticized the way I spoke during the second week of school, and a senior who helped design controversial Cinco de Mayo t-shirts. Interestingly enough, more than half of my group went on to become CCOR facilitators. On more than one occasion, I have had discussions with them about our initial CCOR experience and I'd always feel awkward when they'd say: "remember that time that person left in tears." After I reminded them it was I who broke down, they would *thank me*. To this day, I'm not sure how I feel about that and it has always been on my mind. Is a brown-girl (actually an Indo-Trinidadian) crying the best way to help white students see the challenges faced by a student of color? Instead of programming events with the Pugh Community Board, writing Digest posts, attending endless meetings, and working on this Senior Scholar's projects, should I just set up shop in

⁴¹ Visited Colby Spring 2008, "brown-eyed/blue-eyed" exercise,

Pulver and talk about my experience with race and cry? Is that the way to combat apathy?

Initial Experience with Gender

During my Junior Year, I also began to become interested in issues of gender. My first week back on campus, sexism greeted me. At a meeting with the three other (self-proclaimed) “big boards” student leaders, who were all male, I felt mistreated. I met two out of the three for the first time, but the other male was a personal good friend. I was especially astonished at how willing he was to join them as they spoke down to me, challenged my abilities, and even made suggestive comments⁴². When I shared these sentiments with a few close female friends they taught me about ‘feminism.’ I cannot deny that I had (and still have) severe internalized sexism. Growing up in an Indo-Trinidadian household, I was raised to believe women did have a certain place in society, which was in fact, inferior to men. It is not something I’m proud of or a quality I even fully recognized the effects of. As I became more involved with the Women’s Group and had discussions with Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies majors, my anger grew. I was frustrated with myself for being 20 years old and not realizing how my complacency towards gender roles was creating a problem. I became aware of the large role female safety in the sense of sexual assault and harassment, double standards, and expectations played in my life.

⁴² At the time, I thought this was harmless, but looking back it was inappropriate to comment on my outfit in a sexual way during a business meeting.

Until now, with the help of fellow senior Heather Pratt⁴³, I have had a difficult time discussing sexual assault at Colby although due to experience I have a complex relationship with it. I wanted to include thoughts on sexual assault in this introduction, but I wasn't sure if it would be appropriate, so she said to me: "The personal is political. Write about it." Heather has helped me realize that at Colby, it is very difficult for a female to feel safe. Every weekend, at every party or dance, a female is sexually harassed, whether it is in the form of a lewd comment or inappropriate touches, or worse. There are more survivors of sexual assault and harassment here than we would realize. People scoff at the national statistic of 1 in 4 women will suffer sexual assault or attempted sexual assault—but I do believe it is true at Colby. Many don't realize this occurs because of the blurred line between right and wrong. When concerns of sexual harassment is vocalized, men are quick to claim they can be harassed as well, and while granted that is true; it side-tracks the efforts to foster conversation and awareness on the sexual assault and harassment against females, which is statistically more abundant. With Heather's support, I have began exploring issues of gender. I am now sensitive to instances where females are put in inferior positions, judged unfairly, or explicitly discriminated against and I have vowed to *not* have any missed opportunities but be vigilant in voicing my opinions. Yet, I am astonished at how silenced these issues have been made by the Colby Administration and am seeking ways to open doors to successful communication and support. There has been an outcry for support but unfortunately the response is null.

⁴³ Who is writing a thesis on this subject

Empowerment

I was given a challenge and an opportunity when I was elected chair of the Pugh Community Board. After such a previously chaotic year, I felt compelled to be proactive and curb any act of ignorance or intolerance. I was fortunate to have a talented, hardworking and dedicated Board who trusted my leadership and as a team we were able to begin making repairs to Colby's damaged community. In the role of Chair, I was introduced to the politics that existed within the institution, had the opportunity to begin identifying student's needs as well as general needs on campus, and raised the visibility of the PCB by changing the perception of the Board. By the end of the year, I believe we succeed in upholding and achieving our personal mission:

As a Board, we strive to make an impact in the Colby community by being approachable, outreaching, active, honest, open-minded, accountable, humble, unassuming and by proving amnesty. Further, we will be proud and confident of what we do—if we fail, we will fail BIG and we will not fear mistakes. We will utilize all of our networks but avoid cliques. We will try to encompass many different and fun multicultural issues in our programming in order to create “traffic” in the Pugh Center and achieve success in the year 2009 – 2010.⁴⁴

Administration, faculty, and the student body recognized the PCB's efforts to promote multiculturalism, and I believe we began to take many positive steps towards becoming an inclusive community. My attitude towards racial and gender related incidents on campus, while confused, has managed to remain hopeful.

On Being a Posse Scholar

I am a Posse Scholar. I am lucky to have come to Colby in a group of 11 students, whose support has helped me overcome personal and academic obstacles.

⁴⁴ The Pugh Community Board End-of-Year Report 2009 – 2010, prepared by Sonia Mahabir (me) and presented to Director of the Pugh Center, Noel James.

There are standard privileges and disadvantages that come with being a “typical” Posse Scholar:

Privilege	Disadvantage
Posse Scholars are assigned a mentor who helps them negotiate their college experience by providing support.	Assumption of lack of wealth—Posse is not a need-based scholarship, but many assume that most scholars are poor.
Automatically invited to be a part of social support groups—a positive opportunity, and good resources.	Automatically invited to be a part of social support groups—assumption of ability and need (this is not intention, we know that, but sometimes it can be frustrating.)
Built in support system	Student exploitation by the institution
Recognized as a leader	Not all Posse Scholars are “of color”—this is not a racial minority scholarship.
A network between students for extracurricular, academic and social opportunities.	Unfair grouping and clustering, we are not all the same. We have different opinions, interests, etc.

Without Posse, I would not be writing this thesis, have involvement with Pugh Clubs and the Pugh Community Board, or even attended Colby College. One of the most insightful aspects of the Posse Program is our Posse Plus Retreats. During these retreats, I have had my interests and concerns affirmed. Specifically, my junior year retreat on Race opened my eyes to my own struggles with racial identity. I do not self-identify. Every time I am faced with a standardized form that includes race, I hope that there is a box for ‘other.’ If not, I leave it blank⁴⁵. While I am Indo-Trinidadian, it is hard to consider myself ‘Asian,’ especially due to my Caribbean descent, I am often ascribed the race ‘Black’ by institutions. I never truly felt like a “racial minority” until I came to Colby, so it was never a big deal of what I self-identified as. In Trinidad, there is segregation between ‘Black’ and ‘Indian’ but ‘Indian’ is never linked to ‘Asian.’

⁴⁵ Well actually I either check off Black, Hispanic, and Asian or if we can only pick one, I rotate, but I’m sure that’s inappropriate to put in this...also I learnt recently that my dad does the same thing.

Essentially, I am confused. My internal struggles have motivated me to further work to create a comfortable and equal atmosphere regarding race.

This year's retreat focused on *Millennials* and the capabilities and responsibilities of my generation. What are we passionate about? Are we over technologized? What challenges do we face? This retreat shaped my attitude about the current Colby student body. I, along with many others, have been frustrated with Colby's apathy, complacency, ignorance and inactivity. I believe that through this project I will be able to find the root of these emotions and offer solutions to strengthening my generation's grasp of multicultural issues.

My Last Chance to Take Action

This year, as a senior, by working on this Senior Scholar's project and applying to graduate school for a career in Higher Education Student Affairs (with the intention of working in Multicultural Affairs Centers then eventually becoming a Dean of Students⁴⁶), I have had the opportunity to critically and thoroughly reflect upon my experiences with multiculturalism. I think every student of difference has two choices: assimilate or embrace the obligations that come with their identity. I chose the latter. Until that moment in CCOR, I was very content living in a bubble at Colby. I was accepting my position within the institution instead of challenging its oppressive nature. I have had extraordinary academic opportunities at Colby, but my ability to be *just* a student has been compromised. I do remember feeling that I wasn't as smart as my peers because of my inner-city public school education that couldn't compare to their private, prep, or top ranked public schooling. While I worked and studied very hard for

⁴⁶ And ultimately a President of a University – don't tell anyone!

the past three years, I cannot deny that often my studies took second place to my personal wellness and extra-curricular activities. I found learning opportunities outside of the classroom on many occasions, because I was unsatisfied with what I was being taught. I chose to do this work, and it not a decision that I have yet regretted. (I will also be continuing this work as I am going onto Graduate School at University of Michigan for Higher Education and will be working in a Multicultural Affairs Residential Assistantship!)

I believe the combination of my experiences has put me in the position to question the perception and promotion of multiculturalism at Colby College. When the Associate Dean and Director of the Pugh Center, Shontae Praileau resigned in October from her position—after only serving 90 days, the problems that exist on this campus were emphasized. I began to ask myself why isn't multiculturalism more mainstream? Why is multiculturalism always some sort of after thought by our campus resources such as the student newspaper⁴⁷ and by the administration? Why is there a lack of support for students of difference and further why is only staff position mainly concerned with multiculturalism dysfunctional? Why has it taken so long to fill the open position during this academic year? How can we successfully cooperate with an administration that lacks transparency? How can we implement institutional change in order to create a balance of power and an inclusive campus? Through my work on this project, I intend to address these questions and suggest solutions to improve Colby.

⁴⁷ Sonia vs. The Echo, 2010

APPENDIX III

Exploring the Digest

Rally for Real Multiculturalism Posting

Every year campus buildings are defaced with racist graffiti, students of color are harassed or ignored and cultural celebrations are co-opted as opportunities to consume copious amounts of alcohol. This racism is so pervasive that it often becomes quietly omnipresent. It is so rampant that we often lose faith that an alternative will be sought. If you reject racism, if you reject bigotry, if you reject the commodification of culture, it is time to take a stand. We need to be more visible in our objection to racism than the racism itself. This rally is about being just as loud, just as pervasive, just as rampant, just as omnipresent as the racism that exists. It is time to show solidarity in our outrage and seek real manifestations of multiculturalism. If it is more important to you to improve race relations on this campus than it is to drink beer, you belong beside us on the Miller steps on Friday at 3pm and you belong with us in our boycott of Saturday's Cinco de Mayo party. Boycott these t-shirts, boycott this party, boycott racism.

Mark Tappan's Digest on Outsiders, Cinch de Mayo

In most instances of difference there is also a factor of inequality--inequality of status and power--leading to a situation in which one group, the "insider" or "dominant" group, has power, privilege, and control, while another group, the "outsider" or "subordinate" group, lacks power, privilege, and control. A commitment to social justice requires that we work toward the elimination of inequality-but that work, to be effective, must occur in the context of mutual understanding and respect.

To that end, I offer ten general principles that describe the dynamics of power and privilege that typically result from situations of inequality:

1. Insiders view, describe, interpret, and judge outsiders through the lens of the insiders' own rules, structures, roles, values, etc.; outsiders typically do not "measure up" to those standards.
2. The behaviors and norms of the insider group become more pronounced when outsiders arrive/try to enter the group.
3. Outsiders are expected to assimilate to the culture of the insiders; insiders are not expected to assimilate (or accommodate) to the culture of the outsiders.

4. Outsiders are left to figure out the insiders' group/culture on their own. Usually, they receive feedback only when they are in error.
5. Outsiders look to other outsiders for support in new, unsafe environments.
6. Outsiders' behavior is viewed by insiders as negative (e.g., "angry," "hostile," or "aggressive"), while outsiders are actually feeling confused/vulnerable/unsafe.
7. Little/no time is taken to share/discuss group/cultural differences. Over the long term, in order to survive, outsiders come to know much more about the insiders than insiders know about outsiders.
8. Outsiders are vividly aware of the dynamics of power and privilege in any given situation, while insiders are typically unaware/unconscious of the same dynamics.
9. Insiders focus on the individual intent of their actions (e.g., "I was only joking"), while outsiders focus on the impact of those actions (e.g., "I was hurt/offended/outraged").
10. Insiders focus on individual acts of bias/discrimination/oppression and individual "victims" of those actions, while outsiders focus on patterns of such actions and the systems/structures that support and perpetuate those actions.

These ten principles can be found in the academic literature on privilege and oppression, in both historical and contemporary situations of inequality and oppression, and they emerge in structured experiences that simulate the dynamics of power and privilege, like "Ecotonos" (ask someone who's taken ED 231 what that is) and Jane Elliott's famous "brown eye/blue eyed" experiment. They have also appeared continually and repeatedly on this campus-most recently in the context of the Cinch de Mayo incident, in the posts on this Digest by [concerned students], and in the responses to those posts.

I share these ten principles (at the risk of sounding like I'm "lecturing") because I have found them to be very helpful to me, as a privileged white, male, heterosexual, relatively affluent faculty member, as I struggle to recognize and understand my own blind spots in situations and conversations like the one we currently find ourselves in. I share them, therefore, with the hope that they will help all of us to work toward constructive dialogue (dialogue that is as free as possible of both defensiveness and recrimination), by recognizing how our different experiences impact our awareness and understanding of these dynamics, and by committing to the formation of a genuine learning community in which we all feel safe, respected, and honored.

Luau concerns

As someone who was born and raised in Hawaii, I was deeply offended by SPB's "Hawaiian" Dance and Lu'au. The exoticization of the Hawaiian culture and people masks a brutal history of genocide and forced assimilation. Hawaiians today struggle to maintain a culture, language, and history that has been subjugated by American economic and military interests. The authorization of this "Luau" only affirms the ignorance that pervades the United States when it comes to Native Americans. A lu'au, planned traditionally, is a rich and beautiful event. I hope the next time the administration plans an event like this, they thoroughly research their topic and contact native students instead of relying on false, stereotypical images. I was saddened that an institution so deeply regarded for its intellectual excellence would act in such a racist way.

Dear SPB,

I was deeply disappointed to see that you have still chosen not to publicly apologize for the distasteful and offensive portrayal of Hawaiian culture in this year's Loudness. I came to you on Friday September 5th, in good faith, hoping that you would do the right thing by trying to fix this mess, however, it seems that you do not care about respecting the rights of others. When I met with the president of SPB, Sarah Dallas, all I asked was that SPB release an official apology. I should not have even had to ask for a public apology because that should have been the first step taken after I voiced my unhappiness. I already know how your actions were bigoted and ignorant, your personal apology to me really does my people no good. And now the greater Colby community will think that it is acceptable, once again, to marginalize a group of people with whom they are unfamiliar because your lack of action has given them approval to think so. Thank you, SPB, once again, for exerting your white privilege by choosing to ignore this matter, and I hope you have a clear conscience knowing that every day for the past two weeks you have marginalized one of your peers.

SPB's Apology

Recently, concerns have been raised regarding the cultural sensitivity of SPB events. If any of SPB's programming has caused discomfort, we genuinely apologize. When concerns of cultural sensitivity are raised, SPB works as a team to address concerns and issues carefully and appropriately, and to learn from our mistakes to continue to provide great programming for the student body. The Student Programming Board is made up of primarily volunteer students who donate their time in order to plan a wide variety of events to entertain the campus each weekend. When planning an event it is never our intention to offend anyone, but if an event raises controversy we take all necessary steps to rectify the situation. When concerns were raised recently, the SPB Executive Board came together to discuss these issues, and we continue to address them so that we may learn from this experience. The

Executive Board is made up of nine members, and when a concern arises we discuss it as a group before responding, in order to cover all sides and come to a unanimous decision on future actions we will take. We recognize that a mistake was made, and have taken the opportunity to learn from it and improve the organization as a whole. If you have any questions, concerns, or programming ideas we are always eager to hear them. Though our formal application process is over we are always looking for more members to join the organization. Additionally, all of the SPB General Board meetings are open to the public to attend. Our next meeting is on Monday September 29th in Cotter. We hope to see you there!

Vampire

Hello all, I normally never ever write on the discourse. Heck, I hardly ever even read the thing. But the substantive, thoughtful back-and-forth I've seen on the discourse in recent weeks, on the subject of ethnic and sectarian strife amidst our school's confines, has made me question the very assumptions I hold as a white, tax-paying heterosexual. I never thought I could relate to this discourse. I was wrong. Let me be clear: -I think there is value to a substantive discussion of racial and pecuniary issues here at Colby. -I think engagement on these issues would be great. However, I think most of the discussion has constituted an opportunity to strut and preach. -I think there is a silent majority at Colby that would like to engage in a substantive dialogue on race, free from hectoring and mutually alienating arguments. We need someone to kickstart that. That person is me. I say, proudly, that I am 1/2 Transylvanian-American, and, equally confidently, am full Vampire. Vampires built this country. We are an integral part of the American dream. There are no limits, solar or otherwise, on what my people have accomplished. My grandfather came here on a boat -- and not just any boat. A boat on which he'd killed everyone. He sailed that boat all the way to New York City, where he was welcomed with open arms and open caskets by the city's storied undead community. Never have my nocturnal habits, occasional acts of murder, nor asthma kept me from achieving all I wanted to. Colby has been a big part of that. And that's why the events of 10/15, a day that will live in infamy, are so disturbing. Garlic Fest. Even the words send a tingle up my leg. Garlic Fest. Garlic Fest. At two dining halls. I had to eat at FOSS. I spent the rest of the day in immortal fear that I would be stunned by a sudden gust of unwanted garlic. I become a mess on that stuff, as anyone who knew me freshmen year can attest to. That such a wanton act of intolerance would occur without any thought or consideration for my feelings is unconscionable. My request is humble: if the staff of SGA, SPB, and Dining Service do night resign by sundown, I will -- well, you know. I look forward to a healthy and sanguine dialogue. - X

Smart Comments on Cinch de Mayo

1. "All too often we make mistakes in our understanding of the world around us and we say things to offend people, even when we often don't

mean to. However, the biggest mistake we can make, and the most unforgivable in my view, is the choice to remain willfully ignorant...I believe that Colby does not want to stand for ignorance, but I believe that many of us do not fully understand what ignorance is, and therefore remain unaware of stereotypes and prejudices we are supporting through our silence." (AM)

2. "I don't know how often the general population at this school takes the time to think about what it's like to be a racial minority especially here where there is no one to represent your cultural background except for a handful of people, in some cases it's really just you. It's very easy to feel isolated and unwanted. Ignorance is dangerous and hurtful, there is nothing innocent about it." (KP)

3. "It should be obvious by now that intentionality is not the issue at the heart of this debate. No one sets out to cause pain to his or her peers. But I am hopeful that from this, we as a community can come to terms with our ignorance and motivate ourselves to become educated about cultures about which we know little." (CC)

4. "Our aim as Colby students should be to learn from unintentional mistakes and be apologetic for the ones we've made already-and that's just about the amount of growing up that should be expected of us." (SB)

5. "Experiencing the pain that comes from a consistently generalized and marginalized culture does not lead to "self-righteousness" but justified frustration. It is unfair and completely disrespectful to tell students who were genuinely offended by this unintentional racism that it was not "legitimate" enough to warrant their outrage." (RH)

6. "White privilege is not meant to be an attack on white people, or an invitation to point out all of the ways in which white people suffer as well, but rather an appeal to focus on minority groups' struggles to enjoy the same rights as mainstream America." (JO)

How did we reach this point of casting blame and jumping to the defense? What happened to trying to understand and end ignorance? It upsets me that a group of students were offended and instead of trying to see things from their perspective there is a greater investment in determining if their hurt is justified. I believe that when one is offended it shouldn't be determined as trivial because then what matters? What can be determined as important? Who decides what is worth discussing and debating? On campus, racism occurs every day and it is ignored. Yes, everyone is faced with discrimination, but some can deal with it publicly knowing that they have support, while others must behave politely and privately handle their conflicts because they are the spokesperson of an underrepresented group. Some get to declare their feelings and have it taken seriously, while others voice their opinion and are challenged for having one. I would like to encourage everyone to take some time today and see things from the other perspective. Maybe it will help.

President Adam's note

To the Colby Community:

The past weekend - thanks to Halloween celebrations and the performance of a comedy troupe - many members of our community were left hurt and angry and wondering why some at Colby seem unable to observe the most basic requirements of respect in this small and culturally diverse community. I understand and share their anger and frustration. I have trouble understanding why, after so much recent conversation about the destructive effects of stereotypes and experience with those effects, some members of our community chose to celebrate by wearing a sombrero and carrying a Mexican beer, or putting on an Afro-style wig and "dressing up" as a "black man" for Halloween. Why use a Cinch de Mayo party, or any other theme party or event that co-opts and ridicules a meaningful cultural observance, as an excuse to tap a keg? Obviously, these stereotypes are specifically offensive to many members of our community and generally offensive to caring persons of all ethnic groups. So why do some among us continue to find ethnic and racial stereotypes acceptable? Why do professional comedians, from the local comedy club to Comedy Central to a stage right here on our campus this weekend, continue to tell offensive jokes about race and ethnicity? Why do people laugh at such jokes? My frustration stems in part from my image of the kind of community we aspire to be. We are supposed to be wiser than stereotypes. We are supposed to care about one another. We ought to be able to use our brains and hearts to insure that we all interact with respect for one another. We are a very small place - how can we exclude a single person from the utter assurance that he or she belongs on Mayflower Hill? You have heard me talk in the past about how critical free expression is to a community engaged in intense intellectual discourse. And about the discomfort that ought to attend some of your finest moments at Colby - times when your ideas are questioned, respectfully but vigorously, and, perhaps, your mind is changed. About those life-altering moments a liberal arts education is meant to deliver, times of struggle and of coming to grips with a world that has expanded beyond your previous ability to imagine. But the value of free expression does not relieve us of the compelling responsibility to respect one another. And it does not free us from the obligation to act and speak responsibly, especially where our differences are concerned. It does not permit us to employ the excuse of ignorance - and leave it at that -- when we may have inadvertently but clearly offended individuals or groups through the employment of racial or ethnic stereotypes. I believe that all of us bear the responsibility to speak out on each other's behalf, to care for each other, and to examine ourselves and root out attitudes that are so often based on intellectual and social laziness. It's easier to promote a stereotype than to challenge it. Colby people are too smart to accept the easy path. And so, exercising my own responsibility to speak out, I appeal to all of us to pull together in defense of this community and its values - of humane behavior, civility, responsible thought and expression, and rigor of inquiry, especially where it concerns ourselves and the way we treat one another. As opportunities arise to discuss these matters in the days,

weeks, and months ahead, I urge all of us to participate, in community.
Sincerely, William D. Adams President

The Problem

How can one honestly state that "a majority of the campus doesn't condone racism, sexism, homophobia, religious intolerance, etc"? That is EXACTLY the problem. The Colby community condones racism, hatred and discrimination. By refusing to address the problem WE have created the awful environment that we find ourselves in today. Every single student is responsible; every single student has allowed discrimination and racism to infect the Colby community. WE ARE ALL TO BLAME. Pinning the blame on a "minority" is an obvious effort to rid yourself of any responsibility in the situation. Moreover, it is entirely ineffective and discourages a true campus wide discourse. We must all become aware of how our actions, or lack of, have further contributed to the problem. If an individual chooses not to see himself as part of the problem, he will not see the need for his involvement in the solution. For a solution to be possible, all students must be ready to change. I can almost understand how a student in a position of privilege would see the "attitude of outrage" coming from victims of discrimination as problematic. Trust me, the attitude of outrage is warranted and is absolutely necessary. It is a result of the majority refusing to hear the thoughts, feelings, and hurt of the victimized for far too long. Had we opened our ears earlier, we would have recognized that serious problems existed and perhaps have re-evaluated our treatment of others. But we, the dominant majority, did not listen. Now can you understand where the outrage is coming from??? Students who have been constantly ignored and marginalized have every right to feel and express outrage. We have all committed micro-aggressions. We are all guilty of discrimination. Until we can all open our eyes to this fact no progress will be made. We are ALL part of the Colby community. We have ALL created an environment in which discrimination is acceptable. We must ALL be part of the solution. With hope for change, X

Dialogue, Not Debate

As you are all aware, the past few weeks at Colby have been filled with controversy. Whether it is the events of Halloween weekend, including the comedy show, or the sit-in in Pulver last Thursday, the whole of Colby is talking about the nature of the racial dynamic on campus. These are complex and controversial issues. As members of the Colby Community it is important that we engage with these issues in more ways than just reading the civil discourse. There is a forum for that engagement this Wednesday, November 12 at 7 pm in Page Commons. There will be context provided before breaking into smaller groups to discuss your feelings and reactions to the events as well as questions about the greater impact of these events on life at Colby. - How do you

characterize the current racial dynamic on campus? - How do you characterize your own experience within this dynamic? - Wherever you are in this spectrum, what would you like to say about the dynamic? - What change would you like to propose or see take place? Come engage in positive discussions about these questions and make your voice heard.

Dean Terhune's e-mail

To the Colby Community: I am writing to you today to share details of a deeply disturbing series of events which took place on campus very early this morning. At approximately 1:30am today, as the SPB dance in Page was winding down, a Colby security officer discovered a student in medical distress in the Pugh Center and summoned members of Colby Emergency Response for assistance. While the CER team treated the ill student, a couple of dozen other students began gathering around the scene. First one student, and then a second student, attempted to intervene with the efforts of the CER team and were restrained by Colby security officers, who, concerned for the safety of the ill student, the CER members and the crowd of on-lookers, called the Waterville Police Department for assistance. Officers from a number of law enforcement agencies, jurisdictions, including the Kennebec County Sheriff and the Maine State Police, responded to the campus and arrested the two Colby students who were interfering with CER and security. Both students were taken into custody and sent to the Kennebec County Jail in Augusta. A short time later, in a separate but apparently related incident, a third Colby student was arrested for disorderly conduct related to an incident with a Waterville Police Department officer. That student, too, was taken to Augusta. And, lastly, in a truly senseless act of destruction, at some point last night twelve windows in Runnals and one in Foss were broken and are being repaired or replaced by PPD. This is a profoundly distressing series of events that are in no way reflective of the sense of personal responsibility and mutual respect which are hallmarks of the Colby community. We are eager to gather as many facts related to these incidents as possible. Now, and in the coming days members of the Dean of Students staff, including me, will be reaching out to students in an attempt to understand what happened this morning any why. I strongly encourage students who witnessed what happened this morning to contact me, campus security and/or their advising deans to help us, as a community, to deal with this critically important matter.

Martin's Report excerpt

In the early morning hours of Sunday, April 12, 2009, there was a series of encounters between Colby College security personnel, students, and CER (Colby Emergency Response) responders that resulted in the physical restraint of two students of color and their arrest by Waterville police officers. The restraints and arrests occurred as a result of events beginning within the SOBHU (Students Organized for Black and Hispanic Unity) room and ultimately moving out and into the Pugh Center as a dance attended by well over 100 Colby students was ending.

The function room where the dance was being held was separated from the Pugh Center by a very short hallway. Almost all student witnesses to the events of that morning were very critical of the extent and duration of the restraint of the two students by Colby Security and the resulting arrests by the Waterville Police Department.

These events received coverage in the campus newspaper and local news outlets. A segment of the restraint of the students was captured on video and distributed across campus as well as on the Internet. A portion of the captured video showed students being restrained and immobilized on the floor and also recorded a student being sprayed in the face with pepper spray. The College administration received numerous emails and telephone calls from members of all College constituencies questioning the efficacy of the means used against the students and the security/safety of students – particularly students of color. At the same time, the administration received emails and communications from other members of the same constituencies supporting security's handling of the situation.

Why is my sexuality funny?

I believe that, when living in a community, one must understand that they will do detrimental things to their peers and one's peers will do the same thing back. Whether these harmful exchanges are on purpose or not does not matter to me... stuff happens.

A general focus on not hurting other people is an ideal for me. I can't spend all of my time walking on eggshells to make sure other people don't get hurt, and I don't expect others to either. But I have something to say about homosexual jokes at Colby.

I have been to a few performances by acapella groups on campus this semester, and I really enjoy the shows. There are some really great singers at Colby and I really love pop songs.

However, I have realized a prevalence of jokes in these shows centered around male to male sexual attraction. A large amount of the songs performed by the Blue Lights tonight had some form of this 'humor.' I laughed at some of it, but there is only a certain amount of homosexual jokes that I can take good-heartedly.

Why is two guys having an attraction for one another so funny?

Please don't try and tell me "Oh... well it's funny because it's two straight guys pretending to be gay."

Why is my sexuality something to laugh at?

Political correctness

I have never followed civil discourse till today. I just went through a couple of posts by X, X and X. The posts were quite amusing. I respect

everyone's point of view and I am not here to contradict or criticize anyone's post. I just found X view on "political correctness" interesting.

"This is a big issue here at Colby, especially with being "politically correct." Being PC is way too clean, too boring."

I completely agree with X. "Political correctness" is overrated in Colby. It is overrated to such an extent that I feel suffocated sometimes. The thing I like the most about Colby is that I get an opportunity to hang out with kids from all around the world. In my experience, the best way I have got to know more about these kids is by breaking the barrier of "Political Correctness". Once I broke this barrier, all the conversations I had with these kids were carefree, amusing, educating and most of all humorous.

I came to Colby College from a small homogeneous society in Nepal. I did not have any international exposure. I was really narrow-minded and I had a lot stereotypes about people from different parts of the world. In my first semester of Colby I had hard times dealing with my conversations with some kids. These kids were always making really "politically incorrect jokes" about my culture, country and people. I would feel like punching these kids. However, as time went on I started taking those "politically incorrect jokes" as humors and I started enjoying the conversations. I also started making these so called "politically incorrect" humors about these people. In our carefree conversations, I have broken so many stereotypes about these people and got to know more about them. These carefree conversations also give me opportunity to clarify to them the wrong stereotypes they have about my country and culture. When I make "politically incorrect" jokes, I don't mean to offend anyone. I respect everyone and I don't have prejudice against any race, sex, culture and whatever category human beings have been divided into.

For me, breaking the barrier of "political correctness" is just limited to international community. I find it disappointing and limiting. May be I am wrong, but I find most of the American kids really "politically correct". I really appreciate their "political correctness" since they make so much effort to make sure that they won't offend anyone. Moreover, sometimes consequences of making "politically incorrect jokes" can be really bad if the other person is really sensitive and makes a big deal out of it. However, I have a lot of respect for Colby kids. I think they are really sensitive and caring; therefore, I don't think they can make "politically incorrect" humors to offend anyone. Therefore, I think, we should stop overrating "political correctness"/PC and engage into carefree conversations with each other and get to know more about each other in an amusing way. The best way to know more about each other in this multi-cultural world is by getting over with "political correctness".

For many, people like me, breaking the barrier of "political correctness" are like coming out of their comfort zone. However, I think it is worth

it. Move out of your comfort zone. You can only grow if you are willing to feel awkward and uncomfortable when you try something new.

Double standards

This past evening I was quite excited to go to Foss for dinner for two reasons: 1) I was hungry and 2) I was sporting an artfully rendered advertisement for the woodsmen's Mud Meet.

To be specific, I was wearing chainsaw chaps that showed off my outer derriere cheeks, which read "MUD MEET THIS SATURDAY" in marker. No x-rated parts of my body were shown; my outfit, though it flouted public decorum (and perhaps some dining hall rule I don't know about) could have been featured in a PG-13 movie and was probably equivalent to wearing a skimpy bathing suit bottom. I entered Foss with the intention of leaving to cover up more, if anyone was to tell me that he/she was offended and/or uncomfortable with my outfit.

My meal was ruined due to the behavior of one kitchen worker. This kitchen worker repeatedly walked upstairs to the card-swiper, and to other parts of Foss (where the worker is not stationed) in order to organize a team of, I don't know, villigantes, to stake out the dining hall. This worker (and the others who had abandoned their work) then found and approached the table I was sitting at. The one worker I specifically mentioned then stepped in closer to me and whispered the following in my ear:

"You should expect to get raped if you dress like that."

DON'T GET ME WRONG. If this worker was offended by my outfit and told me about it, I would've happily changed, as my room is pretty close to the dining hall. But to be told that because of what I was wearing, I was "asking for it"? Let's just say it ruined my dinner. I believe that had I been a male student under the same circumstances, this never would have occurred.

NESCAC Comparison

Multicultural Affairs Positions in the President's Office (or Reports and Works Directly with the College President):

Amherst: Special Assistant to the President for Diversity & Inclusion

Bates: Special Assistant to the President

Bowdoin: Special Assistant to the President for Multicultural Affairs

Connecticut College: Senior Diversity Officer (who is also the Dean of the College)

Hamilton: Chief Diversity Officer

Middlebury: Dean of College and Chief Diversity Officer

Trinity: Dean of Multicultural Affairs and Senior Diversity Officer

Tufts: Executive Director of Institutional Diversity

Wesleyan: Vice President for Institutional Partnerships and Chief Diversity Officer

Williams: Vice President for Strategic Planning & Institutional Diversity

Other than a position in the President's Office, are there other members of the Staff specifically and officially concerned with Multicultural Affairs?:

Amherst: yes, Coordinator & 2 Co-Directors for the Multicultural Resource Center

Bates: yes, Director of the Office of Intercultural Education / Dean of Students, Program Coordinator

Bowdoin: yes, Associate Dean of Multicultural Student Programs

Connecticut College: yes, Director of Unity House/Dean of Multicultural Affairs, Associate Director, Assistant Director, Administrative Assistant, and a number of faculty involved The Center for the Comparative Study of Race and Ethnicity, a faculty-driven think tank on campus, provides a hub for researching and teaching race and ethnicity across the disciplines

Hamilton: yes, Diversity Coordinating Council

Middlebury: yes, several 'Centers'

Trinity: yes, Associate Director of Multicultural Affairs, Graduate Assistant/P.R.I.D.E Coordinator & Supervisor of the Cultural Houses

Tufts: yes, supervisors for LGBT Center, Latino Center, Women Center, Asian American Center, Africana Center, etc.

Wesleyan: yes, Dean for Diversity and Student Engagement

Williams: yes, Director of the Multicultural Center, Faculty Director, Program Coordinator, Assistant Director, Assistant to the Vice President, Associate Dean for Institutional Diversity, Director of Special Academic Programs, Assistant for Special Academic Programs

Mental Health

On Thursday, November 4 at 7pm in the Pugh Center, Active Minds and SHOC will be hosting an event called "Narratives of Mental Health: Stories From Colby Students." Active Minds has been collecting anonymous stories for the past year about Colby students' struggles with mental illness.

On Thursday, these stories will be read in order to break the silence surrounding these issues. Statistics show that 1 in 4 people in the United States currently suffer from a mental illness and only 25% of those people receive treatment. Many students at Colby suffer but are too ashamed or embarrassed to tell anyone: this event is meant to show people that they are not alone.

Come support your peers.

Sexual Harassment

I would like to bring attention to an issue that has become far too common at Colby. Yesterday as I was writing my final paper, I received a note from a Colby male where I was referred to as a "trollop." In the interest of time, I will keep the background on this story brief, as it is rather irrelevant to the point I am trying to make. Basically, I was asked to move from my study spot late Friday night so that a student, with whom I am not familiar, could watch TV in that spot. Politely or not, I refused. About an hour later, he presented my roommate and me with a rather lengthy note where I was repeatedly described as a prostitute. The problem I have is that whether or not I was rude to this person is completely independent of my sexuality. No one has the right to comment on my sex life in any way, especially in a derogatory manner. How many people I have slept with is my business alone, and it cannot be used as an insult. Furthermore, any woman's level of promiscuity should not be a source of derision. I will not tolerate having my personal life judged because someone considers me to be rude. The two have nothing to do with each other.

To this person I would say: how dare you think you have any right to comment on my life beyond the short interaction that we had. My personal life has nothing to do with you. And I fail to see why calling me a "slut" has become a common insult in our culture and at Colby. This is not the first time I have dealt with similar name-calling. Whether or not I am a "trollop," as you so eloquently put it, is my right. I will not stand for you to attack my character using words that belittle my sexuality.

I would wager, that if the person who wrote this note to me, had thought he had been wronged by another male, he would have directed any insults in a relevant way. If this person thinks I was rude, let him tell me so. A rude female does not equal a promiscuous one. Using words synonymous with promiscuity as an insult shows a clear misunderstanding of the empowered choices that women make regarding their sexuality. I am asking the Colby College community to stop using these words in such a flippant manner; they are both hurtful and irrelevant.

His response

Suffice it to say, I enjoyed reading your diatribe on the civil discourse. It truly shows that you took my intent to heart. What I do have issue with however, is your assumption that trollop was used to belittle your sexuality in particular. Did you notice the first three words of the poem I wrote? They were "to two trollops." Alliteration or Consonance? No, it must be a patriarchal plan to keep you down.

I will return to the subject of male and female relations momentarily, but first it's necessary that I correct some errors you made in your composition. You say that I wanted to watch TV. This is patently false.

I sought to watch a film. It's all about the difference in connotation. If you had written "so that he could watch an art film for a class and for enjoyment," then you would be correct. By writing that I wanted to watch TV you make it seem as though I wanted to aimlessly flip through the channels while desperately searching for something to watch. This was not the only error of course. You label my poem a "note" as though it were simply a piece of prose that I dashed off in anger. Not in the slightest. I took time to write and dedicate a poem to you "Muses"; at the very least respect that it was a poem, not a note.

Back to the subject of male and female relations, and how words and connotation play a large part. Having established that I used the word "trollop" for its alliterative effect, let's look at its precise definition. The American Heritage Dictionary lists the primary definition as "A woman regarded as slovenly or untidy." I believe you purposefully chose to overlook this definition, and instead went to the secondary definition, where a trollop is a strumpet. This of course would be doing a disservice to strumpets everywhere, many of whom are polite people. Would you not say you were slovenly that evening? Were you not untidy as you slaved away writing your paper?

With the use and intent of the word trollop in mind, let's take care of some assertions you made later in your diatribe. You said, "No one has the right to comment on my sex life in any way, especially in a derogatory manner." Actually, I do. It's your choice to not listen, or to respond to my comments. I have every right to comment on anything, but that doesn't necessarily mean you have to give my statements credence. I reserve every right to comment upon your life based upon the short interaction that we had. That's the problem of induction; I drew a conclusion based upon the experience I had with you.

Another assertion you made, although not as egregious, is still worthy of comment. You wrote, "I would wager, that if the person who wrote this note to me, had thought he had been wronged by another male, he would have directed any insults in a relevant way." Well, don't go to the racetrack, because your record on wages so far is 0 for 1. If I had been insulted by a male I probably wouldn't have been so polite as to use trollop. I would have preferred the more vulgar "pig-fucking degenerate necrophiliac." See, I really don't care about your feelings or emotions. They get in the way of reason all too often.

To sum this all up, don't assume that I am calling you a prostitute. Recognize poetic license when you see it. This revelation should now cast your entire diatribe into doubt. I didn't call you a trollop because I don't respect a woman's right to be promiscuous; rather, it is because you were rude, slovenly, and generally untidy. Had you taken the time to research the word you wouldn't have jumped to such conclusions.

I am worried about the community...

To Colby,

I am worried about our community, and about the way we are treating each other. This week's incident is not the first act of hate on our campus this semester, however the response of Mr. Ewer in the Digest was, in my opinion, the most egregious thus far. Like it or not we are all on the same Sloop Horn (for those who don't know that's the ship on top of Miller Library). Colby is a small place and we have to see each other, learn from each other, and above all, show regard for one another's feelings. This is the nature of the beast; you have to care about those around you since you see them everyday. If anyone on Mayflower Hill does not want this small, insular setting, I suggest transferring to a place that can give you what you seek. There are many larger universities where one can move through the day with little regard for those around them. Colby is a civil place with community standards, of which respect is paramount. I challenge anyone to argue that they want to live in a community where people show no regard for the emotions of others.

On the Subject of discourteousness, I am emotionally and spiritually concerned for X and his comments. Anyone who cannot make the simple distinction between fundamental literary concepts like authorial intent and social implication is going to end up causing a lot of hurt with their intellectual missteps. What you write, what you mean, and what some one else gleans are different, and these distinctions matter. Regardless of how you said it, or meant it to be understood, you chose to use language that is demeaning, hurtful, and offensive. Like it or not, language is a cultural product, and as such has meanings beyond your control.

Additionally, I think you are going to have a very lonely life if you were sincere in your initial post, boasting: "See, I really don't care about your feelings or emotions. They get in the way of reason all too often." All human relationships are based in balancing your emotion with the feelings of others. If you cannot master this elemental practice, there are many resources on and off campus that may provide assistance. I encourage you to reconsider your position for your own sake, and for the sake of our community. Colby has a lot to offer, and you might find something wonderful here, even something that might make you care about others.

I write this, not to condemn Brett, though his actions, including the use of profane language, sexism, and an attitude of extreme entitlement are certainly lamentable. I really want to ask how we, including myself as a student leader, actively create a campus where a first year student would think this behavior is remotely acceptable. What have we done that someone just entering our school would act like this? Brett, you are a first-year, and so often

that is used to excuse bad behavior; I am not excusing you because of your age. However, you have clearly internalized a culture, or sub-culture, that is not reflective of the Colby I know, and the Colby I would like to see.

All of this is to ask a few important questions of you, Brett, but also our school writ large:

- 1) What kind of place do we want Colby to be?
- 2) What are our values and how are those reflected in the way we treat each other?
- 3) What are we doing that is leading us so far astray from these goals?
- 4) And most importantly, how can bring back our good and save our community from this regrettable path?

I encourage everyone to ponder these things in the coming weeks and make an effort to move Colby back in the right direction.

Hate is Not a Colby Value

This morning, as I walked out to my car, I was utterly dismayed to find the frost on my windows vandalized with three choice expressions: "Gay, Fuck you, and Fag." I cannot fathom what motivated someone to write these words on my car, but it serves as a stark reminder of how prevalent homophobia and disrespect of difference are on this campus.

This past weekend was S.H.O.U.T.: a weekend committed to celebrating diversity and encouraging student-to-student conversation on the ways in which we can build meaningful community and relationships on the hill and in the world. We demonstrated a positive commitment to social integrity to our visiting prospective students. This is also Women's History Month- if you have not noticed the fury of activity on campus, you're missing out on a display of great student organization and passion for social change. It is with this in mind that the attacks on my car are even more disheartening. I thus challenge every student on campus to treat other students with respect and to hold the Colby community to higher standards. We are among the most educated people in the entire world. If you graduate Colby without an understanding of how hateful, despicable, and terrorizing the word "fag" is to many, you have missed out on the greatest gift of a college education. Our time at Colby is aimed at preparing us for the real world, and you are simply not prepared for life after college if you employ homophobic language to convey "anger." Doing so is a reflection on your lack of humility, respect, awareness, and intelligence. People in the world outside Colby will look up to you for your privileges: using the word fag only reinforces the belittlement of other human beings and will perpetrate these hurtful micro-aggressions as an acceptable practice. I realize that words like gay and fag are used colloquially, but

there is ultimately no excuse for an educated college student to not know the implications of such language. I find the contradictions between the positive message we send out our prospective students and the negative messages we send to each other disappointing, and I am upset.

I do not write this post as an attack on the individual who is responsible. But as a straight student, I cannot fathom the fear that such language could have caused had a gay student found this vandalism on their own car- and this alarms me. And, as a senior who has called Colby home for nearly four years, I am hurt that we cannot treat each other with a greater sense of dignity. We all live here together with the goal of high academic and social achievement. Do not discredit the power of your education by ignorantly using words that have such hateful meaning.

Micro-aggressions

To the Colby College Community (especially professors),

In the recent weeks, there has been an influx of instances in which I (and many other students of color) have been called everything BUT my/our correct name(s). I know it must be difficult to distinguish between the "Black" students on this campus (after all, there are SOOOO many of us here) but please realize that calling me X,X,X,X, or X etc will NOT get you a response. Feel free to stop being so disrespectful, and LEARN my name. If I can call our community members by their correct names (let's be brutally honest...Colby's very White), I'm pretty sure everyone else can as well.

Thanks in advance,

X

PS- I know Colby students love to start apologizing when others feel offended, but please spare me your apologetic emails.

APPENDIX IV

The Broken Contract: Colby's Commitment to Diversity

To understand multiculturalism and diversity at Colby, it is important to examine our institutions guiding principles. In June of 2004, The President's Office of Colby College adopted the following statement on diversity:

Colby College is dedicated to the education of humane, thoughtful, and engaged persons prepared to respond to the challenges of an increasingly diverse and global society and to the issues of justice that arise therein. The College also is committed to fostering a fully inclusive campus community, enriched by persons of different races, gender identities, ethnicities, nationalities, economic backgrounds, ages, abilities, sexual orientations, political beliefs, and spiritual values. We strive to confront and overcome actions and attitudes that discourage the widest possible range of participation in our community, and we seek to deepen our understanding of diversity in our daily relationships and in our dealings as an institution.⁴⁸

This statement declares that the college is prepared and determined to:

1. Actively acknowledge and combat challenges that hinder societal justice. This may include actions and attitudes that sets limits and prevents community growth.
2. Create a fully inclusive campus community (implying that every member will feel safe and have the ability to voice concerns.)
3. Work towards the daily development of an understanding of diversity.

Have these "promises" been kept? Is the Colby community able to trust its administration? Has Colby upheld this statement of diversity or is it providing lip service to the community? Does the diversity statement even say anything valuable, relevant or concrete to improving Colby's current state?

⁴⁸ <http://www.colby.edu/diversity>

Today, most American Colleges have a diversity statement noting the college's plans, goals and intentions for supporting multiculturalism and creating an inclusive community. 'Imperfect execution' of these goals, however, causes a lack of trust in the Administration as well as a myriad of communal problems: "when the university is *not* perceived as committed to its stated diversity goals, there are higher perceptions of hostility and discrimination among students, lower grades for African American students, and increased feelings of isolation and alienation among various groups of students" (Pepper, Tredennick, Reyes, 2010).

An effective Diversity Statement must do more than "have several broad goals, including developing an understanding of diversity; infusing attention to differences by race, sexual orientations, and gender; and creating greater equity and parity in the experience and outcomes of individuals from diverse backgrounds" (Kezar, 2008) it must successfully follow through in achieving these goals and making its progress transparent to the campus community. There are no expectations for perfection, but when problematic issues arise it is important for the Administration to address the failures. This can actually "create a 'bad is good' paradox in which positive perceptions are built by negative comments. By admitting to wrongdoing or to falling short of its expressed commitment to stated diversity goals, the organization is perceived as committed to its ideals" (Pepper, et al., 2010).

To explain the diversity statement, the administration published on the official Colby website (can be found by accessing: <http://www.colby.edu/diversity>) a thorough assessment of what diversity means to the college, Colby's history of diversity, what diversity requires, and why we must engage in diversity. Reviewing this publication, seven years later, the Administration has not achieved much success due to unclear

goals and imprecise methods. This is “a violation of the contract” and has led to a dissatisfied Colby community in regards to multiculturalism (Pepper, et al., 2010). In this section, I will analyze and critique the College’s published assessment of the diversity statement in order to establish the lack of foundation and clarity for multicultural affairs at Colby. This will also expose the reader to an understanding of the College’s language and approach to multiculturalism and the emotions and attitudes it incites in members of the Colby community.

What does diversity mean to the College?

Colby has adopted the term "diverse" to describe the kind of community we hope to build and maintain on Mayflower Hill. Our definition of what constitutes diversity may--and probably should--change over time, but when we promote diversity now we are expressing our commitment to an inclusive campus community, enriched by persons of different races, genders, ethnicities, nationalities, economic backgrounds, ages, abilities, sexual orientations, and spiritual values; to ensuring equal opportunity for all who work or study here; to sustaining a climate of civility, mutual respect and tolerance; to promoting the free and open exchange of ideas, including unpopular ideas; to an open and inclusive governing and decision-making process; and to broadly educating students for life in a complex world.⁴⁹

In short, Colby recognizes that the definition of diversity is continuously changing and it is their responsibility to create an equal experience for all. An ‘equal experience’ is defined as “a climate of civility, mutual respect and tolerance.” These words suggest pacification for the community that limits the learning process, so how would this begin to educate students for “life in a complex world”? The statement recognizes the ability for diversity to change – but does not give any solution or suggestion for how the college will change *with it*. Recognition is not enough; understanding that different groups of people have been cheated will not remedy injustices.

⁴⁹ <http://www.colby.edu/diversity>

What is the history of diversity at Colby?

Before the Civil War, Colby was home to one of the first student abolitionist societies; later in the nineteenth century, Colby was the first all-male college in New England to admit women. More recently, Colby has worked steadily to expand opportunities for less-wealthy students through need-based financial aid, to offer protection against discriminatory treatment and sexual harassment, to enlarge the sphere of participatory decision-making, and to promote full-bodied diversity through the Pugh Community Center, multicultural programming, and diversity-focused curricular opportunities and requirements.

Colby's recently completed strategic plan contains a large number of initiatives intended to enhance diversity at the College. These include efforts to effect change in the stated policies and common practices of the College, as well as in the institution's overall culture.⁵⁰

There is a lack of preservation and celebration of Colby's history of diversity. There has been inconsistency with recorded events that challenges transparency, trust, and most importantly progress for the institution. In addition, The Pugh Community Center (actually know as the Pugh Center) and multicultural programming receives an inadequate amount of support on campus in terms of finance and staffing. The statement suggests that Colby has completed a strategic plan but where are the results? Was it successful? How is success measured? The assertions made are incomplete and unreliable for understanding how diversity is accepted and celebrated by the college.

What does diversity require of the college?

The College's culture reflects our broader national and international culture, marked by the division of people into dominant and subordinate groups. We must pay particular attention to the differences that have the most powerful adverse effects on people's lives. Those differences manifest themselves in our daily interactions, as well as in our widespread institutional practices and policies and can make Colby more challenging and difficult for some. We must find ways to overcome dominant-subordinate divisions in the service of greater inclusion, respect, and recognition throughout the institution. This involves, inevitably, changes in institutional policies and group practices,

⁵⁰ <http://www.colby.edu/diversity>

curricular innovation, a shift in campus climate, and changes in individual behavior. It also requires both strong leadership and broadly shared responsibility in pursuing these diversity initiatives.⁵¹

The presentation of micro-aggressions is ambiguous and minimized: “those differences manifest themselves in our daily interactions...make Colby more challenging and difficult for some.” The understating of the effects of discrimination produces more questions than answers: How can Colby be more difficult for some students? What is the response of members of the community? Where are the resources? What is the plan to effect change? Who is a part of this so-called strong leadership? Who on an administrative level handles areas of multicultural affairs? Who shares the responsibility? The statement attempts to address what the college requires but fails in execution. Therefore, how can these requirements to create inclusiveness be met?

Why should the campus be engaged in diversity?

There may be no way to craft a comprehensive statement about diversity at Colby, or to plan for all future exigencies. But this statement and the initiatives described in our strategic plan represent our current best thinking about this critical area of our shared endeavor. All members of the Colby community are urged to engage this issue. We will be successful in our efforts, and we must be successful, only if we commit ourselves as a community to this effort. Each of us--in our work environments, in our public interactions, and in our personal relationships--must aspire to the goals we have set for ourselves. Our integrity, as well as our success as an institution of higher education, demands nothing less.⁵²

To excuse its own shortcomings, the statement claims that it is impossible to make a comprehensive statement or plan and this is the best the Administration could offer. How is this good enough? It is disappointing and rather shameful that the administration places such low priority on multiculturalism, diversity, inclusion, and social justice that its diversity statement reflects little hope for a “warm” campus

⁵¹ <http://www.colby.edu/diversity>

⁵² <http://www.colby.edu/diversity>

climate. There is a definite incompleteness presented within the statement that projects a positive image but does not negotiate any actual intentions or functions. Further, how often is this statement revisited?

Colby's Statement of Diversity in itself falls short of reassuring members of the community that they are entitled to an equal experience. Additionally the promises made within the statement have not been kept as can be seen during my own time at Colby where there has been a lack of support for multicultural students, mishandling of discrimination, and failure to create a plan that prevents future problems. Students do not believe that this is an inclusive community and as a result we are left disappointed in our administrations approach to diversity. The purpose of this project is to develop an understanding of student's attitudes towards multiculturalism, with special attention paid to race and gender in order to offer suggestions to the institution for improving conditions. According to Adrianna Kezar in *Understanding Leadership Strategies for Addressing the Politics of Diversity*, there are three reasons why evaluating the campus pulse is important:

First, presidents needed to know when it was time to tap allies for support. Allies are much more powerful when used at times of resistances; having allies talk all the time decreases their power and effectiveness. Second, presidents were able to identify if they were pushing the agenda too hard and too fast. By taking the pulse, they can see where they need to slow down again and gain more support...Third, this approach also anticipates forms of resistance and facilitates developing an effective strategy to address resistance in a proactive rather than a reactive manner.

What is the campus climate like at Colby College? Why? What principles and values have we relied on to create this climate? Where can we see improvement? How do we go about making these improvements?

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