2022

Fifty Years of Underrepresented Student Advocacy at One Jesuit Secondary School

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FIFTY YEARS OF UNDERREPRESENTED STUDENT ADVOCACY AT ONE JESUIT SECONDARY SCHOOL

A Dissertation Presented to
The Faculty of the School of Education
Catholic Educational Leadership Program

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

by
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San Francisco
May 2022

Abstract

Across the United States Conference, Catholic and Jesuit secondary schools are experiencing tremendous change in their student demographics. Schools of today are being challenged to consider what true inclusion looks like within their community vis-à-vis students whose racial, economic, sexual and gender identities do not fit the traditional Catholic or Jesuit school mold. The racial and social order of the United States is replicated within Catholic and Jesuit schools, even when those same communities claim to promote values of inclusion and opportunity. History offers valuable insights to school communities grappling with these questions.

This qualitative study centers the efforts of key participants over 50 years as they advocated on a traditional Jesuit school campus to identify, imagine, and implement support for marginalized students. Identifying and exploring the actions of these Jesuit educators within the larger context of social and cultural forces of change that shape schools over time, their oral histories construct a narrative analysis of how one Jesuit secondary school has responded to the gradual diversification of its student body over the last half-century. Findings are centered on four overarching narrative themes: (a) the problem of selective sight; (b) an institution's need for legitimacy; (c) varying levels of acceptance; (d) reform within a colorblind context. Findings explore the organizational tensions between on-campus student advocacy and off-campus social justice efforts, the institutional need for legitimacy towards new initiatives regarding race and difference, contradictions around the acceptance of certain groups or strategies but not others, and how organizational narratives can be changed by individuals through creating spaces of reform.

This study may hold significance for Catholic or Jesuit secondary schools whose demographics are shifting away from a traditional, majority white student population to a more diverse student body. This study may also be used to inform Catholic or Jesuit schools that already have established underrepresented student support structures. As we operate schools in this era of growing awareness and understanding of race, gender, class, and various forms of identity, Jesuit schools will increasingly be asked to accommodate and support a broader profile of student than ever before.

This dissertation, written under the direction of the candidate's dissertation committee and approved by the members of the committee, has been presented to and accepted by the Faculty of the School of Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education. The content and research methodologies presented in this work represent the work of the candidate alone.

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Acknowledgements

I would like to thank The McGrath Institute for Jesuit Catholic Education for their tremendous support of my academic journey. Thank you also to my advisor and dissertation committee chair, Dr. Ursula Aldana. You are such an inspiration to me and undoubtedly to generations of students that will follow. Thank you to my dissertation committee: Dr. Desiree Zerquera and Dr. Genevieve Negron-Gonzales. To Dr. Jane Bleasdale, you helped my 25 year doctoral dream come true! To Dr. Michael Duffy, thank you for your unwavering support.

Deep thanks to my classmates and those who checked in on me along the way: Liliana Deck, my Jesuit friends Plinio Martins SJ, Koko Winandoko SJ, and Lourdu Mummadi SJ. We made it #Team2021 and #Team2022!

Profound thanks to St. Robert's Prep for trusting me to document this piece of the school's history. To my participants, thank you for trusting me with your truth, but most importantly - thank you for transforming St. Robert's. Your advocacy and bravery shaped the lives of hundreds, if not thousands, of students who found a safe place on campus because of you. May God bless you always for your work.

To my husband, Chris, who embraced this journey even though sometimes he had to carry me and the family down the road. I love you *más que ayer*. To my children, remember that nothing is impossible.

This work is dedicated to my mother. She was denied a formal education because she was a woman, she was poor, and she was Mexican. Thank you for giving me and my sister the opportunity you never had. All that you could have been, my students will become.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The face of education has changed over the past 50 years. Public schools are trending towards majority-minority populations (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018, Table 216.50). Suburban Catholic schools see a relative lack of racial and economic diversity while racial minority youth disproportionately remain in urban Catholic schools (Ee et al., 2018; National Catholic Education Association, 2020; Ospino & Weitzel-O'Neill, 2016). Jesuit secondary schools, perceived to be predominantly white and wealthy, have enrolled increasing numbers of students of color since the 1970s (Jesuit Schools Network, 2020). These demographic shifts bring with them more than just numeric change and over the last half-century, concepts such as diversity, equity, and inclusion have taken hold in Catholic schools. For example, as racial minorities joined historically white school communities, the conversation turned to racial diversity. Over time, the effort around racial diversity expanded to include socioeconomic diversity plus gay and lesbian students, and today schools acknowledge and celebrate various identities among students and families (Brosnan, 2001; French, 2017). Equity conversations ask schools to consider who has access and opportunity within a school setting and who does not, to "consider [schools'] role in supporting a dominant white culture" that privileges some and marginalizes others (Brosnan, 2001, p. 471). Schools of today are being challenged to consider what true inclusion looks like within their community. History offers valuable insights to school communities grappling with these questions.

Statement of the Problem

Diversity, equity, and inclusion conversations take on a distinct tone within Catholic and Jesuit schools. Catholic schools teach about recognizing human dignity and the universal

Christian family. Jesuit schools ask their students and graduates to be people *for and with others,* but research on the experiences of underrepresented students in Catholic and Jesuit secondary schools illuminate feelings of marginalization, even within schools that have explicit social justice missions (Aldana, 2016; Parodi-Brown, 2019; Thomas, 2020). Contrary to the schools' intent, underrepresented students in Catholic or Jesuit schools are largely viewed through a lens of tokenism and a culture of tolerance, not a lens of inclusion (Bleasdale, 2014; Simmons, 2012). Additionally, many Catholic and Jesuit school environments place underrepresented identities within a framework of separation and exclusion through curricular and programmatic means (Burke & Gilbert, 2016; Kabadi, 2015; Ospino & Weitzel-O'Neill, 2014). Fortunately, as spaces of tension emerge between a school's philosophical promise and underrepresented students' lived realities, spaces of opportunity have opened up over time. Often absent from the historical record, many Catholic and Jesuit school teachers, counselors, administrators, and staff have formally or quietly provided support for student being marginalized because of their racial, economic, sexual or gender identity.

For generations of students and alumni, these key personnel have made an enormous difference. However, there is an important gap in research related to these teachers, counselors, administrators, and other staff. Little is known about how these adults, who serve a critical role in the lives of many students, identify, imagine, and implement their support of marginalized students. Inspired by a desire to identify and explore the stories of these Jesuit professionals, and in order to understand the forces of change that shape schools over time, this study uses oral history to construct a narrative analysis of the actions of key personnel responding to the gradual diversification of the student body at a Jesuit secondary school over the last half-century. It

examines what has been accomplished in the past 50 years, names the setbacks that occurred, and imagines the work that remains to be done.

Background and Need

Catholic and Jesuit schools each have experienced demographic shifts over time that influence the composition of their school communities today. Parish schools emerged from the spiritual, linguistic, and cultural needs of Catholic European immigrant communities and served as places where students of immigrant backgrounds could learn to assimilate into dominant society (Brinig & Garnett, 2009; Bryk et al., 1993; Darder, 2016; Louie & Holdaway, 2009). Mirroring the prevailing social order, African-American and Native American children were educated in racially separate Catholic schools, a structure and philosophy that remained until the mid-20th century, promoting a philosophy of racial exclusion within Catholic school and parish communities (Franklin, 1996; Noel, 2002). Following the 1954 *Brown v Board of Education* decision, large-scale population shifts drove white students to suburban Catholic schools and left lower-income and racially minoritized students in urban Catholic schools (Bryk, 1993; McGreevy, 1996). Historically, limited numbers of racially and economically minoritized students have attended traditional Jesuit schools, despite directives to provide educational access broadly (Beaumier, 2013; Padberg, 1996). Funding structures, curriculum choices, and legacy admissions continue to create structural barriers to broad educational access, and disproportionately benefit upper-middle class students (Bryk et al., 1993; Beaumier, 2013; Ladewski, 2010; O'Malley, 1993).

In the late 1960s, the Society of Jesus's former Superior General, Pedro Arrupe, issued a directive for Jesuit schools to increase their numbers of racial and economic minorities. In response, minority scholarship programs, targeted admissions efforts, and support programs for

minority students emerged in Jesuit schools (Beaumier, 1993). As deeply traditional Jesuit institutions began to diversify their student population, tensions emerged as marginalized students found it difficult to navigate Jesuit school cultures built around upper-middle class and white cultural norms, particularly those that held assimilation and individual merit as the keys to success (Darder, 2016; Louie & Holdaway, 2009). To mitigate these challenging experiences, Jesuit educators began identifying and implementing support strategies shown to foster positive outcomes for underrepresented students in schools. These include:

- promoting a positive overall school diversity climate (Aldridge et al, 2016; Smith et al., 2020);
- establishing affinity spaces in support of students' identities (Kosciw et al., 2018; Oto & Chikkatur, 2019);
- supporting strong teacher-student relationships (Bernstein-Yamashiro & Noam, 2013; Quin, 2017; Tillery et al., 2013); and
- capitalizing on a shared adult-student identity (Bristol & Martin-Fernandez, 2019; Egalite & Kisida, 2017; Redding, 2019).

And yet, despite these efforts to foster inclusive and accepting Catholic and Jesuit schools, no institution within the United States is untouched by the dominant power structure that centers and values whiteness and heteronormativity while concurrently devaluing the voices, traditions, and cultures of non-white, non-heterosexual communities. As a result, the support strategies identified above may provide moments of refuge for individual students but have failed to actualize a reimagined Jesuit school culture. In order to create change in a systemic way, it is first important to understand the narratives of educators who have sought to make Jesuit campuses more welcoming, inclusive, and responsive places.

Purpose of the Study

Using oral history interviews as its foundation, this study explores the experiences of several key personnel working in one Jesuit school, between 1970-2020, whose central aim was to support students from minoritized groups within their traditional school environment. For over 50 years, these staff members responded to shifting demographics at St. Robert's Prep (a pseudonym), a 170 year old, all-boys Catholic, Jesuit high school. This study hopes to highlight successes as well as setbacks as these educators identified, imagined, and implemented support strategies for underrepresented students.

The narratives for this study were drawn from interviews with two groups of participants. The first were individuals who have reputations as being advocates for underrepresented students. Their legacy of support and philosophy of care for racial, economic, and sexual and gender minority[1] students continues at St. Robert's to this day. Individually and together, they built out scholarship programs, founded affinity spaces, advocated for curricular changes, and promoted increased visibility of marginalized student groups. Many of their efforts have become institutionalized at St. Robert's through either formal programs or school lore. These key personnel are at or near retirement age and several have already retired after decades of dedicated service. The lack of formal records describing their work, the benefit of documenting their efforts, and the desire to understand their impact all underscore the need for this inquiry. The second group of participants served as witnesses to the work of these key advocates and experienced the demographic shift of the student body in their classrooms and programs.

[1] The terminology around gender identity and sexuality is continually evolving ("Terminology," 2019). Identifiers such as LGTBQIA+ may not be sufficient to reflect the broad scope of persons who are marginalized and minoritized within Catholic and Jesuit schools because of their identity. Within this study, therefore, the term "sexual and gender minority youth" is used to refer to a broad category of youth whose sexual and/or gender identities move beyond the heterosexual and cisgender assumption.

Including the voices of this second group adds depth to the study by illuminating how both demographic shift and support efforts were managed by the institution. While St. Robert's Prep is considered a leader among its Jesuit school peers with a progressive philosophy towards Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) work, the school is perceived in the local community as costly and as a predominantly white school. This persistent perception, as well as the imminent retirement of the participants, provide a rationale for this timely study.

Theoretical Framework and Rationale

Bonilla-Silva's (2002, 2015, 2018) concept of color-blind racism explains how contemporary institutions are able to rationalize internal structures that reinforce racial and social inequality, plus illuminates how these same institutions are able to "softly otherize" certain members of their community while still promoting overall values of inclusion and acceptance (Bonilla-Silva, 2018, p. 3). The idea of color-blind racism moves away from the idea of discrimination as individual acts and instead presents an argument for the structural perpetuation of widespread oppression and inequity. Bonilla-Silva argues that this structure is what allows inequality of all forms to be replicated in all it touches.

The concept of color-blind racism was developed and conceptualized in order to better understand the role of race and racism in society, and its application towards the constructs of class and gender reveal some limitations. Bonilla-Silva acknowledges that "racialization occur[s] in social formations also structured by class and gender" (1997, p. 470), and he presents race, class, and gender as social constructs and "insists that [they] have a social reality" (Bonilla-Silva, 2018, p. 8). Based on this reasoning, an individual's unique combination of racial, economic, and gender identities becomes the means through which people are classified, understood, and treated within society's "organizational map" (Bonilla-Silva, 1997, p. 474). These socially constructed

ideas about race, class, and gender become the sorting mechanism through which social positions, power, and value are assigned to every actor within society (Bonilla-Silva, 1997, 1999). However, race, class, and gender intersect with one another in powerful ways that are not easily separated. Given the centrality of race, it also follows that in certain situations the saliency of race can be mitigated or amplified by class, and similarly by gender. The color-blind racism framework as applied in this study uses its theoretical tenets to demonstrate how a traditional organization uses race as its primary organizational lens, but the study also acknowledges that the additional impact of class and gender are less understood.

Bonilla-Silva's research illustrates two commonalities among individuals living in the post-civil rights era. First is the belief that an absence of overtly racist acts frees them from personal responsibility for systematic oppression. Because various forms of oppression have become institutionalized, individuals see themselves as disconnected from the larger unjust system simply because they are not overtly unkind to people based on race, class, or gender. In classrooms, this detachment is often heard in students' proclamations that because they and their family never owned slaves, they could not possibly have a role in the perpetuation of an unjust system. Second is the use of several frames as a means to rationalize societal inequality: abstract liberalism, naturalization, cultural racism, and minimization of racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2002, 2015, 2018). The four frames of color-blind racism offer individuals alternate explanations for social inequality:

1. Abstract liberalism allows ideas of equal opportunity and individualism to win out over any concerted effort to right historical and systemic wrongs.
2. Naturalization allows circumstances such as racial, class, or gendered segregation to be explained away by individual choice or preference.

3. Cultural racism is based in generalizations made about groups of people which posits that inequality is rooted in cultural deficiencies, such as the narrative that certain cultures do not value education.
4. The practice of minimizing racism leads to the suggestion that race is no longer a primary organizing principle in society.

The use of these rationalizations for every possible social outcome allow the larger unjust system to remain invisible and invincible.

The concept of color-blind racism offers insight into how the racial and social order of the United States is replicated within Catholic and Jesuit schools, even when those same communities claim to promote values of inclusion and opportunity. Catholic schools' embrace of the meritocracy, as an example of abstract liberalism, provides an argument against preferential treatment of one group over another but does not confront internalized or structural bias in hiring or admissions practices. Rather than acknowledging the reality of exclusionary school cultures, the naturalization frame allows Catholic schools to claim that diverse communities simply choose not to send their children to their schools. The cultural racism frame offers justification for why admission and outreach efforts often do not consider engaging African American, Latino, and indigenous communities, due to perceived limitations in finances and/or academic ability. On the whole, Catholic and Jesuit schools are not immune to the temptation to minimize racism through claims that racism, sexism, and classism are not at play in their organizations; this inclination is due to their inability to reconcile the reality that discrimination and bias are present within Christ-centered communities. Color-blind racism has become embedded in Catholic and Jesuit institutions in a covert and powerful way, while these very same institutions simultaneously promote the value of diversity. The perpetuation of color-blind racism within

these schools, therefore, allows the development of conflicting realities where a commitment to community and inclusion is articulated and embraced yet those who are not white, straight, or wealthy become marginalized within the community.

Ultimately, Catholic and Jesuit schools must ask themselves how minoritized and marginalized students experience life on their campuses. For example, the Catholic Church's fundamental belief in sexual determinism translates to formal positions on LGBTQ+ issues that promote respect and tolerance but not full acceptance of LGBTQ+ individuals or their relationships (Love & Tosolt, 2013; Parodi-Brown, 2019). This indicates a need to understand the experiences of LGBTQ+ identified students on Jesuit campuses. In another example, Jesuit schools disproportionately benefit upper-middle class white students and the culture of these students has become the cultural norm of Jesuit schools overall (Beaumier, 2013; Ladewski, 2010). As a result, the Jesuit educational system rewards students for conformity to upper-middle class white norms of behavior, dress, and speech. It follows then, that students of color who assume elements of a white identity (e.g., manners of speech, dress) and suppress their non-white identity will be rewarded and privileged socially and academically. However, due to their non-white racial identity, they will never have access to the same social power that is given to racially white students within that same context. Simply stated, non-white students will never be fully included in the same way white students are. Similarly, and related to these two examples, curriculum and programmatic offerings that center non-white, non-heteronormative perspectives will not receive the same level of legitimacy as the standard canon.

To expect Catholic and Jesuit schools to be free of the sinister and structural influences of systematic subordination of racial, economic, and sexual and gender minorities is to hold unrealistic expectations of an institution's ability to evade the influence of something as

pervasive as the air we breathe (Darder, 2016; Tatum, 1997; Wallis, 2016). At the same time, the dominant cultural narrative in Jesuit schools, which normalizes whiteness and heteronormativity, has enormous, negative mental, emotional, and academic consequences for youth with minoritized racial, economic, sexual and gender identities. Thriving in, rather than simply surviving, Catholic and Jesuit schools requires great mental and emotional resiliency among students in minoritized groups, and among staff who provide support to these students (Love, 2019). Examining the macro-level structural and social issues inherent within Jesuit schools through the lens of color-blind racism allows the roots of injustice to be exposed and challenged, preventing future schools from unintentionally perpetuating an unjust social order by operating under a historical status quo.

Research Questions

This study weaves a narrative analysis of the journey taken by a group of key educators as they responded to shifting demographics at one Jesuit secondary school over half a century. The participants all served at St. Robert's for 20-40 years and played key roles in establishing new ways to support underrepresented students at the school. Their thinking and actions were informed by what they saw and heard from the students with whom they worked. This study identifies participants' motivations for advocating for underrepresented students, their reflections on the impact their support strategies had on both the target student population and the larger school population, and the political work that needed to be done to initiate and maintain various supports for underrepresented students. Inspired by a desire to understand the forces of change that shape schools over time, this study interrogates four research questions:

1) What historical actions did key personnel take in support of underrepresented students at a traditional, predominantly white Jesuit secondary school? In what ways did opportunities to support underrepresented students present themselves?
2) Within a traditional, Catholic, Jesuit school, what spaces of institutional opportunity allowed for advocacy work towards underrepresented students, and what institutional constraints existed or emerged due to this advocacy?
3) In what ways did the narrative around underrepresented students change at the school over time? How did this shifting narrative impact subsequent efforts at underrepresented student support?
4) In what ways did larger, off-campus social movements influence the work of these key personnel in their service of underrepresented students, particularly as they related to the school's justice-centered mission?

Educational Significance

This study has the potential to be significant for several different groups of stakeholders in Jesuit education. For example, it may hold significance for Catholic or Jesuit secondary schools whose demographics are shifting away from a traditional, majority white student population to a more diverse student body. Over time, as communities become more racially, culturally, and economically diverse as well as more gender affirming, schools will be increasingly called upon to address the various needs of their students and families. Schools that are in the nascent stages of identifying support strategies for underrepresented students may find this study helpful to understand historical successes and learn from another school's setbacks as they began to formalize their work. This study may also be used to inform Catholic or Jesuit schools that already have established underrepresented student support structures. Jesuit schools

share many of the same political tensions and organizational concerns: maintaining a positive relationship with the local Bishop, balancing *cura personalis* with *cura apostolica*, and holding space for a wide range of political and religious beliefs within the same school community. Again, as feeder communities continue to diversify in both people and thought, Jesuit schools will increasingly be asked to accommodate and support a broader profile of student than ever before. This study can identify the spaces of tension and political minefields that emerge when schools broaden their gaze to new groups of students.

Finally, many parallels exist between today's sociocultural context and the social movements of the 1960s and 1970s. There is much to be learned from history. The social movements of today continue to grow with an urgency that is not only fueled by the desire for justice but also by the reality that young people need help to make sense of all that is unfolding around them. Movements such as Black Lives Matter and #MeToo may be at the forefront of the national consciousness, but disability rights movements, LGBTQ+ rights movements, and increased criticism of capitalist structures are additional examples of the advocacy work that is present in communities today. Twenty-four hour news cycles plus the viral nature of social media have brought generation-defining moments such as the murder of George Floyd directly into young people's consciousnesses, almost in the moment it is happening. Students' emerging activism on high school playing fields is evoking the same level of national political division normally reserved for celebrities. Most poignantly, in 2020 students and alumni of color used social media to call out private schools at the secondary and post-secondary level for perpetuating racist or exclusionary campus environments.[2] This study has the potential to be

[2] Social media tags such as "BlackAt[school]" or "Expose[school]" drew attention to the marginalization and racism experienced by students and alumni of color at several private, elite secondary schools as well as some private universities (Lorenz & Rosman, 2020). This social media movement inspired some Catholic school alumni of color

helpful for Catholic and Jesuit schools that are increasingly being asked to reconcile their social justice mission with social advocacy movements - and perhaps even being challenged to think about who is being marginalized on their campuses, and why.

Study Delimitations and Limitations

This study is subject to several delimitations. First, the site of research is one Jesuit school, St. Robert's Prep. It is an all-male secondary school with a 170 year old tradition of education in the western United States. While narrowing the analysis to one site allows for a deeper understanding of one entity, it does mean that the study runs the risk of its findings not being applicable to other locations. Other delimitations are specific to the timeframe of the narratives, and the sample of Jesuit school staff from which the narratives were drawn. The specific work that occurred at St. Robert's during 1970-2020 emerged from a unique combination of demographic, leadership, and sociocultural factors that coalesced within a 50 year time-period. Related to this, participants generally overlapped in their multi-generational tenure at the school, offering consistency with regards to school administration and student demographics over the study's historical time period (1970-2020). The decision to include these participants' perspectives, and not those of the current educators who currently work with underrepresented students at St. Robert's, stems from the desire to learn about how the support structures of today emerged and became reality. Finally, this study is choosing to restrict the histories collected to include only those of personnel present at the school when the need for new strategies emerged. As such, alumni who benefitted from the strategies and programs will not be interviewed, nor will current students. These decisions are rooted in a desire to: (a) highlight the intent behind the educators' actions rather than the result; (b) focus on their motivation rather

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to publish web articles about the disconnect between stated school values and authentic racial justice work (Nguyen, 2020).

than the reception of their actions; (c) narrow the inquiry to an exploration of how adults navigate student support within institutions that are in the midst of change. While these delimitations have a negative impact on the ability to generalize the findings of this study to other Jesuit schools, important parallels can be drawn in numerous ways between past events and current settings: (a) current school leadership styles may be similar to those encountered in the past; (b) the social movements of one era may inform those of the current time; (c) positions taken by the Catholic Church or local ordinary may have long-standing antecedents. While specifics of one school's experience may not be completely replicable, some important generalizations can be gleaned from the larger analysis.

There are also several limitations to this study. First oral history methods principally rely on memory (Leavy, 2011; Ritchie, 2017). A significant limitation of this study is the simple fact that participant memories fade over time. As such, events may be remembered differently than actual events. Additionally, meanings and motivations change over time; the significance of a person's past actions may change over the course of their life (Ritchie, 2017). Original intents and actions may be remembered through the lens of today as opposed to the lens of yesterday. While the interviewees all worked together at the same school at approximately the same time, their shared experiences do not mean they will each remember the same event in the same way. Disparate accounts were clarified through follow up interviews. Second, there was limited formal historical documentation available for this study. New programs or curriculum revisions, for example, rarely begin with formal documentation and more often begin with personal conversations that are rarely documented. Most records that were available reflected more recent events. For example, email records were available only in the latter half of the study's time

period. To supplement gaps in formal documentation, historical evidence such as yearbooks and school newspapers were included when available.

Finally, it is important to note that the researcher has been an employee of the study site of study for approximately 15 years. The interviewees are personal friends and professional colleagues. Being an insider in this research process offers the researcher the benefit of leveraging the trust she has built up with the participants over the past decade and a half. However, that level of familiarity brings with it the potential for analytical bias or assumptions of meaning. Sharing transcripts of interviews and confirming findings with the participants will help ensure that the meaning made by this study is being co-produced and not assumed because of my prior relationship with the institution, the participants, or any past or present administrators who may be mentioned in participant interviews.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are used in this study, and terms that are used interchangeably are identified below:

- The term *Catholic schools* is generally used to refer to Catholic, diocesan schools, distinct from Catholic schools that are affiliated with a specific religious order.
- The phrase *Jesuit schools* is meant to specify secondary schools (offering grades 9-12) that are religiously sponsored by the Society of Jesus. When the unit of analysis is an educational level higher or lower than secondary school (college/university or elementary school), that distinction will be made clear.
- The Jesuit order, or the Society of Jesus, is organized into regional geographic territories called Provinces, each led by a Provincial. Regional Provincials report to the Superior General of the Society in Rome. Ministries within each Province,

including schools, are under the purview of the Provincial through his Provincial's Assistant for Pre-Secondary and Secondary Education, also known as the PASE.

- The term *underrepresented students* is used to refer to students from non-white racial or ethnic backgrounds, low-income students, plus students whose sexual or gender identity falls outside the heteronormative and cisgender assumption (generally referred to as LGBTQ+ or sexual and gender minority youth).
- The school which is the site of study uses the following identifiers for student demographics. Multiple terms within the same category will be used interchangeably throughout this study as follows: (a) Native American; (b) Black or African-American; (c) Asian or Asian-Pacific Islander (includes Southeast Asian identities); (d) Hispanic or Latino; (e) Multiracial; (f) Caucasian or white.
- Terms such as *racial identity* and *ethnic identity* are used interchangeably. The term *students of color* refers to any student of non-white racial identity.
- As the site of study is an all-boys secondary school, pronouns and gendered language will use the masculine as their gender referential.
- The term *private independent school* specifies secondary schools (offering grades 9-12) that are independently governed and not affiliated with a religious entity. Again, when the unit of analysis is an educational level higher or lower than secondary school (college/university or elementary school), that distinction will be made clear.
- The phrase *cura personalis* is used to refer to the Jesuit value of "caring for the person," suggesting a holistic educational approach that cares for the whole student in mind, body, and spirit. The phrase *cura apostolica* refers to the care for the institution

and reflects the importance of each individual apostolate as a ministry promoting the larger mission of the Society of Jesus.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Education has changed over the past 50 years, with public schools moving steadily towards majority-minority populations (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018, Table 216.50). Similarly, Jesuit secondary schools have enrolled increasingly diverse student bodies since the 1970s (Jesuit Schools Network, 2020). These demographic shifts have sparked conversations on concepts such as diversity, equity, and inclusion**.** They have also created tension as educators work to reconcile the Jesuit ideal of being *for and with others* with the negative experiences of minoritized students in Catholic and Jesuit secondary schools (Parodi-Brown, 2019; Thomas, 2020). This study explores the efforts of a group of staff members at one Jesuit high school who have worked to support minoritized youth for over 50 years. This chapter includes a literature review that addresses three areas related to the research problem addressed by, and purpose of, this dissertation. These areas of scholarship include: (a) a discussion of historical demographic shifts within Catholic and Jesuit schools; (b) an exploration of the research on underrepresented students' experiences in Catholic and Jesuit school contexts; (c) a description of strategies known to ameliorate the negative experiences of minoritized students at school.

Historical Demographic Shifts within Catholic and Jesuit Schools

Student demographics within United States (US) schools have changed markedly within the past 50 years. In their most recent analysis of school demographic trends over time, the National Center for Education Statistics reported an increase in the percentage of students of color in public schools from 35% in 1995 to 51% in 2015 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018, Table 216.50). The National Association of Independent Schools recently

reported that 33% of students in private independent schools are students of color, up from 14% close to 30 years ago (Brosnan, 2001; National Association of Independent Schools, 2020). Overall Catholic school demographics have shifted during this same time period, with 10% of their student body identifying as non-white in 1970, increasing to 27% for the academic year 2020-2021 (National Catholic Education Association, 2020). Jesuit schools have seen an even greater acceleration of student demographic shift than Catholic or private independent schools.

Student enrollment in all Jesuit secondary schools in the United States and Canada for the academic year 2020-2021 reflects 44% students of color (Jesuit Schools Network, 2020) compared to 19% in 1995 when the Jesuit Secondary Education Association began reporting student data by ethnicity (The JSEA Bulletin, 1995). In the past 20 years, Jesuit provinces across the United States have opened Cristo Rey schools, which are secondary schools specifically designed to serve low-income students of color. Among the 14 Jesuit Cristo Rey high schools in the US, student enrollment for the most recent academic year reflects 99% students of color (Jesuit Schools Network, 2020). If Cristo Rey schools' enrollment data is separated from traditional Jesuit school enrollment data, the overall percentage of students of color in the 55 traditional Jesuit secondary schools in the United States decreases to 37% (Jesuit Schools Network, 2020). The following sections explore the founding history of Catholic and Jesuit schools in the United States and names the populations these schools were designed to serve. This historical foundation offers context behind the demographic transitions that have unfolded across these school contexts since the 1970s and speaks to the environment that awaited minoritized students that joined Catholic and Jesuit schools within the past 50 years.

Catholic Schools

Who chooses Catholic schools and why has been the subject of much research, and Catholic school populations have fluctuated in numerous ways over their almost 300 year history in the United States (Hunt, 2005; Lawrence & Mollborn, 2017; Setari & Setari, 2016). At present, Catholic school populations, overall, are overrepresented by white students and underrepresented by minority students, in addition to having greater numbers of middle- and upper-income students (Ee et al., 2018; Reardon & Yun, 2002; Riordan, 2000). Historical analysis of Catholic demographic data reveals increasing racial and religious diversity in Catholic secondary schools in the latter half of the 20th century along with decreasing socioeconomic diversity over a 20 year period (Riordan, 2000). Specifically, increasing numbers of non-Catholic students are choosing to enroll in Catholic schools (McDonald, 2015). Financial aid remains a priority as rising numbers of students are requesting tuition assistance and slightly over half of Catholic secondary schools report being able to meet most aid requests (McDonald, 2015). Both the history of Catholic schools and the demographic shifts that caused *inflection points*, or moments of significant change, are evident in the composition of current-day Catholic school populations.

Early History

Catholic schools emerged within the colonial era and their student composition reflected prevailing social constructs and norms. The first religious order school was opened for girls in 1727 by the Ursuline Sisters in New Orleans, and the earliest parish schools opened in the mid-1770s (Bryk et al., 1993). While most early Catholic schools emerged harmoniously, the mass immigration from Europe in the early 1800s spurred nativist and anti-Catholic rhetoric in the US, marginalizing Catholics into “one of America’s first minority groups” (Bryk et al., 1993, p. 22).

With the common school movement taking hold in the mid-1850s and providing free education to all students, immigrant parishioners sought an alternative to the anti-Catholic and anti-immigrant sentiments in public schools. These parishioners established Catholic schools where their native languages and religion would be preserved (Bryk et al., 1993; Hunt, 2005; Walch, 2003). The emergence of early ethnic Catholic schools can be characterized as an act of resistance against a discriminatory public educational system that marginalized Catholics (Brinig & Garnett, 2009; Bryk et al., 1993; Darder, 2016). However, this resistance can also be understood as a rationale for a racially separatist philosophy of Catholic education.

While many theologians of the time denounced the evils of discrimination, Catholic Church leaders excused racial separation as an extension of the behaviors of Catholic European immigrants, arguing that "many of the coloreds, just as the French, the Germans, and the Polish prefer to worship by themselves" (as cited in McGreevy, 1996, p. 33). Bolstered by the *separate but equal* doctrine legalized by *Plessy v. Ferguson* in 1896, the Catholic church rationalized racial separation within its schools as an extension of historical practice. For example, while the Catholic church was clear in its condemnation of the slave trade, separate Catholic schools for Black children began emerging in the early 1800s, with the 1827 the founding of a school for free Black girls in Washington DC. This was followed by several schools for free Black boys and the first Black parish school in 1857 (Franklin, 1996). A racially separate Catholic system of education leading to university study began to emerge for Black students in the early 1900s because "the Catholic hierarchy refused to change the discriminatory admissions policies at Catholic colleges and universities across the nation" (Franklin, 1996, p. 53).

In another example of racially separate Catholic schooling, Native American children were not only marginalized but systematically harmed within faith-based boarding schools. The

Catholic church joined several other Christian groups in establishing missionary boarding schools for Native Americans with the explicit goal of *civilizing* Native children through American education, a process described as "de-humanizing and de-Indianizing" (Noel, 2002, p. 26). Of the over 350 Native American boarding schools which existed in the United States in the early 1900s, 84 were administered by Catholic religious orders and four of these were operated by the Society of Jesus (The National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition, 2020)[3].

The first two hundred years of Catholic education laid the foundation for the normalization of European immigrant culture and students as their reference point. The desire for ethnically-based parishes and schools gave way to a system that rationalized and promoted the need for racially separate Catholic institutions. As such, the Catholic church replicated discriminatory social and racial hierarchies in its ministries, and most Catholic schools in the US remained populated by generations of European immigrants and their offspring until the latter half of the 20th century. Neither Catholic schools nor the communities they served could anticipate the massive changes and transformation that were about to occur as the remainder of the 20th century unfolded.

Inflection Points

The 1950s ushered in an era of *white flight,* which describes the migration of white families, en masse, out of urban centers and into city suburbs. New waves of immigration filled the abandoned urban centers. The European immigrant communities who originally filled

[3] Recent discoveries of mass graves of Native American children on the grounds of Native American boarding schools in Canada and the United States have reignited the cry for truth and justice regarding the atrocities committed at these boarding schools (Pember, 2021). Across religious communities, responses to these histories have varied, with some religious orders remaining silent, others issuing an apology, and very few taking concrete action towards reconciliation and healing (Pember, 2022).

Catholic school classrooms in large urban cities began to move to the suburbs just as public schools were being asked to integrate, following the 1954 *Brown v Board of Education* decision. As new suburban housing developments emerged, white communities engaged in coordinated and sometimes violent efforts aimed at blocking the racial integration of these suburban communities and schools (Brinig & Garrett, 2010; McGreevy, 1996). At the same time, new waves of Latin American, Asian, and Caribbean immigrants were arriving in the United States (Louie & Holdaway, 2009), and joined the African-American communities who remained in the urban centers. The Catholic church's response to this urban exodus reinforced the physical and spiritual segregation of white, suburban communities from urban African-American, Latin American, Asian, and Caribbean communities.

In response to the demographic shifts in the 1950s, new parishes and schools were quickly built in suburban communities for white Catholics while urban Catholic schools and parishes fell into financial distress and disrepair (McGreevy, 1996). The costs of building new parishes and schools – the early 1950s saw new construction at a rate of four new parishes per week across the nation – resulted in suburban parishes assuming massive financial liability and vastly increased capital expenditures. The Church was willing to assume these debts while neglecting the "perfectly satisfactory" urban parishes that remained (McGreevy, 1996, p. 85). During this time, Catholic schools in urban, or *inner-city,* areas experienced an increase in the enrollment of low-income minoritized students; corresponding increase in white student enrollment occurred in suburban Catholic schools (Hannon, 1984). During this time, Catholic schools experienced an overall decline in Catholic enrollment and the urban schools that once served children of European-descent began to fill with low-income Black and Latino students.

This demographic shift fundamentally altered the composition and fiscal reality of both urban and suburban Catholic schools alike.

In the years since this shift occurred, Catholic schools have coalesced around several distinct models. Traditional diocesan Catholic schools have been joined in recent years by Catholic schools that serve majority-minority and low-income student populations such as the Nativity and Cristo Rey schools. Other Catholic school models include cooperatively linked Catholic schools, as well as independent, and academically-elite Catholic schools (Nelson, 2000). These different types of Catholic schools tend to show distinct demographic enrollment patterns, resulting in school composition that mirrors widespread patterns of racial and socioeconomic segregation (Reardon & Yun, 2002). For example, Cristo Rey schools, Nativity schools, and cooperatively linked Catholic schools, serve the children of families living in urban poverty. Schools such as these, serving majority-minority and low-income student populations, tend to enroll students from their immediate neighborhood, likely contributing to the increased percentage of racially minoritized students in Catholic high schools between 1972 and 1992 (Riordan, 2000). Moreover, traditional Catholic secondary schools and academically-elite Catholic schools serve an increasingly affluent student population, a finding consistent across all racial groups (Riordan, 2000). These localized enrollment patterns result in the hyper-segregation of lower-income students of color in urban Catholic school settings and the relative lack of racial and economic diversity in suburban Catholic schools (Ee et al., 2018; National Catholic Education Association, 2020; Ospino & Weitzel-O'Neill, 2016). While there is a recent interest in strategies to increase the percentage of underrepresented, namely Latino, students in traditional Catholic schools (Alliance for Catholic Education, 2013; Darder, 2016; Suhy, 2013), traditional Catholic schools tend to characterize outreach towards these communities as

unnecessary (Heft, 1991).With racial and economic segregation deeply informed and reinforced by the history and persistence of segregation in the larger US context, the current demographics of Catholic schools are unlikely to change without intentional strategy and effort.

Jesuit Schools

While similar to Catholic schools in their faith tradition, Jesuit schools have a specific religious charism that roots their works in pursuit of social justice. Education is viewed as a means to improve one's status in the world (O'Malley, 1993), and to that end, Jesuit schools have always been open to students from all racial and class backgrounds. How and when this philosophy of access translates into a demographically diverse student body, however, depends more on the actions of individual schools and individual leadership than on a systematic approach to integration. While certain Jesuit secondary schools such as Cristo Rey schools are specifically designed to enroll low-income students of color, the majority of traditional Jesuit high schools have a long history of serving European immigrant families and their descendants. There is evidence of increasing numbers of students of color enrolling in Jesuit schools over the past 25 years (Jesuit Schools Network, 2020), but increasing numbers of upper-income students are also enrolling in traditional Jesuit secondary schools (Beaumier, 2013; Reardon & Yun, 2002; Riordan, 2000). The reliance on individual school-based action, as it relates to student body diversity in Jesuit schools, resulted in sporadic admissions of racial and economic minority students for the first chapter of American Jesuit education. This pattern that persisted until a deliberate directive from the Society spurred Jesuit schools to take intentional action to enroll more racial and economic minority students.

Early History

A common misperception of Jesuit schools is that they were specifically created to serve the children of the wealthy elite ruling class. It is noteworthy, then, that Jesuit schools' historical foundations specify that their aim was to serve a broad student population. The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus, drafted in 1533, outline the philosophical foundation for the operation and governance of all ministries of the Society of Jesus, including Jesuit schools. Concerning the work of the Educational Apostolate, the Constitutions direct schools to serve broadly with their mandate that "all educational initiatives of the Society must look to the plurality of cultures, religions, and ideologies as well as to local socioeconomic needs" (Padberg, 1996, p. 304). From their philosophical inception, Jesuit schools were asked to serve a diverse and varied student population, promoting interreligious collaboration and allowing for coeducational opportunities, provided "civil norms existing in various places are…observed" (Padberg, 1996, p. 308).

To accomplish this mission of educational ministry to all social classes, Jesuits in the mid-1500s worked with socially and financially powerful partners. Structurally, early European Jesuit colleges were a new kind of ministry, distinct from existing Jesuit ministries because the schools were designed to subsist off an endowment and not alms (O'Malley, 1993). This new financial structure required colleges to form partnerships with the economic elite in order to survive. By highlighting engagement with "important and public persons" such as "princes, lords, magistrates, or administrators of justice" who had both the financial means and the moral propensity to help the Society at large, mutually beneficial relationships between Jesuits and the power elite allowed Jesuit institutions to provide educational access to students "no matter to what social class they belong" (Padberg, 1996, p. 304). These important and public persons

ultimately contributed more than just financial support, as their influence unconsciously became part of the fabric of Jesuit schools both in means and manners.

Decisions made in the early years of European Jesuit education set up a framework that structurally impeded Jesuits' constitutional directive to provide educational opportunity across all social classes. Philosophically, early European Jesuit schools were open to "every kind of person" as directed by the Society:

> With a notable exception or two, the Jesuit schools during [this] period did not favor the sons of the rich over other students. While they generally had a mix of social classes, some catered especially to the poor, even the rural poor…Although not social revolutionaries, the Jesuits in theory and action supported the improvement of status through education. (O'Malley, 1993, p. 211)

The Jesuits wanted their education to be accessible to students based on academic ability and a moral propensity to advance the work of the Society. However, a structural hurdle quickly emerged for students from the lower social and economic ranks, caused by the Jesuits' choice to adopt a humanistic curriculum that promoted the study of literature and languages over more practical skills conducive to a profession in business or trade. This choice of curriculum "directed their schools towards the classes of society for whom that curriculum had particular appeal" (O'Malley, 1993, p. 211) and also created the need for academic entrance requirements related to literacy. The combination of these two structural elements – humanistic curriculum and literacy requirements - resulted in a student body that "often, but by no means exclusively, [was] drawn from the middle and upper classes of society" (O'Malley, 1993, p. 240). Over time, as Jesuit schools continued to proliferate across Europe and eventually America, decisions such as choice of curriculum allowed for the institutionalization of structural and invisible barriers to

access and inclusion that disproportionately benefited those already possessing social and economic power.

The strong anti-Catholic environment of the early United States impeded the Jesuits' ability to replicate their European methods of working in partnership with the social and economic elite to establish schools that could serve students from all backgrounds. The absence of a Catholic ruling class became an opportunity as early American Jesuit schools quickly became the mechanism through which an American Catholic elite class could emerge from the existing Catholic immigrant community (Beaumier, 2013). The role of legacy admissions played a pivotal role in the creation of a Catholic power structure. Generations of Jesuit school alumni who achieved social and financial success sent their children to Jesuit schools and colleges, creating legacies of insiders who remained loyal to the Jesuit mission (Beaumier, 2013; Kabadi, 2015). Typically, but not exclusively, these legacy families were white and wealthy (Kabadi, 2015), limiting the admission opportunities for low-income students and students of color, and demonstrating the negative impact of legacy admissions on minoritized students (Ladewski, 2010). While legacy admissions is not unique to Jesuit schools, it does contribute to the elite student demographic among schools that allow this type of multi-generational admissions (Bryk et al., 1993; Beaumier, 2013). The result is that traditional Jesuit schools tend to replicate the imbalanced social and power structures found in the larger US context.

For the majority of Jesuit secondary schools in America in the late 1940s, students of color were a rarity and any coordinated effort to increase these numbers was equally as rare. In the late 1940's Jesuit schools practiced what Former Superior General Pedro Arrupe later called *token integration* of racial minorities. For example, in 1947, a study of Jesuit secondary schools' enrollment of Black students revealed that 26 of the 38 Jesuit secondary schools in existence at

that time had some number of African-American students. Ten of the 26 schools enrolled a total of 20 students of African ancestry, with six institutions enrolling only one African-American student that academic year (Drolet, 1947). Jesuit deference to the local Catholic community allowed the Society to abdicate large-scale responsibility for the education of African-American students: several Jesuit secondary schools in 1947 noted that they "would admit [African-Americans], but find that the local segregated Catholic high schools are caring for such students" (Drolet, 1947, p. 301). When the Jesuits of the New Orleans province approved widespread racial integration throughout their province schools and ministries in 1952, they opted to desegregate Jesuit schools only if there were no other Black Catholic schools in the surrounding community (Anderson, 2005).

Despite being called to serve students from all social and racial backgrounds, the first chapter of Jesuit schools in America did not reveal broad social and racial integration within their schools. Structures related to funding, curriculum, and admissions reinforced the exclusion of racial and economic minoritized groups, contrary to the Jesuit's philosophy of broad educational access. As such, early Jesuit education disproportionately benefitted upper-middle class and white students, and reinforced the discriminatory social and racial hierarchies found in the larger US context.

Inflection Points

The demographic shifts that occurred within Jesuit school populations beginning in the late 1960s were largely credited to a seminal statement issued by Former Superior General Pedro Arrupe. *The Interracial Apostolate* (1967) issued directives to combat the "twin evils of racial injustice and poverty" and specifically asked Jesuit schools to increase their numbers of racial and economic minorities (p. 6). Earlier calls for racial justice from the Society had largely been

through individual efforts such as the community work of Fr. John La Farge SJ and Fr. William Markoe SJ during the early 1900s, or through individual statements such as "The Sin of Segregation" written by Fr. George Dunne in 1945 condemning the slow work of integration efforts by Catholics (McGreevy, 1996). Individual provinces attempted sweeping racial integration, such as the efforts of the New Orleans province in 1952, but all these efforts towards racial justice were eventually stymied by the powerful social and political forces that maintained the dominant racial order in the first half of the 20th century (Anderson, 2005).

Fueled by broad social transformation due to Vatican II and the Civil Rights movement, the voice of Superior General Pedro Arrupe SJ called Jesuit ministries to action. Arrupe's letter took a directive approach towards racial and economic justice, outlining ten directives to guide Jesuit ministries. Arrupe noted that the Society had undertaken ministry to racial minorities as an individual effort and not a systematic one. He asked the Society to move beyond the "token integration" of racial and ethnic minorities by creating programs to increase the enrollment of people of color and low-income students in Jesuit schools (1967, p. 5). As a result, new programs such as minority scholarship programs, targeted admissions efforts towards students of color, and support programs aimed at social integration emerged in Jesuit schools (Beaumier, 1993). Jesuit schools materially increased their numbers of students of color in the years following Arrupe's letter. Historical Catholic school demographics from the 1970s reveal that the percentage of students of color in all Catholic schools in the United States during that time period was 10%, and Jesuit schools would be included in this data (National Catholic Education Association, 2020). In 1995, the JSEA published national student ethnicity data for the first time, revealing that 19% of Jesuit secondary school students in the United States at that time were students of color (The JSEA Bulletin, 1995). With the addition of Cristo Rey secondary schools in the year

2000, the number of students of color continued to increase over the next 25 years in Jesuit provinces nationwide. In the 2020-2021 academic year, the number of students of color in traditional Jesuit secondary schools was 37%, and the figure climbed to 44% if data from Jesuit Cristo Rey high schools was included in the analysis (Jesuit Schools Network, 2020).

In summary, inflection points during the late 1960s and 1970s marked the beginning of increased student diversity within Jesuit schools. All Jesuit ministries, including schools, responded to the changing times by opening their doors in new ways to people of all backgrounds. Conversations even began to emerge in Catholic ministries in the mid-1970s questioning the exclusion of gay and lesbian individuals, notably through the work of Fr. John McNeill, SJ entitled *The Church and the Homosexual* (McCartin, 2016). However, even as the demographics of deeply traditional Jesuit institutions began to shift, the influence of the power and social structures in Jesuit schools remained largely the same. Generations of white and economically privileged students continued to experience Jesuit education as their birthright, while generations of racially and economically minoritized students never quite felt as if they belonged. Underrepresented students in Jesuit schools often found themselves within a school that actively desired to enroll them yet did not fully know how to include them – more often than not leaving students feeling as *welcomed outsiders* within Jesuit schools (Darder, 2016).

Underrepresented Students' Experiences in Catholic and Jesuit Schools

A considerable amount of research on the academic benefits of Catholic education for minoritized youth exists (e.g., Altonji et al., 2005; Fleming et al., 2018; Grogger et al., 2000), but there is comparatively little empirical work on the socioemotional experiences of students of color and low-income youth in Catholic school settings (Aldana, 2016; Burke & Gilbert, 2016; Simmons, 2014). In addition, most research on racial issues in Catholic and private schools

considers the experiences of African-American or Latino youth but largely neglect the experiences of Asian-American, Native American, or other minoritized youth. The difficulties faced by sexual and gender minority youth in schools is well documented (Aragon et al., 2014; Craig et al., 2018; Kosciw et al., 2018), with these students facing additional complexities in faith-based school settings (Callaghan, 2016; Love & Tosolt, 2013; Parodi-Brown, 2019). As Catholic schools are becoming increasingly white and higher income, it is important to understand the experiences of minoritized youth in these settings (Ee et al., 2018; Lawrence & Mollborn, 2017; Reardon & Yun, 2002). The research on the experiences of minority students in predominantly white non-Catholic private schools is a helpful comparison point (Brosnan, 2001; French, 2017). The following subsections review this literature.

A Corollary: Predominantly White Schools

Predominantly white private independent schools have a history of excluding students based on race, religion, or economic status (Brosnan, 2001; French, 2017). Independent schools in the early 1900s believed that exclusivity and homogeneity was an asset and actively sought to educate wealthy white children (Brosnan, 2001). The arrival of underrepresented students in predominantly white independent schools was sparked by a moral imperative to right historical wrongs of exclusion by providing modern day access (Brosnan, 2001; French, 2017). Unfortunately, access to an educational system built on exclusivity resulted in a school environment that provided academic opportunity at great personal and emotional cost (French, 2017). Multiple studies highlight the negative experiences of underrepresented students attending predominantly white school communities and reveal that minority students feel isolated and excluded within these contexts (e.g., Coleman, 2017; Fergus, 2017; Newcomb, 2020). Further complicating this school-based isolation is the finding that minoritized students attending

predominantly white private schools also feel alienated within their home communities because of their schooling experiences (Datnow & Cooper, 1997; Herr, 1999; Simmons, 2014). Social class affiliation is a salient factor for underrepresented students in predominantly white private school contexts, for low-income students of color often find themselves doubly marginalized not only by racial group membership but also by social class affiliation (Cookson & Persell, 1991; O'Keefe, 1994; Newcomb, 2020), further complicating inter-racial relationships with classmates as well as intra-racial relationships with same-race but different social class peers (Herr, 1999; Simmons, 2012). Still, race is by far the most salient factor affecting the experiences of students of color, for even wealthy students of color in predominantly white private school settings faced marginalization and isolation due to racialized differences (Cookson & Persell,1991; DeCuir-Gunby, 2007). Negative racial stereotyping and exclusion are also experienced by African-American, Latino and Asian youth in predominantly white public school settings (Fergus, 2017; Gordon, 2012; Quach et al., 2009). These studies raise question about the emotional and psychological cost of educational access for students of color in predominantly white school settings (Carter, 2007; Coleman, 2017; Simmons, 2012; Simmons, 2014). Students of color who attend Catholic and Jesuit schools face an additional hurdle. These students must reconcile experiences at school that replicate the discriminatory and racialized power hierarchies of the US as a whole with conflicting school messages that promote a unified community and gospel messages that speak of inherent human value.

Cultural Attributes of Catholic and Jesuit Schools

Both Catholic and Jesuit schools have distinctive school cultures and derive their core values from the example of Jesus Christ. Both types of schools promote beliefs such as upholding the inherent dignity of the human person, promoting the centrality of family and

community, exercising a preferential option for the poor, and standing in solidarity with one another as Christian brothers and sisters (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2005). In addition, both Catholic and Jesuit schools are steeped in social justice ideals and ask their students and graduates to work towards dismantling unjust systems through both word and deed. Specific principles in Jesuit schools stem from their Ignatian identity, such as the ideal of *cura personalis*, or care for the person, and the common goal across ministries of the Society to create *men and women for and with others*. In addition to the promotion of Catholic values, this commitment to serving others, to caring for the individual person, and to the pursuit of justice, are frequently heralded as key cornerstones of Jesuit school communities. If these values were to be embraced consistently and completely by Catholic and Jesuit schools, the experiences of all students in their communities would be marked by full acceptance. Students would feel valued as they are, and marginalization or discrimination of any kind would be overtly rejected by all members of the school community. And yet, both research and personal experience indicate that this is not the reality experienced by minoritized students in Catholic and Jesuit schools.

In reality, students within Catholic and Jesuit schools hear and experience conflicting messages. For example, the practice of conditional inclusion is seen in the Catholic philosophy of accepting gay and lesbian people through a *love the sinner, hate the sin* paradigm. Callaghan (2014) outlines how this exclusionary contradiction fundamentally limits how students in minoritized sexual and gender groups are seen, heard, and supported in Catholic schools. In a space that should be characterized by welcome, ambivalence prevails, and as a result "Catholic high schools in the United States [are] not addressing the topic of homosexuality in any significant and systematic way, with a few exceptions" (Maher & Sever, 2007, p. 81). In another example, the early Catholic school practice of assimilating immigrant (and non-dominant group)

students into the dominant culture (Bryk et al., 1993; Louie & Holdaway, 2009) remains evident in both Catholic and Jesuit schools today (Darder, 2016; Martin, 1995). A school culture of assimilation reproduces a colonial order that rewards a student's ability to reflect white and upper-middle class behaviors, ways of speaking, norms, values, often at the expense of their own cultural and linguistic heritage. A final contradiction is embedded in Catholic and Jesuit schools' embrace of the social mobility rhetoric, and the idea of meritocracy as the way to achieve success and upward social mobility (Beaumier, 2013; Darder, 2016; O'Malley, 1993). The academic culture of Catholic and Jesuit schools promotes achievement within a curriculum that remains heavily influenced by white and upper-class language and literacy standards (Bryk, 1993; O'Malley, 1993). This centuries-old tradition, along with the other exclusionary contradictions discussed above, has profound ramifications for all students that enter Catholic and Jesuit schools.

Marginalized Student Experiences in Catholic and Jesuit Schools

The extant research suggests that student experiences at Catholic and Jesuit schools are framed by race, class, and sexual and gender identity (Martin, 1995; O'Keefe, 1994; Love & Tosolt, 2013; Maher, 2007), but not much is known about the social and emotional experiences of underrepresented students in Catholic schools. Among the existing studies, Bleasdale's (2014) research illustrates a troubling trend. Studying the experiences of Black, Latino, and LGBTQAI+ students in traditional Jesuit high schools, Bleasdale found that underrepresented students were viewed through the lens of tokenism and a culture of tolerance, not a lens of inclusion. In addition to these findings, several studies demonstrate that while Catholic and Jesuit schools ostensibly welcome all students, LGBTQAI+ identified students feel, at best, invisible, and at worst, actively rejected for their non-heteronormative identities (Callaghan, 2016; Love &

Tosolt, 2013; Parodi-Brown, 2019). Love and Tosolt (2013) illustrate this rejection and isolation in a study of lesbian students at an all-girls Catholic school. The lesbian-identified girls in this study heard messages of welcome and acceptance, only to see their relationships and personal expression stifled by a heteronormative school climate.

According to Burke and Gilbert (2016) "it may not be surprising…that Catholic schools exist in a raced context (and re/create it), it's just that very little research exists examining such a thing" (p. 534). For example, the participants in a study of African-American graduates and non-graduates of traditional Jesuit secondary schools experienced a profound sense of minority status within the school context (Caesar, 1997), and this experience was echoed by the African-American students in a similar study, fifteen years later (Simmons, 2012). Consistent with the findings of Mattison and Aber's (2007) and Voight et al. (2015), Martin (1995) highlighted the disparate experiences of white students and minoritized students in Jesuit secondary schools. white students in Martin's (1995) study had positive impressions of the curriculum as culturally diverse and perceived the school to be free of racism. These students characterized cultural affinity groups as divisive within a community striving towards unity. In contrast, racially and culturally minoritized students in the same study perceived the curriculum as lacking cultural diversity, reported personal experiences of racism, and found affinity spaces valuable for their own social and emotional well-being. These contrasting experiences reveal the dominant culture paradigm at play in Jesuit schools.

This paradigm promotes and reinforces a Euro-centric narrative and experience, at the expense of the well-being of minoritized students. Echoing these findings, a recent qualitative study at a predominantly white Catholic secondary school documented the experiences of African-American male athletes. The participants in this study felt valued for their athleticism

but isolated due to their racial identity (Thomas, 2020). Too often, the lived experiences of racially minoritized students fail to reflect Catholic and Ignatian values and ideals. Even within school communities designed to serve predominantly minority and working-class student populations, minority students' positive experiences of brotherhood and social justice are tempered by feelings of marginalization resulting from deficit-based teacher perceptions of racial and economic minority students (Aldana, 2016). The experiences of underrepresented students in Catholic and Jesuit schools reveal how these organizations center a white, upper-middle class heteronormative identity and marginalize everyone else.

An additional way that Catholic and Jesuit schools promote a white, upper-middle class heteronormative identity is through the practice of curricular and programmatic separation. Curricular options to study non-dominant people and cultures are often minimal, if offered at all, and these options are generally curated to reflect the dominant heteronormative social order (Maher & Sever, 2007). With regards to linguistically minoritized families, Ospino and Weitzel-O'Neill's (2014) study noted the predominant approach used by Catholic schools towards Hispanic families is one "not necessarily … of integration where the needs of Hispanic students and their families are intentionally engaged by the school community" (p. 66) but rather one that is based on separation through specific programming. When families and students attend separate programs for Hispanic/Latino families they may feel a sense of inclusion and respect for their language and culture. However, separate programs isolate families from the school community as a whole. Separate programs such as these create racialized experiences within Catholic schools and replicate the discriminatory social, racial, and gendered hierarchies found in public schools (Burke & Gilbert, 2016). A cultural deficit perspective of minority students persists even within Jesuit secondary schools specifically designed to serve low-income students

of color (Aldana, 2016; Kabadi, 2015), undermining school messages of inclusion and the promotion of justice.

A central tenet of Catholicism is the importance of reconciliation. Where there is hurt or a need for healing, reconciliation provides the opportunity for people to work towards being in right relationship with one another. In the case of minoritized students in Catholic and Jesuit schools, there is a need for reconciliation between the school and students from minoritized racial, economic, sexual or gender identity groups. For this reason, it is important for the faculty and staff at Catholic and Jesuit schools to be familiar with effective strategies for increasing experiences of inclusion and for facilitating reconciliation. The literature in the next section reviews the literature that defines, explores, and evaluates the strategies that can be used to mitigate feelings of exclusion among minoritized students in a variety of school settings.

Strategies that Ameliorate Negative Experiences for Underrepresented Students

Identifying factors that support the persistence and well-being of students of color, low-income youth, and sexual and gender minority youth is not only key to promoting their academic success in school, but also essential to their ability to remain whole throughout their educational journey. In the previous section, numerous studies offered insights into the experiences of underrepresented and marginalized youth in public, private, Catholic, and Jesuit school settings. Most studies concluded with recommendations for future research or recommendations for practice. From the review of these recommendations, three important avenues of support emerged: (a) school diversity and climate; (b) affinity groups; (c) teacher-student relationships. The subsections below address each of these themes and discuss strategies that promote positive outcomes for racial, economic, and sexual and gender minority students as they navigate school settings framed by feelings of isolation or rejection. The literature reviewed in these subsections

includes studies from public and private secondary schools, as well as some studies from higher education. Research on elementary school settings was excluded as it is outside the scope of this dissertation. Notably absent, but not purposely excluded, from the search results is literature on Catholic school settings. As of yet, there is no empirical work that explores or explains the impact these strategies have on the social and emotional wellbeing of minoritized students in Jesuit and Catholic schools (Alliance for Catholic Education, 2013; Darder, 2016; Ospino & Weitzel-O'Neill, 2016; Suhy, 2013).

School Diversity and Climate

Overall school climate is an important factor in determining social, emotional, and academic outcomes for adolescents (Aldridge et al, 2016; Brand et al., 2003). A school's *diversity climate*, also referred to as a school's racial climate, has been specifically noted as a contributor to positive outcomes for racial, economic, sexual and gender minority students. A school's diversity climate has been operationalized in numerous studies by examining factors such as a school's history of inclusion or exclusion of racial or ethnic groups, numerical diversity, psychological climate regarding diversity, and the climate regarding how racial and ethnic groups function within the school (Brand et al., 2003; Hurtado et al., 1998). Mayhew et al. (2005) identified additional factors that contributed to a positive campus diversity climate such as current interactions with diverse peers, interactions with diverse faculty, perceptions of diversity in the curriculum, and involvement with co-curricular activities. Within racially, economically, and gender-diverse school settings, a school's diversity climate has been identified as a factor contributing to positive outcomes for minoritized students (Aldridge et al, 2016; Smith et al., 2020). A positive diversity climate has, for minoritized students, been associated with an increased sense of motivation at school (Brand et al., 2003; Byrd & Chavous, 2011),

increased well-being and school satisfaction (Aldridge et al, 2016) and an increased sense that school is enjoyable (Byrd, 2015; Smith et al., 2020). The impact of a supportive school racial and diversity climate on the positive outcomes of underrepresented students underscores the need for schools to demonstrate their commitment to diversity and cultural pluralism in concrete ways (Smith et al., 2020).

School curriculum is of particular note when assessing the diversity climate. Minoritized students often contend with a school curriculum that renders them invisible (Coleman, 2017; Parodi-Brown, 2019; Thomas, 2020). Related to this, several studies demonstrate that a culturally pluralistic curriculum contributes to improved inter-group relations across race and gender in diverse school settings (Chang & Le, 2010; Kosciw et al., 2018; Mayhew et al., 2005), but the impact of a diverse curriculum on additional student outcomes remains largely unexplored (Burke & Gilbert, 2016; Byrd, 2015; Byrd, 2017). In a study of university students' perceptions of school diversity climate, Mayhew et al. (2005) noted the importance of a culturally pluralistic curriculum in communicating an institutional commitment to diversity: "the magnitude of an institution's commitment to diversity is measured by its willingness to integrate different racial and ethnic perspectives into its curricular initiatives" (Mayhew et al., 2005, p. 408). Curriculum remains both an important barometer for institutional climate regarding diversity as well as an important source of feelings of recognition and inclusion for minoritized students navigating school contexts.

School diversity climate within Catholic and Jesuit schools varies from school to school, but their common roots establish the foundation for a fairly consistent environment around diversity. Catholic and Jesuit schools' history of educating children of European immigrants within a colonial framework led to the systematic exclusion of significant numbers of non-white

and lower-income students over time. In addition, the heteronormative climate of Catholic and Jesuit schools also led to the silencing of gay and lesbian identities within their walls. While Catholic and Jesuit schools work diligently to promote inclusive and accepting environments, the underlying diversity climate is still one that promotes the exclusion and isolation of minoritized youth (French, 2007). One strategy that can be used to bridge this gap is the use of affinity groups.

Affinity Groups

Promoting formal and informal affinity spaces and supporting same-identity peer networks are crucial strategies that have been demonstrated to improve the experiences of racial, economic and sexual and gender minority youth on school campuses. Affinity groups are particularly significant in reducing feelings of isolation, affirming and validating both identity and experiences, and promoting a sense of safety among underrepresented students in schools - especially within predominantly white school settings (Oto & Chikkatur, 2019; Simmons, 2014). Distinct from social clubs or shared interest groups, *affinity groups* are social organizations that bring together students of the same cultural, racial, or identity background to discuss topics and share experiences regarding their common identity (Aguilar & Gross, 1999). Affinity groups in secondary schools can be formally organized groups such as cultural or racial student unions, or support groups for sexual or gender minority youth. Typically, schools begin affinity groups organized around race and culture, then add more groups to address the needs of sexual and gender minority youth (Brosnan, 2001). Recently, newer additions to affinity work are groups for first-generation college-bound low-income youth.

Another types of affinity group, Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs) are a specific type of affinity group for sexual and gender minority youth. Research clearly documents the benefits of

GSAs as vehicles that promote a sense of emotional safety, improved sense of well-being, and often lower levels of victimization (e.g., Fetner & Elafros, 2015; Kosciw et al., 2017; Marx & Kettrey, 2016). In addition, even if a student is not an active participant in the GSA, the presence of a GSA on campus alone has a positive impact on sexual and gender minority students' well-being (Toomey et al., 2011; Walls, et al., 2010). GSAs are commonly found in public schools but there is some ambivalence in Catholic schools towards these affinity spaces. Some Catholic schools do not allow GSAs, while others allow the groups but with specific conditions around meeting location or nomenclature (Callaghan, 2014; Callaghan, 2016; Liboro et al., 2015; Maher & Sever, 2007).

While many Catholic and Jesuit secondary schools do currently have affinity groups on their campuses, many still do not. Often, the barriers to affinity groups in Catholic and Jesuit schools stem from fear of the larger community's reaction (including Church officials, donors, alumni, and parents) or lack of internal administrative or faculty support for these types of structures (Liboro et al, 2015; Maher & Sever, 2007). As Catholic and Jesuit schools continue to enroll increasing numbers of minoritized students (Riordan, 2000), consideration must be given to how these students are experiencing school. Both formal and informal affinity groups can be used to address and understand these experiences. Formal affinity groups often have faculty moderators and scheduled meeting times or events, whereas informal affinity groups meet in more social settings such as the lunchroom or casual spaces on campus. These formal and informal spaces serve as "identity-affirming counter spaces" and have a dual purpose: providing spaces of safety and affirmation as well as promoting the development of peer networks to help underrepresented students negotiate a sense of outsider status (Carter, 2007; Datnow & Cooper, 2007). Peer networks allow students to process and understand their racial or minoritized identity

and are critically important for promoting positive outcomes for underrepresented students in school settings (Arrington et al., 2006; Carter, 2007; Datnow & Cooper, 1997). Catholic and Jesuit schools are ideally suited to promote affinity groups because their embrace of *cura personalis* calls them to care for the whole person. Another way students feel cared for within schools is through positive teacher-student relationships.

Teacher-Student Relationships

Conclusive evidence suggests that connections between adults and students in school settings are associated with positive outcomes for youth and serve as a protective force against other challenges experienced during adolescence (Bernstein-Yamashiro & Noam, 2013; Quin, 2017; Tillery et al., 2013). Adults build relationships with students through many roles on school campuses, from teachers to coaches, to club moderators and counselors. As students transition to high school, their relationships with teachers become more significant (Murdock et al, 2000), even at a time when their peer relationships are deeply valued. School-based adults can become important figures outside the adolescent's family network and can serve as role models or mentors during the critical high school years. Ozer et al.'s (2008) work with recently immigrated families highlighted two key features of positive adolescent-teacher relationships: "the desire to be 'known' on a personal level and the distinction between being cared about as a student versus as a person" (p. 462). This finding can is applicable to marginalized students in any school setting.

While any adult can serve as a mentor or role model for any student, there is an added value for minoritized students when their mentor or role model identifies as a member of one or more shared identity groups (Bristol & Martin-Fernandez, 2019). For example, research on *race matched* teachers posits that same-race teachers bring a unique culturally-based understanding to

the classroom and the teacher-student relationship (Cherng & Halpin, 2016; Ladson-Billings, 2009), providing the opportunity to know and support minority students on a more personalized level. Considerable research shows improved academic outcomes for race matched students across African-American and Latino student groups (e.g., Redding, 2019) including some findings that report small gains for Asian students (Egalite et al., 2015). Racial minority students who are taught by same-race teachers perceive their teachers to hold higher academic expectations, and these students feel more connected to their school (Atkins et al., 2014). Research suggests that this is also true for youth in minoritized sexual and gender groups who are matched with teachers who identify as members of those same groups. (Egalite & Kisida, 2017).

Due to the traditional and exclusionary culture of most Jesuit and Catholic schools, cultivating and supporting positive teacher-student relationships may be the most significant strategy available to promote positive social and emotional outcomes for minoritized youth who attend these institutions. In instances where a school's climate for diversity is hostile, or in schools that do not permit the creation of affinity groups around race or gender identity, strong teacher-student relationships may become the sole form of support for students in minoritized racial, economic, and sexual or gender groups. Bryk et al. (1993) demonstrated that teachers in Catholic schools view their roles as a kind of ministry and that this philosophical approach allows teachers to not only shape students' lives intellectually, morally, and spiritually but also prompts students to engage in the life of the school. However, the strategy of promoting teacher-student relationships, particularly among teachers and students with shared identities, does have limits. Most importantly, while teacher-student relationships operate powerfully at the individual and group level, they rarely serve as a vehicle for promoting systematic change.

Summary

This section presented several strategies which have been shown to foster persistence and a sense of belonging among minoritized students in public and private schools. These strategies can be used to ameliorate experiences of isolation by offering spaces and moments of unconditional acceptance within exclusionary school environments. The central question for Catholic and Jesuit schools, ultimately, is whether the well-being of minoritized students should rely on these individual experiences, or if the well-being of these students warrants systemic change. Catholic and Jesuit schools often rely on a culture of kindness to govern interpersonal interactions rather than using formal policies to promote inclusion or equitable treatment. In addition, while Catholic and Jesuit schools of today may reject adopting an English-only policy or mandating rules prohibiting certain hairstyles or cultural dress, the choice of language for institutional materials as well as community norms around dress and grooming often speak louder than a formal policy. A notable exception to the absence of policies relating to student identity are those related to sexual and gender minority youth. Sexual and gender minority youth may face school policies that prohibit certain behaviors (i.e., displays of affection, even if platonic) or those that value the rights of the parent over those of an LGBTQAI+ student (Callaghan, 2016; Love & Tosolt, 2013). While public schools may mandate the creation of safe spaces for sexual and gender minority youth (Liboro et al., 2015), Catholic schools have demonstrated inconsistency regarding overt student support structures for sexual and gender minority youth (Callaghan, 2014; Callaghan, 2016; Maher & Sever, 2007). Catholic and Jesuit schools have a history of structural exclusion and an inability to hear their contradictory messages of inclusion. Fundamentally, the mission of justice, humanity, and care that defines the Catholic faith and the Jesuit charism requires a reconciliation of these contradictions.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has woven together numerous threads that inform the proposed study. The early history of Catholic and Jesuit schools not only grounds the study within their larger historical context but also illuminates the reality of these schools as extensions of a colonial order that historically supported racial segregation. The inflection points that led to demographic shifts in school populations reveal the tension between a social justice mission that calls for broad inclusion and the overwhelming power of the dominant American social and racial order that centers heterosexual whites and marginalizes racial, economic, sexual and gender minorities. Understanding the experiences of minoritized students in Catholic and Jesuit schools reveals the inconsistencies that lead underrepresented students to feel like *welcomed outsiders* (Darder, 2016) within a predominantly white framework that promotes assimilation and meritocracy. Finally, identifying strategies that support positive outcomes for minoritized students offers an understanding of evidence-based practices that can be institutionalized to provide support and care for minoritized youth in Catholic and Jesuit schools. Taken together, the literature reviewed in this chapter provides a rationale for exploring how and why supports for minoritized youth emerge in Catholic and Jesuit schools. The study that follows explores the history of a traditional Jesuit school that has been increasingly enrolling minoritized youth for over 50 years, seeking to understand how the school has changed as a result, as well as what it has learned.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This study uses oral history interviews to provide a narrative analysis of the advocacy efforts of several key educators towards underrepresented students at St. Robert's Prep over a half-century. Oral history, defined by Ritchie (2017) as "[collecting] memories and personal commentaries of historical significance through recorded interviews" (p. 1) offers this study's participants the opportunity to share their perspectives, motivations, and insights regarding their actions over time and have their stories documented in the historical record. In addition, oral history methods allow this study to make linkages between the participants' experiences and related larger social and cultural movements that defined equity, diversity, and inclusion during different time periods. The roots of modern diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts at the school in this study began with the actions of key, dedicated individuals. These individuals identified a need to serve minoritized students in Catholic and Jesuit schools and organized themselves and their school community to respond to this need. The key individuals who are the focus of this study are at the end of their 20-40 year career at St. Robert's, and several have already retired from the school. Documenting their experiences and efforts will preserve an important piece of institutional Jesuit history, as well as provide insight for other Jesuit schools working to support racial, economic, sexual and gender minority students.

Context/Background

The place of inquiry is St. Robert's Prep, a pseudonym. This all-boys Catholic, Jesuit high school is located in the western United States, among six other Catholic secondary schools within the boundaries of the local Diocese. For over 170 years, St. Robert's has offered a college preparatory environment and has a strong reputation for academic rigor and post-secondary

success. Every year, 100% of its students graduate from high school and over 98% of the students enroll in post-secondary study. Standardized test scores are above local and national averages.

The school is part of the national Jesuit Schools Network and is recognized as a work (ministry) of the Society of Jesus. The motto of St. Robert's, similar to that of most Jesuit schools, is to form "men for and with others," promoting a spirit of servant leadership "according to the pattern of service inaugurated by Jesus Christ" ("Our Mission," para. 2). The school has a strong reputation both locally and nationally for producing leaders in government and industry, and parents seek out this all-male educational experience for the strong academic program and the robust spiritual formation program that forms "men of conscience, competence, and compassion" ("Our Community," para. 3). Parents are proud to have their sons enrolled at this school, and families that boast several generations of graduates from the school are deeply valued both by the institution as well as by the larger Catholic social network. Generally, students and alumni speak fondly of the *brotherhood* present at the school.

Opening its doors in 1851, the school was affiliated with and resided on the physical campus of the local Jesuit university, King's University. The school provided education to students ranging in age from grammar school through college study. The school was then known as King's Prep. In 1911, the school stopped enrolling grammar school students, and in 1925 the high school division moved to the current site of the school, renaming itself St. Robert's Prep. From 1851 until 1983, St. Robert's Prep offered a boarding component in addition to its day school. Boarders came from cities across the state, and from as many as 10 countries around the world. From 1925 to 1966, boarding students lived in various buildings throughout campus. In

1966, all boarders moved into one central residence hall, where Jesuits and lay teachers served as prefects. The dormitory closed in 1983, ending nearly 130 years of boarding at St. Robert's Prep.

While the school has employed lay people since its inception, the school was staffed primarily by Jesuit priests and scholastics well through the 1970s. A slow decline in the number of Jesuits missioned to the school began in the late 1970s and rapidly accelerated in the early 2000s. Currently there are 12 Jesuits living on campus, an abundance of riches compared to many other Jesuit secondary schools in the nation. Six of the Jesuits (including three scholastics who are in the process of formation and have yet to be ordained) are in student-facing roles, serving as either teachers, counselors, or campus ministers. Three of the Jesuits are in adult-facing roles and interface with faculty, staff, or parents through their work in Adult Spirituality or Advancement. The continued presence of Jesuits at the school is deeply valued yet bittersweet: the community has a shared awareness that their Jesuit community is aging rapidly. Many members of the Jesuit community are working into their 70s and 80s; for most of these Jesuits, St. Robert's is likely to be their last missioning before retirement.

St. Robert's Prep has been slow to diversify its faculty and staff. At the highest level of school leadership, the president's office was held by a Jesuit priest until 2014, when the school hired its first lay president. An alum of the school, the first lay president had worked at the school for close to three decades before assuming the presidency. The principal's role was held by Jesuit priests until 1999, when a lay man was appointed principal, serving for the next ten years in that role. The school hired its first female faculty member in 1968 into the role of librarian, 117 years after it opened. Most significantly, the school is currently under the leadership of its first female principal, a lay woman who is currently in her 6th year in the position. Related to this, the school has also been slow to diversify by racial identify. For

decades, racial diversity among faculty was a result of the presence of Jesuits or Jesuit scholastics. Lay people of color worked in the kitchen or maintenance departments but were not represented among the teaching faculty. In 1979, the school's first lay teacher of Asian descent, and the first teacher who identified as Latina, were hired. The next year, the school hired its first African-American employee, a mathematics teacher. The percentage of faculty of color stayed around 10% until the early 2000s, when the population of teachers of color began to slowly increase through 2015. Currently, just under 30% of the faculty are teachers of color.

Similarly, St. Robert's student demographics have shifted over time, most notably among racial identity groups in recent decades. In academic year 1994-95, the student body was majority white (65.9%), with Asian students as the next largest ethnic group (19.0%), followed by Latino students (11.5%), African-American students (2.6%), and Native American students (1.0%) (Jesuit Secondary Educational Association, 1994). More recently, in academic year 2020-2021, 47.0% of the students enrolled at St. Robert's are white, with 53.0% of students identifying as non-white, representing Latino (16.6%), Asian (33.7%), African-American (2.4%), and Native American (0.3%) backgrounds (Jesuit Schools Network, 2020). As a point of comparison, the racial/ethnic composition of the larger geographic area is nearly 60% non-white, as county residents are 31.4% Asian, 25.2% Latino, 2.8% African-American, and 40.6% white (SCC Public Health, 2018). St. Robert's students come from a variety of faith traditions, with 70% of current students identifying as Catholic and the remaining students identifying with a variety of faith traditions (Jesuit Schools Network, 2020). As a result of these demographic shifts and the schools' responses to their changing student population, the school has been a site of study for several empirical studies relative to diversity, equity, and inclusion (Bleasdale, 2014: Martin, 1995).

Over the years, the school has also responded to changes in the local economic landscape and worked towards maintaining economic access for low- and middle-income youth. Home prices in the cities around St. Robert's provide a helpful measure for the dramatic economic shifts that have taken place in the area over the past 50 years as well as call attention to the resulting shift in socioeconomic backgrounds for the majority St. Robert's Prep students: the median home price in 1969 in the local area was $26,500 (Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1970), followed by an increase to $245,670 in 1990 (Compass, 2016), and currently stands at $1.55 million for a single-family home (Hansen, 2022). The level of income needed to meet basic needs within the local area has skyrocketed in recent decades. As tuition for academic year 2020-21, was approximately $22,000 per year (Jesuit Schools Network Annual Report, 2020), the families who are able to pay full tuition at the school have become wealthier as the area has become unsustainably expensive for lower- and middle-income families to live in.

The school responded to the shifting economic landscape through outreach programs and a commitment to tuition assistance. In the late 1970s, the school created a summer program to attract low-income minority youth to the school, and in 2001 the school created a student outreach and support program designed to enroll low-income Latino youth from a specific, underserved neighborhood in the local area. The school exhibits a strong commitment to financial access through tuition assistance, with its percentage of students receiving financial assistance doubling over the past 20 years – and its tuition assistance budget increasing tenfold over the same time period. Approximately 25% of St. Robert's student body receives some form of tuition assistance, but only 4% of the student body qualifies as very low income. These students receive full tuition assistance plus additional resources for transportation, books, and lunch. In a desire to promote increasing socioeconomic diversity, the school has been proactive

with its tuition assistance program. Since 2002, the school has increased the tuition assistance budget for families commensurate with both increases in tuition as well as the cost of living in the area. In 2002, the tuition assistance budget nearly doubled, from $620K to $1.1M, and the current tuition assistance budget for the academic year 2020-2021 is over $6.0M. In spite of the school's commitment to economic diversity, the majority of students - 75% of the student body – come from families who are able to pay full tuition every year at the school.

As a result of these commitments to promoting racial and economic diversity, St. Robert's is considered by many peer institutions to have a progressive philosophy towards DEI work. While very little formal documentation exists around their creation, affinity groups for students of color have been part of school life since the late 1980s, and a student group was formed in 2001 to support gay students. In recent years, St. Robert's has taken a leadership role in hosting national conferences for minoritized student groups, and its faculty and staff are frequent attendees at national and regional gatherings related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. St. Robert's has employed a diversity practitioner since 1996, and in the academic year 2107-2018 the entire school community committed itself to a yearlong focus on the topic of race, followed in the 2018-2019 academic year by a yearlong focus on gender. School leadership ensures the faculty and staff receive regular and consistent professional development regarding race and gender identity, among other topics. Despite these efforts, the reputation of St. Roberts within the local community and even among its peer schools is one of a *white and wealthy* school.

Participants

The participants in this study were invited to partake in oral history interviews. These interviews allowed for a narrative analysis of their work as it relates to the experiences of minoritized youth at St. Roberts. Participants were invited to share their perspectives,

motivations, and insights, and to make connections between their experiences and the social and cultural movements that have transpired during the last 50 years. Leavy (2011) describes oral history participants as "knowing parties" (p. 18), or individuals that possess and can share valuable experiences and perspectives. Ideally, participants played key roles in the events being documented, or are identified as a "significant player" that has "influence, respect and standing within an organization" (Ritchie, 2017, p. 77). Also referred to as narrators, participants in an oral history offer their stories as a means to fill in the historical record and to share in the meaning-making that characterizes an oral history project (Leavy, 2011; Ritchie, 2017).

Every school has individuals who have worked at the school for long periods of time. Every school has people whose contributions make them part of school history, or who have raised their voice in advocacy, built programs, and changed the way their schools frame their philosophy of student support. While hundreds of adults have worked at St. Robert's over its 170-year history and many have worked closely with underrepresented students in various capacities over time, this study looked specifically for individuals who brought the lens of racial, class, and gender justice to their work as advocates for underrepresented students within a traditional school setting. The participants for this study shared the specific intent of creating a system of support for underrepresented students, and the participants each proceeded in a manner which demonstrated that they understood and acknowledged the implications of building out these supports for racial, economic, and sexual and gender minority youth within a predominantly white, upper-class, and heteronormative environment. They keenly leveraged their existing political and social capital into opportunities for minoritized students and communities to achieve lasting visibility and value. The participants were shaped by the

traditional school environment, but they also learned to navigate it towards the advantage of their students.

Individually, these participants founded, or built the foundation for, one or more support programs for minoritized students at St. Roberts. Collectively, these participants built the framework through which minoritized students would be seen and supported at the school for generations to come. For the five key participants, their individual contributions reflected a steady focus on one particular student group, yet at the same time their advocacy required an interdependent relationship with the other participants. For example, one participant expanded the school's first program for minority students in the early 1980s, and this work subsequently led to a partnership with another participant to establish one of the school's first affinity spaces for Latino students. The founding of support structures for African-American students, Asian Students, and gay students within the 1980-2000 time frame required both individual effort as well as parallel efforts of the other participants to bolster their work.

The participants also share the characteristic of being long-tenured employees with two to four decades of service at St. Robert's. Collectively, the eight participants have served a total of 283 years at the school. Among the group, the average number of years of service is 35.4 years, and the participants range in tenure from 21 years to 43 years working at the school. Three participants served 40 years or more with the school, three other participants served between 35 and 39 years, and the final two participants served between 20 and 29 years. As a group, they have served under the leadership of seven principals. The longest tenured participants experienced several major periods of change: the growth of enrollment from 1,100 to 1,600 students, the closure of the school's dormitory in the mid-1980's, the change in student, faculty, and staff demographics, and the transition from Jesuit leadership to lay leadership.

The five key participants are three men and two women with a combined 178 years of service at St. Robert's. Several of the participants worked together to establish spaces of support, or to collaborate as advocates for minoritized students during the 1970-2020 time period. All but one participant has recently retired; one participant still teaches at the school and is making plans to retire within the next few academic years. It is important to note that each of the participants is a layperson. This study chooses to center its gaze on the laypeople that effected change within the St. Robert's school community, without the protection and political influence of the collar. The researcher sought to understand the ways in which the efforts of laypeople were received, as well as the professional risks associated with this type of advocacy work. The supplementary participants are three additional individuals who worked at the school during the years when the student supports for minoritized students were beginning to emerge. Their most significant attributes are a lengthy tenure at the school and a role that provided them with exposure to a large cross-section of students for many years (e.g., a full 5-period teacher, a counselor with a caseload of several hundred students, or multiple roles across several areas of the school). For all participants, their lengthy tenure at the school reflected their deep investment in and commitment to the institution. Including the voices of those who experienced changing student demographics in their classrooms or programs over time offers deeper insights into the ways in which the presence and support of underrepresented students shapes a school's overall culture.

While each of the participants played a key role in developing the school's response to minoritized students, their stories largely remain untold. This lack of a formal historical record has led to several spaces of institutional confusion about when certain programs started, who founded them, and why they began. Sadly, two key educators who worked to establish spaces of support for gay students at St. Robert's have died, one in recent months and one several decades

ago. There is minimal documentation about the efforts of the deceased, and what little exists needs to be verified by the participants in this study for accuracy and reliability. This study and its participants have the opportunity to fill in any gaps or errors in St. Robert's institutional record regarding not only their work but the school's approach towards underrepresented students. Due to the personal relationship the researcher has with all the participants, the initial outreach to participate in the study was done through email requesting an informal phone conversation. This initial conversation gave the participants general information about the study and the rationale behind their invitation. Formal consent from each participant was received in writing before any interviews commenced. Table 1 presents demographic information about the participants including gender, ethnicity, length of service, and year of retirement.

Table 1

Demographic Summary of Study Participants

Participant	Type	Gender	Ethnicity	Years at St. Robert's	Total Tenure
Edward Hunter	Supplementary	Male	White	1974-2017	43 years
Lawrence Reynolds	Supplementary	Male	White	1978-2013	35 years
Alton Jun	Key	Male	Asian	1979-2018	39 years
Heidi Alvaro	Key	Female	Latina	1979-present	42 years
Ernest Truman	Key	Male	African-American	1980-2020	40 years
Gordon Fidelio	Key	Male	White	1981-2017	36 years
Lisa Williamson	Supplementary	Female	White	1990-2017	27 years

Table 1 (continued)

Justina Bowen	Key	Female	White	1997-2018	21 years

Note. All participant names have been changed.

Research Questions

Inspired by a desire to understand the forces of change that shape schools over time, this study interrogates four research questions:

1) What historical actions did key personnel take in support of underrepresented students at a traditional, predominantly white Jesuit secondary school? In what ways did opportunities to support underrepresented students present themselves?
2) Within a traditional, Catholic, Jesuit school, what spaces of institutional opportunity allowed for advocacy work towards underrepresented students, and what institutional constraints existed or emerged due to this advocacy?
3) In what ways did the narrative around underrepresented students change at the school over time? How did this shifting narrative impact subsequent efforts at underrepresented student support?
4) In what ways did larger, off-campus social movements influence the work of these key personnel in their service of underrepresented students, particularly as they related to the school's justice-centered mission?

Research Design

This qualitative study uses oral history methods, which allows the participants themselves to create a narrative as they recount past experiences (Bhattacharya, 2017; Ritchie, 2017). As a form of narrative inquiry, oral history serves multiple purposes towards documenting stories that are missing from the historical record: individual experiences are situated within larger social

and cultural contexts, narratives are pieced together from various points of view, and both participant and researcher collaborate on the meaning-making process (Leavy, 2011; Franzosi, 1998; Ritchie, 2017). Narrative inquiry uses participants' insights on the past to develop an understanding of how individuals experience the world (Bhattacharya, 2017; Holley & Colyar, 2009), exploring relationships between people and places. Different from a case study, for example, which is a focused inquiry into issues occurring in the present moment (e.g., a case study of current student support efforts at St. Robert's), or a phenomenological inquiry, which explores the intrinsic nature of a phenomenon (e.g., the phenomenon of the marginalization of underrepresented students), this study seeks a more open-ended approach (Bhattacharya, 2017). Oral history methods in this study allow the participants to guide the conversation, allow the researcher and participants to construct meaning about individual actions as well as larger social movements, and allow the passage of time to be a central character in the resulting narrative around underrepresented student support.

Data Collection

This qualitative study used oral history methods to collect participant narratives. Each interview collected participants' background information as well as documented the historical efforts the participants undertook within their targeted student community (key participants) or the observations the participants had of the work being done at the time (supplementary participants). In addition, all participants were asked to reflect on the school's cultural and institutional response to the advocacy work and if those responses shifted over time. Interview questions addressed topics such as when underrepresented students began enrolling in increasing numbers, when certain programs or structures were first implemented, and if any outside social or civil rights movements were being mirrored on campus. Questions that emerged from the

conversation addressed issues such as the climate around diversity, the tenor of leadership, and the response of the community to either students or programs. Participants guided the conversation in the direction they wanted to go in, regardless of the question or topic of inquiry. Whatever the participant considered important was recorded for inclusion and analysis (Ritchie, 2017).

The researcher used an interview guide (see Appendix A) that is mapped to the study's research questions. The interview guide asks each participant the same questions but alters the lens of each question on either individual action (key participants) or perception of said actions (supplementary participants). While the interview guide identified topics of inquiry, the interviews were semi-structured to provide participants the opportunity to guide the conversation. Flexibility during the interview was paramount, as Ritchie (2017) advised oral historians to "be willing to deviate from the prepared questions whenever something unexpected and interesting develops" (p. 93). Semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher both flexibility and depth during data collection. The researcher allowed each conversation to unfold naturally while returning to the interview guide for structure and direction. Additionally, a semi-structured interview allowed both participant and researcher to probe deeply into complex or multi-layered interactions to fully unpack intents, motivations, and outcomes (Leavy, 2011; Longhurst, 2003; Ritchie, 2017). The same interview protocol was used for each participant, but as semi-structured interviews are more conversational and informational (Longhurst, 2003), there was expected variability among the order and structure of participant's interviews.

In addition, as personal memories are not often linearly remembered, there were times during the interview when the conversation returned to an earlier topic or clarified something that was said earlier. Therefore, the order of the interview topics varied by participant. Several

times, participants referenced artifacts such as photographs, documents, or physical mementos to clarify or expand on their narrative (Leavy, 2011). Several participants mentioned yearbooks as a source of data. One participant mailed the researcher a brochure that had been published and distributed in the years of her advocacy work. Any and all artifacts such as photos, yearbooks, or materials related to student support groups were scanned and cataloged for inclusion in the study.

Each participant interview lasted between 60 minutes to 120 minutes. All interviews were conducted over Zoom, a web-based video conferencing platform, due to the uncertainty regarding the global pandemic. The use of web-based video conference platforms are considered similar to face-to-face interviews and increasingly seen as acceptable forms of conducting interviews (Janghorban et al., 2014; Sullivan, 2012). All conversations were recorded on Zoom and both audio and text transcript files were produced from each session. The verbatim transcription of the interview was reviewed as quickly as possible and verified first by the researcher. After the transcripts were verified for accuracy by the researcher and all names of people, places, and organizations were changed, each transcript was shared with the corresponding participant so they could verify accuracy of the conversation and clarify any initial questions that arose from the conversation (Ritchie, 2017). To ensure the integrity of the transcription process and also to honor the trust each participant placed in the researcher, each participant was afforded the opportunity to clarify any part of their interview or request that specific statements be amended or deleted. Interview excerpts used in Chapters 4 and 5 reflect the participants' comments verbatim.

Data Analysis

The first step in data analysis involved developing a deep understanding of each research participant. Individual summaries were drafted to solidify the researcher's understanding of the

participant and their unique perspective. These summaries provide a general understanding of each participants' role on campus, as well as provide insight into their personality or personal outlook - including how they see themselves within the historical narrative of the school. Additionally, these summaries note the participant's personal racial/ethnic and gender identity, offering some insight into their specific positionality. Finally, each summary presents additional topics that the participant found relevant to mention, which often provide a sense of subjects that are of particular significance to the participant.

Next, data analysis examined the interviews individually as well as comparatively. Transcripts were first read individually so that initial themes and codes could emerge within each narrative. A second round of analysis analyzed the data comparatively across all participants, revealing additional codes and themes. As commonalities began to emerge across the conversations, excerpts from each interview were organized into separate documents by common narratives such as student-identified needs, institutional climate, reflections on leadership, and off-campus social movements. A final round of analysis identified relevant statements or events that were significant to the research questions for the study (Bhattacharya, 2017). From these broad categories, the researcher explored deeper within frequently-mentioned narratives for more focused analysis. Patterns emerged, including contradictions and tensions (Bhattacharya, 2017). As artifacts such as yearbooks, photos, and meeting minutes became available, they were included in the coding schema (Leavy, 2011).

Researcher Positionality

As a committed mid-career Ignatian educator approaching nearly two decades of service to Jesuit schools, it is vitally important that my positionality begins by stating my deep allegiance to the ministries and members of the Society of Jesus. My research on Jesuit schools is rooted in

an inviolable belief in the transformative power of Jesuit education, as well as in a profound desire to improve Jesuit schools for all students. Specifically, my gaze has been focused on marginalized populations in different Jesuit ministries. During the past three years I have been promoting institutional change at St. Robert's through DEI initiatives, most specifically by promoting faculty diversity. I have seen firsthand how many young people's lives have been changed by receiving a Jesuit education, and my professional work keeps me in contact with alumni who credit their St. Robert's education for their professional and moral foundation (Wirth, 2007, as cited in Simmons, 2014). In my professional capacity, I have also experienced firsthand the tension that many alumni experience as they weigh the excellent academic and moral education they received with the high personal and emotional cost of being part of a minoritized group on a Jesuit campus (Simmons, 2014). I have witnessed many men from minoritized groups praise St. Robert's, and in the same breath question if they would send their sons there. There is so much good in Jesuit schools, yet I wonder if the emotional and psychological cost of attending our schools needs to be so high for minoritized students.

I would also like to acknowledge that I am a strongly connected insider in the world of Jesuit schools. Having previously served as a President/Director of the Work of a Jesuit Nativity school, as a program director for first-generation college bound youth at St. Roberts, and currently as a member of the senior administrative team at St. Robert's, I have strong personal connections to my colleagues there. In addition, I maintain strong connections with my colleagues in other local other Jesuit schools, within the Province, and among the national Jesuit Schools Network. This level of connection inspires me to conduct this study following the utmost personal and professional standards. My hope is that this study is an authentic

representation of the work being done at St. Robert's, one that can be of service to other schools, to the Province, and perhaps to the Network.

My personal experience as a first-generation college-bound Latina student is also deeply relevant to this work. I have attended both public and private schools during my educational journey and have experienced both acceptance and marginalization due to my ethnicity, gender, economic background, and ability. I share the feelings of so many St. Robert's alumni that question if the academic preparation they received during high school was worth the psychological and emotional cost of attendance (Simmons, 2014). I treasure the adults in my life – teachers, mentors, and coaches – who believed in me, made my path a little easier, and who helped me to make sense of my high school experience. It is my fervent hope that this study is helpful to those who currently walk with minoritized youth at Jesuit schools and beyond.

Human Subjects Protection Statement

As this study expects to interact with all participants in a virtual format, participants were emailed the human subjects protection statement as part of the informed consent process (see Appendix B). This statement explained the purpose of the study, the research methodology, the potential risks and benefits of participating in this study and verified that approval for the study had been granted by the University of San Francisco's Institutional Review Board (IRB). All participants received a copy of the informed consent form in advance of their interview and returned a signed copy to the researcher, which is kept in a password-protected folder. To confirm participants' understanding of the terms of the research and reconfirm consent, the researcher opened each interview by reminding the participants that participation in this study was completely voluntary, they could stop the interview at any time, and they could choose not to answer any specific question.

Due to personal relationships and the researcher's current affiliation with St. Robert's Prep, all five key participants were aware of this proposed research study as the proposal was being developed. At the proposal defense stage, the scope of the project was expanded to include three supplemental participants. After the research study received formal approval by the Institutional Review Board, all eight participants were contacted between mid-June 2021 and August 2021 to request a formal interview. Participants received invitations to participate in this study via email, which explained both the purpose and the scope of the study. The consent form was sent both via email and mailed to their residence with a stamped, self-addressed envelope. To confirm their participation in the study, participants were asked to return a signed consent form to the researcher via email or post. All interviews were conducted over Zoom and recorded so that the oral history transcripts could be transcribed verbatim for archival purposes. All interviews took place between June 2021 and September 2021.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE PLACE, THE PEOPLE, THEIR WORK

The data presented in this chapter derive from historical and published materials, as well as oral history interviews conducted between June 2021 and September 2021. The historical materials include a review of St. Robert's school yearbooks dating back to the school's first official yearbook in 1951, and a review of archived school newspapers from 1950 to 1999. Historical information on the school was gleaned from a publicly available book written by an alum on the history of the school, published in 2000. Additional materials include publicly available annual reports from the Jesuit Schools Network that publish teacher and student demographics as well as student enrollment data. All names, including those of the participants, their students and colleagues, plus names of institutions and locations, have been changed to pseudonyms.

St. Robert's Prep: Change Through the Years

St. Robert's Prep dates back to 1851. Over the past 170 years, the school has undergone significant periods of change. From its founding in 1851 to 1925, the school operated as King's Prep and was connected – both physically and financially – to the local Jesuit university. It spent the first seven decades of its existence serving primarily as a boarding school for elementary through college students. By 1925, the school decided to reorganize into a separate high school division, moved the school to its current location, and changed the school's name to St. Robert's Prep. In 1935, enrollment was 300 students, and at its centennial in 1951, enrollment was over 700 students. From the early 1970s to the early 1990s, enrollment grew from 1,100 to 1,350. In academic year 2009-2010, enrollment surpassed 1,600 students for the first time. As of this writing, total school enrollment is approximately 1,700 students.

Based on yearbooks going back to 1951, St. Robert's Prep had a predominantly white student body and a predominantly white teaching faculty until the mid-1990s. Prior to the mid-1980s, the population of boarding students was the main factor that diversified the St. Robert's student body. For example, Edward Hunter noted that when he lived in the dormitory, the majority (approximately 75-80%) of the boarders were white, but there were also students from the Middle East, the Pacific Islands, and Hong Kong. When a midwestern Jesuit boarding school closed in 1978, Edward recalled that two African-American students transferred to St. Robert's Prep as boarding students. Heidi Alvaro noted that there were also boarding students from Argentina, Mexico, and Bolivia, and these students she characterized as white Latinos. When asked what the student body was like when they were first hired, most participants agreed with Gordon Fidelio that there were "white kids, Asian kids, and not many Black – maybe - very few Black students, and a number of Latino students" (G. Fidelio, personal communication, July 28, 2021). Heidi further demarcated two types of Latino students in her classroom during the 1980s – middle-class Latino students and low-income Latino students. The latter group enrolled in the school in larger numbers in the mid-1980s as a result of the Minority Scholarship Program that Gordon Fidelio assumed responsibility for in 1981.

A demographic shift in the student population began to take hold in the 1990s due to the success of the Minority Scholarship Program and increased tuition assistance. The school has maintained a strong commitment to tuition assistance over many years. In the early 1990s, tuition was approximately $4,500 a year and the school's tuition assistance budget was between $400,000-$500,000 per year. In academic year 2002-2003, tuition approached the $9,000 mark. As a response, the school nearly doubled its tuition assistance budget to $1,100,000 to ensure continued ethnic and economic diversity at the school. From the mid-1990s on, the population of

students of color fluctuated between 30%-40% of the total student population until about 2015, when the split became 55% white students and 45% students of color. Since then, the numbers of students of color have steadily increased, and in academic year 2019-2020 there were more students of color in the school than white students (52% students of color to 48% white students). While programs such as the Minority Scholarship program and the outreach program for low-income youth were successful in helping to ethnically diversify the student body, the students of color within these programs find themselves in an economic minority as most students of color enrolled at St. Robert's Prep come from middle or higher income families.

St. Robert's Prep has also seen a change in the diversity of its faculty and staff, albeit at a slower pace than its student demographic change. In terms of gender diversity, women on staff prior to 1968 were primarily in support roles such as secretary or nurse. From 1968 through 1978, the school employed approximately 10 women each year, but from 1968 through 1973 there was one female classroom teacher in the entire school. She was joined by a second female teacher in 1974, and there were only two or three women teaching at the school until 1979. Ethnic diversity among faculty was, for many years, reflective of the Jesuits that were missioned to the school. The first faculty member of color joined the teaching staff in 1957, when an ordained Latino Jesuit joined the school as a mathematics and Spanish teacher. He stayed for two years. In 1962, an Asian Jesuit - a Filipino scholastic - joined the faculty and taught English, also for two years. The first lay person of color, a Latino Spanish teacher, was at the school from 1966-1968. For approximately the next 10 years, there was a sprinkling of Jesuits and lay people who identified as men of color, teaching in various academic departments. None of them remained at the school very long. The first year that there were multiple teachers of color teaching at the school was not until 1979-1980 when Alton Jun and Heidi Alvaro were hired in

the same year. Heidi was the first woman of color hired to teach in the classroom in the school's history. Ernest Truman joined the school one year later in 1980. While the occasional Latino or Asian Jesuit would be missioned to teach at the school for a year or two, overall there were less than five teachers of color teaching at the school from 1979 until the mid-1990s, when the numbers of teachers of color began to steadily increase. In academic year 2020-2021, 28% of the faculty were teachers of color.

In addition to enrollment increases and demographic shifts, the school experienced significant cultural changes over the decades. The 1950s were characterized as period of post-war optimism, with the national narrative celebrating the return of soldiers from war, advertising housing and economic opportunity, and promoting traditional American values along with a strong anti-Communist sentiment. The hidden narrative behind this storybook façade was the expansion of government-sanctioned housing segregation, widespread employment discrimination based on race and gender, overt hostility towards gay communities, and widespread violence towards Blacks in the Jim Crow south. In the 1950s at St. Robert's, yearbooks present a portrait of a school that promoted community, consistency, and tradition. Discipline (or avoidance of it) was a common theme in yearbooks and alumni memories. The presence and influence of the Jesuits was strong. Co-curricular offerings were rooted in athletics, ministry, or theatre. Student leadership was offered through student government, speech and debate, or writing for the newspaper or yearbook. Student clubs stemmed from sodalities, or student ministry that "trained real Catholic leaders" (1951 yearbook) to participate in "corporal and spiritual works of mercy" (1953 yearbook). Sodalities promoted service to the school, outreach to the poor, literacy, or prayer. In addition, yearbook photos and newspaper articles from this era showed the school's heteronormative culture. The pursuit of female attention and

companionship was a prominent theme in school documents, and this identity presumption prevails in yearbooks and documents to this day.

Starting in the mid-1960s, several changes took place that opened the doors to a new energy at the school. During this decade, the school changed its curriculum, moving away from a mandatory foundation in Classical languages and allowing students to enroll in more electives. In addition, the school schedule changed, allowing each student to have his own schedule rather than scheduling by grade or division. A holistic counseling program was developed, emphasizing the students' personal growth, academic progress, and spiritual well-being. These changes at the school occurred within a shifting national social context which saw a rebellion against traditional behavior, the questioning of normative values, and the embrace of the individual. Across the nation, the 1960s saw the American civil rights movement take hold. The national consciousness during this decade was characterized by stark political and social division around the call for equal rights for racial minorities, women, impoverished communities, and for gays and lesbians. In 1964, California passed Proposition 14 which ended fair housing practices at the same time that affirmative action policies were being embraced nationally as a way to counteract decades of discrimination. In neighborhoods across the nation, both the Vietnam war and the anti-war movement were televised. This decade also saw increased activism on college campuses, plus the emergence of the first cultural student organizations such as Black Student Unions and Chicano student organizations.

The 1970s ushered in a complicated social reality which revealed a widespread cultural backlash against the reforms and movements of the 1960s. As President Nixon was asking for the support of America's silent majority, and California passed Proposition 13, which tied school funding to property taxes through discriminatory undertones, the spirit of equality and freedom

was taking hold in popular culture. At St. Robert's during the 1970s, additional changes occurred at the school that closely reflected the work of the Society of Jesus. General Congregation 32 took place December 1974 through March 1975, and the assembly was gathered to address societal change in the wake of the Second Vatican Council. The documents that resulted from the General Congregation clearly outlined that the pursuit of justice must be a central component of the Catholic faith and directed ministries of the Society of Jesus to act accordingly.

In April 1976, the school's newspaper wrote about a gathering of students, parents, and faculty where Provincial leadership communicated clearly about the expected direction of the school:

> The General Congregation of Jesuits had stated that if an institution (supported by the Jesuits) does not encourage faith and justice, then that institution should not be allowed to continue until the effort and manpower is directed into this area. ("Justice discussed", 1976, p. 1)

Several major initiatives resulted from GC 32. The school broadened its Local Service Ministry office in Fall of 1975 and offered students service opportunities such as working in soup kitchens, participating in food drives, and volunteering in the local area. In 1976, the school announced the addition of a compulsory Social Justice class for all students and began publishing a magazine that was mailed to all families twice a year to raise awareness of local, national, and global social justice issues.

As the country kept changing, so did St. Robert's Prep. National and state politics during the 1980s can be characterized as a rejection of the free-spirited 1970s, as evidenced by President Regan's opposition to affirmative action and California's Proposition 63, which effectively made the state English-only. On campus at St. Robert's Prep, the 1980s welcomed new teachers who

had been shaped by their college experiences during the 1970s, plus the first group of teachers of color. This new group of educators embraced the spirit of individualism and identity, plus brought structural models to uphold this work. The creation of Faith Sharing Communities (FSCs) in the mid-1980s brought students together in small groups to share their individual experiences and engage in group prayer and service. The Faith Sharing Communities of the 1980s were the precursor to the cultural affinity groups of the 1990s. The Black Student Union and La Raza Unida were both FSCs under Campus Ministry before the Associated Student Body's club structure was formalized. Most of the major cultural affinity groups emerged on campus between 1988 and 1991, and their presence sparked smaller cultural affinity groups to emerge for the subsequent decade. To this day, almost two dozen clubs exist on campus where students can explore their identity with their St. Robert's Prep brothers. FSCs, paired with a curriculum called Personal Growth, elevated student voices and provided space for them to share their feelings and support one another. This period in school history marked the beginning of an increased level of attention to the individual student experience. A student retreat program was built out in the late 1980s/early 1990s which further allowed students the opportunity to come together in prayer and share their experiences. The establishment of a global immersion program in the early 1990s, along with the adoption of a mandatory service requirement, ushered in the era of educating students' hearts and not just their minds. These programs and their emphasis on reflection and small group sharing allowed students to speak their truth about who they were, what they felt, and how they wanted to effect change at their school and beyond.

Student voice was being heard on campus in an entirely new way in the 1990s, and just in time. The statewide political and social debates of that decade reflected a backlash against immigration and multiculturalism. California's Proposition 187 struck against immigrant

communities and Proposition 209 targeted affirmative action policies. These ballot initiatives mirrored the tensions happening on campus. A racist incident involving the St. Robert's football team deeply divided the school in 1995, and this incident led to a student protest against on-campus discrimination at an all-school athletics rally in 1996. The 1990s were the decade that pulled back the veil to reveal the experiences of underrepresented students at St. Robert's.

The 2000s was the decade of student support. While the nation was grappling with the aftermath of 9/11 and facing the reality of war in the Middle East, several major student support initiatives emerged during this time. In the early 2000s, the school committed itself to serving students with learning differences and created a program with dedicated staff to support these students. Additionally, the school began to educate itself on the topic of sexual identity through professional development for faculty and staff. Shortly thereafter, the school and the Diocese allowed the creation of an on-campus support group for gay students, nearly 12 years after the first Gay-Straight Alliance launched in public schools. Finally, the school created a program in 2001 designed to enroll low-income Latino youth from a specific neighborhood in the local area that had been historically underserved by St. Robert's. Again, the school built a program and hired dedicated staff. After about 10 years this program morphed into a support program for any first-generation college-bound, low-income youth enrolled in the school, and provided comprehensive pre-college student and parent support for families.

The decade from 2010 to 2020 saw increased efforts to engage and elevate the presence of communities of color on campus. The election of President Obama in 2008 encouraged minority and majority communities alike to see each other in new ways. The school formalized cultural celebrations - annual events such as the Lunar New Year celebration and Mass for Our Lady of Guadalupe, which previously were organized and attended solely by affinity club

members, were opened to the entire community and supported by the St. Robert's Mother's Guild. New traditions such as community celebrations for Diwali, Santo Niño, and a Black cultural event were established. An all-school Unity Assembly became part of the school calendar, and this event showcased students and cultures from all backgrounds. The latter part of the decade saw increased attention to student needs around gender identity. Underlying these years of social change at the school, the shift from Jesuit leadership to lay leadership took place in the late 1990s. Jesuit schools traditionally have a two-tiered school leadership model which includes both a president and a principal. The president of a Jesuit school is responsible for the entire organization but delegates oversight of the daily operations of the school to the principal. In short, while the president establishes the overarching philosophy that guides the school, the principal decides how to interpret that philosophy and put it into practice.

In the 1970 to 2020 timeframe, eight different principals and five different presidents served at the school, but four administrators' names consistently emerged during interviews and within historical documents: Fr. Hugh Parker, SJ, Michael Freeman, Owen McCoy, and Robert Goodman. Fr. Hugh Parker, SJ served as principal from 1980 to 1993 and was Assistant principal from 1978-1980. Fr. Hugh Parker, SJ has a reputation for identifying a direction and proceeding forward unabated.[4] After Fr. Hugh Parker, SJ's leadership, several lay administrators took the helm of the school. Michael Freeman served in administration from 1997 to 1999, after serving in various roles, and was interim principal for one academic year. Owen McCoy, an educator who had previously been a member of the Society of Jesus, was the school's first lay

[4] As an example of his leadership style, Heidi Alvaro recalled Fr. Hugh Parker's stated commitment to diversify the faculty by hiring more women. Fr. Parker nearly tripled the number of women in the classroom during his 16 years in leadership, summarily establishing a new baseline around faculty representation. In his subsequent work at traditional Jesuit secondary schools across the Province, Fr. Parker established several embedded middle schools for low-income youth at his sole discretion.

principal from 1999-2009. Robert Goodman, an alum of the school, served as principal from 2009-2014, after serving in various administrative capacities for many years. In 2014 he was appointed the school's first lay president, after working at the school for nearly three decades. In 2016, the school formally appointed its first female principal, a talented educator with deep roots in Catholic education. Despite the many changes within the St. Robert's school community over its 170 year history, its prevailing culture remains that of a traditional Jesuit school. The language and norms of the school, like that of many private schools, reflect upper-middle class, heteronormative values. The image of a traditional St. Robert's student continues to be that of a white, heterosexual young man who is athletic, academically excellent, well-mannered, and has a sunny disposition.

Oral History Participants

Each participant's life experience powerfully frames their perspective of St. Robert's Prep, the work they chose to undertake at the school, and their assessment of the institutional impact of their collective efforts. The section that follows presents a profile of each participant to situate them within the context of the school during the time they were employed at the school. For each individual participant, their stories have existed in their memories for decades. Some of their actions have become school lore. Some of their stories have never been told. And other significant moments have been mis-remembered, ignored, or even silenced within the institution.

Mr. Edward Hunter (Supplementary Participant)

Edward Hunter arrived at St. Robert's Prep in 1974, during the final semester of his senior year of college at a nearby California State University. He was hired as a prefect in the school's dormitory, and quickly moved to be the first lay director of the student residence while teaching two sections of Sociology and running the intramural sports program. He briefly left the

dormitory for three years starting in 1977 to be Dean of Students, then returned in 1980 with his wife to serve as director of the dormitory until the student residence closed in 1983. Over his 43 years at St. Robert's, he held many positions: Director of Student Activities, was the school's first lay Campus Minister, served briefly in College Guidance, taught Religion and Personal Growth, and finished his career in Personal/Academic Counseling, where he retired in 2017 after four years as director of the department. In addition to his daily duties, Edward coached baseball for 12 years, roller hockey for 17 years, and moderated several student clubs during his years at St. Robert's. Among his peers and former colleagues, Edward is respected widely for his personal and professional contributions at the school.

Edward credits the Jesuits that worked at St. Robert's Prep for his personal values and educational philosophy. He cites their influence on his spiritual formation, in addition to influencing the work he did at St. Robert's: "The Jesuits were - next to my wife, they had the most influence on my life, so I was really attuned to what they were doing… I learned from all of them and forever grateful for that opportunity" (Personal communication, August 27, 2021). Edward was deeply committed to the school and saw his work as a ministry, often going above and beyond to help St. Robert's students. His love for students, his background in Counseling Psychology, and his grounding in Jesuit education are apparent as he reflects on the work he did with students over the years:

> I like to think my middle names are empathy, compassion, and generosity. That's always what I tried to do as counselor or a campus minister or whatever. In all of my jobs, I would give them an opportunity to create relationships. I used to tell Robert Goodman that I hope that was my tag in 43 years, that I allowed students to have a relationship with

> me. Not for me, but for them, that I can help them in some way. (E. Hunter, personal communication, August 27, 2021)

This belief in the power of relationships led Edward to build out the student retreat program at St. Robert's. As Campus Minister, he brought a seminal Jesuit secondary school retreat program, the Kairos retreat, to the school in the early 1990s. Currently, this program is regarded as a pinnacle formative experience for students at the school.

As a white man, Edward was forthright about the fact that his personal identity shaped the lens through which he saw race and difference: "I was 24 years old, so I had no concept of multiculturalism. I took a class on it. I'm just a white boy from the east side" (Personal communication, August 27, 2021). He attended a Catholic grammar school and a Catholic high school, and received his Master's degree from King's University, a nearby Jesuit university. He readily acknowledges that his positionality influenced the work that he did – or did not do – with students of color:

> I've never really talked to [students of color in the dorm] about if they felt that they were not treated fairly or if they had moments - if they experienced racism or discrimination. Never really talked to them about it. Shame on me. That wasn't my world either. I just felt - given my experiences I've shared with you, I just looked at everybody the same. (Personal communication, August 27, 2021)

Edward upholds the strong influence of his African-American baseball coach in college. His coach's mentorship and friendship provided him not only with the structure he needed to successfully navigate and graduate from college, but also gave him a personal reference point as he reflected on the different perspectives held by people of color versus those held by white people.

Edward referenced St. Robert's Prep school culture frequently during the conversation. His observation was that the school was not always open to change. He offered examples of resistance to programs that are currently seen as fundamental to the mission of the school, and he was at the helm of the Campus Ministry program as these programs emerged. He noted how the community resisted the introduction of Faith Sharing Communities (FSCs) - groups designed for students to share in prayer and community service – and he recalled the resistance he encountered as he introduced Kairos, an overnight spiritual retreat for upperclassmen, to the school. Currently, Kairos is heralded as a seminal experience for St. Robert's students and FSCs are remembered as groups which were instrumental to the formation of students during their time. Edward also noted that several of the defining characteristics of St. Robert's culture were the wide latitude offered to teachers and coaches to do things "their own way," as well as a desire from a faction of the faculty to be "one community" (Personal communication, August 27, 2021). Edward observed the latter sentiment emerge both with the establishment of culturally-based affinity groups as well as with the creation of FSCs. Despite the resistance he observed, he believed the school to be more personalized in the late 1970s through the 1990s than it is now. He attributes this shift to the increased size of the student body and the expanded footprint of the physical campus.

Mr. Lawrence Reynolds (Supplementary Participant)

In the Fall of 1978, Lawrence Reynolds arrived at St. Robert's Prep after working at another all-male Jesuit secondary school, Manresa High School. Lawrence attended Catholic schools his entire life and attended Jesuit schools for high school and university study. Originally hired as a full time English teacher and varsity Soccer coach, he spent his 35 years at St. Robert's Prep in the classroom teaching either English, Mathematics or Physical Education. He co-

founded the PE program, spent 19 years coaching soccer, and coached the cross country team for five years. He also served in the Admissions office for almost 10 years. Retired since 2013, Lawrence is deeply involved with the retired St. Robert's employees' group. He sends out weekly communications about school events and happenings, plus coordinates the groups' frequent social gatherings. He is respected widely among the retirees and current faculty alike.

Lawrence's work as an educator was deeply formed by the Jesuit Secondary Education Association (now Jesuit Schools' Network). He remarked on both the content presented as well as the relationships that emerged from cohort gatherings of educators from Jesuit secondary schools:

> I learned so much by going to different colloquium seminars in the [local area] in California, in the western United States, and I went to several national ones… I've done English department get togethers, PE get togethers, Admissions get togethers. I learned a lot. (Personal communication, August 25, 2021)

A graduate of the Seminars in Ignatian Leadership, he embraced the Jesuit educational ethos of lifelong learning and applied that philosophy to his work at the school. Lawrence's role in the Admissions office placed him within the national conversation about expanding access to Jesuit education. During his six-year tenure as Admissions Director, he was intimately involved with the creation and rollout of a program designed to attract and support low-income Latino students from an area of the city that had been historically underserved by St. Robert's. While he characterizes that experience as one where the school took a risk on non-traditional students, he also reflected deeply on how much he learned from that experience and how much the school learned from that Admissions program. Even in retirement, Lawrence makes efforts to attend school assemblies on social justice topics, simply to continue his learning.

Lawrence grounds himself in an open and accepting point of view. He reflected on his arrival at the school in his mid-twenties and described his younger self through a contradiction: "despite always being a liberal democrat from San Francisco, I think I was extremely naïve" (Personal communication, August 25, 2021). He recalls his formation as a white person absorbing the civil rights movement as laying the groundwork for the thinking he wanted to cultivate within his students: "we learned lessons from the 60s. And we tried to bring those to our students in the 70s and 80s" (Personal communication, August 25, 2021). In addition, he references his Catholic and Jesuit education as providing the justice lens that frames his view: "I always thought of Catholics as liberal. I think really where I got that is at least my Jesuit education at St. Gregory and King's University. I was tuned into some of the liberal thinking that was going on" (Personal communication, August 25, 2021). Lawrence characterizes himself as someone who always had an interest in the African-American experience and remarked on how affected he was by a book he read at his Jesuit high school that opened his mind to the realities of people of color and people living in poverty. While he acknowledges that Catholics are not widely known as liberal, his openness to different life experiences provided him with a wider context through which to understand the world.

During our conversation, Lawrence pointed out several moments during his St. Robert's tenure that gave him pause regarding race and difference. He spoke about taking his soccer players to a lower income, predominantly Latino community to play against the local high school team: "[I listened] to our St. Robert's Prep students' comments as they're rolling through an area of middle or lower income Latinos. Some of the comments from our St. Robert's Prep students were not very sensitive" (Personal communication, August 25, 2021). His response to those comments was to lecture the players about respect and he said this same situation with students

unfolded at least one other time. Lawrence also remarked on a situation that unfolded at the Cross Country banquet in the late 1990s/early 2000s where students were making fun of one of the top runners' Indian identity:

> I remember being at the banquet, and I loved [the head coach], I love cross country, I love the kids. But I feel very uncomfortable. And it's, I guess, that single moment reminded me that we still had a lot of work to do. (Personal communication, August 25, 2021)

Finally, Lawrence reflected on his conversation with a teaching colleague who was frustrated about teaching students with learning differences. He reframed the argument for his colleague that their intent should be to work with students who learn differently, not to dismiss the student for not being able to do the work. While he did not reflect specifically on the culture of the school regarding race and difference – or the overall school culture for that matter – he did point out these moments as being particularly poignant for him during his time at the school.

Mr. Alton Jun (Key Participant)

Alton Jun began his 39 years at St. Robert's Prep in the Fall of 1979. A few years out of college when he started, Alton was the only Chinese faculty member at the school and one of two teachers of color at the school the year he was hired. The school's previous Asian employees were a Filipino Jesuit (1961-1964), a Filipino Jesuit scholastic (1974-1976), a Chinese Jesuit brother (1975-1977) and men of Filipino or Japanese heritage who worked in the kitchen or janitorial staff. For almost 15 years, Alton was the only Asian faculty member at St. Robert's Prep until a Jesuit priest of Chinese heritage joined the staff in the fall of 1994. From the beginning, Alton fully immersed himself into St. Robert's life. Hired to teach Biology and coach

junior varsity tennis, he joined the summer school teaching staff almost immediately and taught behind-the-wheel driver's education to high school students. Over the next 30 years, summer school was a major part of his time at St. Robert's Prep and he served as assistant principal of the summer school program for 10 years. He retired from summer school after being principal of the program for five years. During the regular academic year Alton taught Biology, as well as a few sections of Chemistry as the need arose.

Alton was a leader both to students and faculty alike. His many leadership activities included: (a) being one of three teachers who started the Advanced Placement program at St. Robert's in the 1980s; (b) serving as department chair for the Science Department; (c) serving on the faculty and staff Technology committee that implemented the 1:1 iPad program at the school in 2013; (d) moderating several on-campus clubs; (e) leading sophomore retreats with Heidi Alvaro in the early 1990s; (f) serving as an immersion trip leader. Most significantly, Alton founded the Asian Society student club at St. Robert's Prep in the early 1990s. It remains one of the major cultural affinity clubs to be founded at the school, and came to fruition around the same time the Black Student Union/African-American Student Union and the La Raza Unida/Latino Student Union were founded. He is widely respected among his peers, and frequently referred to by alumni as having had a significant impact on their experiences at St. Robert's Prep. Alton retired in 2018.

Alton attended a university in the region that was known for its social and political activism. He made a point to characterize himself as someone who was <u>not</u> a change agent and thinks of himself as someone who focused on assimilation, yet he also recounted several times where he confronted the administration or staff members for what he saw as unfair treatment, bias against Asian-American issues, or racism towards Asian-American students. He shared a

story about approving Asian Society t-shirts that were seen as controversial but noted how he thought it "instilled a lot of confidence in some of my Asian students" (Personal communication, June 24, 2021) to have t-shirts that promoted Asian-American pride. Alton has a strong understanding of concepts like systemic racism, white supremacy, and critical race theory, and is quick to make connections between micro-level issues and how they represent an overarching system centered on race. Strong in his identity as an Asian-American man, Alton noted how his personal interest in Asian studies translated into conversations with Asian-American students about their experiences at St. Robert's: "I was big on Asian Studies at the time. So I started talking to [my students] about Asian American issues and assimilation and stereotypes" (Personal communication, June 24, 2021). Alton described the institution as a one that was "pretty good to begin with" but also detailed several instances when faculty members would perpetuate Asian stereotypes in attempts at humor. He characterizes the school community as open and accepting to cultural affinity groups, but only to a point.

Among the major changes that Alton noted during his 39 years at the school was a series of demographic shifts that took decades but ultimately resulted in the increase of Asian and Asian-American students at the school. First, he noted the closure of the boarding school in 1983 and the subsequent decrease in international students from Hong Kong. This decrease was followed by an influx of students from various Asian-American backgrounds in the late 1990s, specifically Vietnamese and Chinese students. He took time to explain the shift in demographics that took place in the area as immigrant families settled in the area, either due to instability in their homelands or opportunity through the local area's tech sector. He also witnessed the transformation of the Asian Society from a group focused on general Asian-American issues into a group more focused on language or cultural tradition. Ultimately, numerous cultural groups

spun off from the Asian Society, allowing students from different Asian backgrounds (Filipino, Vietnamese, Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Indian) to have groups of their own where they could explore and celebrate their family's language and culture.

Mrs. Heidi Alvaro (Key Participant)

Heidi Alvaro began working at St. Robert's Prep in the Fall of 1979 as a Spanish teacher. As a Cuban native, she was the first woman of Latin/Hispanic descent hired as faculty member at the school. There were approximately eight women on faculty at St. Robert's when she was hired, and approximately nine other women working in support roles either as secretaries, bookkeepers, or kitchen staff. She was not the first person of Latin/Hispanic heritage to work at St. Robert's. Over the years several Latino men had taught at the school – both Jesuit and lay – but none stayed more than a few years. Heidi was one of two teachers of color at the school the year she started and was the only woman of color in the classroom for almost 15 years. When asked about the culture of the school regarding difference, she alluded to personally experiencing microaggressions. However, she also noted that the school changed once the administration decided to embrace students that were underrepresented at St. Robert's, and to actively recruit students from communities that had been historically underserved by the school.

Heidi is still working at St. Robert's Prep and is currently in her 42nd year of teaching in the Modern and Classical Language department. Over the span of four decades, she has served as department chair for a total of 25 years and served as Assistant Principal of Instruction for 10 years. In the late 1980s, Heidi was among the team of three teachers (including Alton Jun) who started the Advanced Placement program at St. Robert's. Deeply involved in the life of the school, she worked as a service mentor in the early 1980s (before there was a community service requirement at the school) and helped the students identify and complete community service

projects. She helped with mainstay programs like the school yearbook and led multiple sophomore retreats in the early 1990s with Alton Jun. Heidi is widely respected among her peers and her genuine love for students is palpable. Alumni often refer to her and her classroom as places of safe harbor, and she is frequently named as a teacher who had great influence on their lives. Known for her warm personality, her philosophy of welcome was shaped by her early years at the school when she had a sharp sense of not belonging in the community: "I didn't feel like I belonged to the community at that time, especially during those first couple of years" (Personal communication, June 14, 2021). Naturally curious, she develops strong relationships with student and adults alike by getting to know people at a deep level:

> I asked a million questions all the time in my classroom. When will you eat? Who fixes dinner? Does your family get together and eat dinner, right? At least once or twice a week? Who are your friends? Where do your grandparents live? (Personal communication, June 14, 2021)

She is a problem solver at heart, and instinctively seeks to identify what students need so that they can grow into their full potential.

Heidi's efforts and advocacy provided the framework for several programs that exist to this day. She was among a small group of faculty who began working directly with low-income Latino youth at the school in the mid-1980s through Faith Sharing Communities (FSCs). She worked closely with Gordon Fidelio as they developed an FSC which ultimately became the La Raza Unida (later, the Latino Student Union) student affinity club in the early 1990s, one of the main student cultural affinity clubs at St. Robert's Prep. This student group still meets regularly and enjoys a strong reputation on campus. The student support structures Heidi and her team built in the early 1980s provided the framework for a program which began in 2001. This

program continues to serve low-income, first-generation college bound youth with bilingual admission support, tuition assistance, stipends for books, meals, and transportation, and comprehensive student and parent support.

Deeply reflective, Heidi's memories paint a picture of the synergy that she saw between people, philosophy, and action at the school during the 1980s and 1990s. She readily acknowledges how individual Jesuits influenced her work as well as how their leadership styles shaped the school's environment in her first few decades at the school. She characterizes Fr. Hugh Parker, SJ, who served as principal from 1979 to 1993 as a change agent who brought an "awareness that we cannot stay as we were" (Personal communication, June 14, 2021) in terms of the composition of faculty and his support of student support initiatives. Two Jesuit scholastics, Mr. Keith Harper, SJ and Mr. Archie Fitzgerald, SJ, feature prominently in her memories as two colleagues that brought a new level of passion and commitment towards their work in supporting low-income Latino students. She cites Ignatian documents and makes connections to their influence within the school community – documents such as Arrupe's "Men For Others" address in 1973 and "Go Forth and Teach" in 1987 which reinforced ideas of collaboration and companionship to the school. Over her 42 years, she characterized a shift in the school to be "more Jesuit…and more academic" (Personal communication, June 14, 2021).

Mr. Ernest Truman (Key Participant)

Every participant interview that addressed supporting youth of color referenced the work of Ernest Truman. Ernest began his career at St. Robert's Prep in the Fall of 1980 and was the first person of African ancestry to work at the school in any capacity. He was hired as a teacher in the Mathematics department and a freshman basketball coach. Between 1980 and 2020, Ernest held eight positions at the school, supported several student clubs, and left an indelible impact on

students and adults alike. He served as Mathematics teacher, Religious Studies teacher, Social Science teacher, basketball coach, Dean of Students, Assistant Principal, the school's first Diversity Coordinator. He retired in 2020 from his role as Christian Service Director. Ernest moderated the Bike Club, the Brother-to-Brother tutoring club, as well as the student Christian Service club. He encouraged and facilitated the hiring of racially diverse faculty members, playing a key role in the recruitment of women of African ancestry into staff and teaching roles in the late 1980s and early 1990s. He also played a major role in hiring the second Black male teacher at the school in the mid-1990s. He mentored numerous other faculty and staff of all backgrounds, and in a special way mentored faculty and staff of color.

Atop these many accomplishments, Ernest Truman is most known for establishing the first cultural affinity group at St. Robert's Prep. The Black Student Union, at times named the African-American Student Union, was established in 1988 and has been a consistent presence on campus for over 30 years. Currently, the Black Student Union is highly regarded on campus and its members are seen as strong voices for communities of color at St. Robert's Prep. Alumni of all backgrounds, and in a special way, alums of color, refer to Mr. Truman as a pivotal figure in their lives whose person and presence shaped their lives to this day. Among his peers and colleagues, Ernest is seen as a major player in the school's history – as a change agent who shaped the school's trajectory. Ernest characterizes himself more humbly:

> I wasn't the assertive, rabble rouser, indignant, forceful person that went to Fr. Hugh Parker SJ, the principal, and said "things must change". That was not me. I think I was really just trying to be a supportive role with the kids. (Personal communication, June 12, 2021)

Both characterizations of Ernest are true – he did not demand institutional revolution, but he was certainly consistent in his desire to effect change at the school in the areas of inclusion, belonging, and justice.

It is noteworthy that during his oral history interview, Ernest noted 13 different moments of racism that he experienced, or that were experienced by other Black, Latino, or Asian-identified students. He spoke of moments of individual racism aimed at him (questioning his credentials or undermining his authority) as well as painful moments where students of color were targeted by police, belittled by teachers or fellow students, and systematically excluded from the narrative of the school. In the face of these and other painful moments, he remained at St. Robert's Prep for 40 years, advocating for changes in curriculum, promoting DEI-focused professional development for faculty and staff, and supporting students of color and low-income youth. Over his years at St. Robert's, Ernest established himself as a man of goodness, faith, and integrity, and his influence continues to be felt at the school even after his retirement in 2020. Deeply respected by colleagues, students, alumni, and parents across the years, St. Robert's Prep recently established a teaching fellowship program in his honor which promotes diversity in the teaching profession.

Mr. Gordon Fidelio (Key Participant)

Gordon Fidelio's work at St. Robert's Prep, over nearly four decades, can be characterized by the notion of one thing leading to another. In 1981, he began his work at St. Robert's Prep in the Local Support Ministry (LSM) office, where he worked for seven years. Following that, he spent the next three decades teaching full time in the Religious Studies department and working in the school's summer program. He was also deeply involved with the Minority Scholarship Program (MSP), and the relationships he developed and cultivated through

the MSP led to a deep kinship with low-income Latino students during the latter half of the 1980s. The spaces Gordon created for his Latino students ultimately led to the creation of La Raza Unida, or the affinity group for Latino students which exists at St. Robert's Prep to this day. Eventually moving into administration for summer school, he served as Dean of Students and eventually retired from the summer program as Assistant Principal under Alton Jun.

When Gordon arrived at the school, the Local Support Ministry was a recently established voluntary service program that was created to take St. Robert's Prep students out into the local community to serve others. The LSM program was in its second year when Gordon took the helm. Part of the LSM Director's role was to oversee the schools' MSP, which offered scholarships to low-income middle school youth of color for St. Robert's 6-week summer school program. Modeled after a program at nearby King's University, that sought to introduce minority youth to opportunities in higher education, the Minority Scholarship Program was created by Fr. Hugh Parker, SJ in 1980, presumably as a response to the Society's directive to increase the number of racial and economic minority students enrolled at the school. In the early years of the program, these middle school students remained connected to the program throughout the academic year because St. Robert's Prep students provided afterschool tutoring for MSP students. Gordon's work during the summer allowed him to develop strong relationships with minoritized students at St. Robert's, and he recruited low-income students and students of color during the year to serve as MSP staff for summer programs and as MSP tutors during the academic year. The MSP still exists at St. Robert's to this day, rebranded in either 1996 or 1997 as the STRIVE program. Each year, dozens of low income youth of color apply to the STRIVE program for a summer academic experience on campus. This program remains an avenue for

youth from neighborhoods that have been historically underserved by St. Robert's to be introduced to St. Robert's Prep and to consider it as an option for high school.

As a person of mixed Spanish and Northern European ancestry, Gordon is deeply attuned to identity, the subtleties of culture, and how students of color experience schools. Gordon identifies strongly with both his Spanish heritage and the Spanish language, and encourages others to be open towards learning about other cultures and languages. He possesses an acute understanding of differing levels of privilege within communities – and, in particular, how this distinction affects communities of color. For example, when he was working to identify middle school students for the Minority Scholarship Program, he made a point to ensure that his program reached the students most in need:

> We [would] go to the Catholic grammar schools and I said, you know, "which students are the real minority students?"…Not just the low hanging fruit, you know, we want the ones that were really harder to get to and reach. (Personal communication, July 28, 2021)

Issues of culture and identity surfaced several times during our conversation, particularly as he discussed his own limitations when working with Mexican-American youth due to his personal identity as Spanish.

Gordon's desire to be in authentic relationship with students was central to his work with underrepresented students at St. Robert's Prep. He characterizes himself as a person of the heart and is known across the school community for his deep faith and his profound kindness. This combination led Gordon to become an active part of the Faith Sharing Community (FSC) movement that took hold at the school in the mid-1980s. He worked closely with Heidi Alvaro to establish a FSC for low-income Latino students in the mid-1980s, an experience which he characterizes as the highlight of his career: "That was my best group meeting or club or whatever

it was - ever. I mean, we had 40 kids there every day. I never had one like that. That was my peak" (Personal communication, July 28, 2021). The group would gather in his classroom to share experiences, pray together, coordinate service opportunities, and organize retreats. This FSC eventually turned into the La Raza Unida/Latino Student Union student affinity club. Mr. Fidelio's FSC was a lifeline for many low-income Latino students as they navigated the St. Robert's Prep environment. Still meeting to this day, LRU continues to serve as an anchor of support for many Latino students.

Given his deeply personal style, it was particularly painful for Gordon when the FSC morphed into the La Raza Unida cultural affinity club and took on a more political purpose focused on Mexican American issues. Gordon felt limited because he presents as white and does not identify as Latino; he felt rejected by the students. He stepped away from the club shortly thereafter, citing the limits of what he had to offer and what the students needed. When asked to reflect upon his overall impact on the school and students, he represents himself humbly as "the right person at the right time" (Personal communication, July 28, 2021) who worked with students in need. However, dozens of alumni over the years speak of the magic of Gordon Fidelio's classroom and how he was the teacher that went above and beyond to ensure that they could be their full selves at St. Robert's Prep. Widely respected in the community for his contributions and his generosity of spirit, Gordon remains connected to the school and to other retirees.

Mrs. Lisa Williamson (Supplementary Participant)

Lisa Williamson joined the St. Robert's Prep community in the Fall of 1990 as an English teacher and Assistant Speech and Debate coach. Acutely aware that she was joining a private school community after 11 years teaching in public schools, Lisa was drawn to St. Robert's by

the strength of its Speech and Debate program. In her 27 years at the school, she taught English and Rhetoric, became a highly decorated Speech and Debate coach, directed the school's nationally-recognized Speech and Debate program, and served as Assistant Director of the Admissions office before retiring in 2017. Lisa has since moved out of the area and remains a widely respected member of the community. She brings a unique vantagepoint to her reflections on St. Robert's Prep. Personally, she sees herself as someone who "didn't fit into a lot of the pigeonholes. I was a Protestant from public school" (Personal communication, September 9, 2021). She shared that she was raised in a very conservative Christian family although her viewpoints are different from those of her family. She noted there were not many women on campus when she arrived in 1990, and shared moments when she was acutely aware of not being male, and not being an alum.

Lisa's roles at the school brought a wide range of students into her purview: Speech and Debate brought a homogenous group of high-achieving students into her classroom and office, and her role in the Admissions office presented her with the opportunity to interface with students and parents of all backgrounds. She was working in the Admissions office in 2001 when the school began providing new avenues for low-income Latino youth to enroll at St. Robert's Prep. A mother of children who struggled academically, Lisa is acutely tuned into the need for student support and frequently praised the efforts of the St. Robert's Prep Counseling department. As a teacher, she saw the Counseling department as an invaluable partner in the work of educating and supporting St. Robert's students.

The topics of gender and sexual identity came up frequently during her oral history. Lisa noted that whenever a student confided in her that they were gay, her reaction was typically one of being fearful for the students' physical safety. Her concerns stemmed mainly from the

Catholic Church's current position on sexual orientation and gender identity and how that value system influenced the actions of students and adults alike within a Catholic school. She referenced the establishment and efforts of the St. Robert's Gay-Straight Faith Sharing Community (GSFSC) several times in the conversation, and was particularly attuned to the ways in which an institution communicated support or silence towards minoritized students.

Mrs. Justina Bowen (Key Participant)

From 1997 to 2018, Justina Bowen served as the Registrar of St. Robert's Prep. Over the 21 years that she was at the school, she was responsible for all student records, volunteered in the theatre department, and oversaw costuming for school theatre productions. While her professional responsibility was essential to the school's operations and she was involved with a major student co-curricular program, she portrays herself as an almost marginal character in the life of the school. Several times during the conversation she made a point to note that she was staff – not faculty - and so she did not perceive herself as having inside knowledge of certain issues, nor did she see her direct influence on programs. And yet, this self-described "quiet, shy kind of person" (Personal communication, July 17, 2021) focused her gaze on gay students and effected change which created new and critically needed spaces for these on campus.

Justina's reflections consistently centered on what was best for the students, not on her role specifically or what she derived as a benefit. When listing her roles on campus, Justina almost casually mentions her role in establishing the school's first ever space for gay students, the Gay-Straight Faith Sharing Community (GSFSC). She mentioned it in the same breath as her idea to create a support program for incoming transfer students. The school already had a program for new freshmen students which paired them with an upper-class mentor, but Justina's role as Registrar gave her insight into mid-year transfers or transfer students that started in their

sophomore or junior year. She took her idea to the program director and humbly welcomed the counselor who assumed responsibility for the transfer program: “It just seemed to me to be better if a counselor was doing that than myself, you know?” (Personal communication, July 17, 2021). Similarly, with the GSFSC, even though she played a critical role in its creation, she noted, “I didn’t think I was the person to run the group” (Personal communication, July 17, 2021). Her unassuming presence at St. Robert’s often leads people to the mistaken impression that she was not a major player in the establishment of these groups. Her significance is best explained using a theatre metaphor: most people see the actors on stage, but they rarely see the producer – without whom there simply is no production.

Justina offered several observations that painted a complicated picture of the St. Robert’s Prep environment. She noted that when she arrived at St. Robert’s, she thought “it was like the perfect place. But then you realize it's just like any other high school in many ways” (Personal communication, July 17, 2021). While her reflections included high praise for the community’s strong support system, she also referenced several homophobic incidents that occurred at St. Robert’s which led her and other faculty members to discuss the idea of starting an affinity group for gay students. Justina’s desire to be an advocate stemmed from her experience supporting her gay son during his high school years. While her son was not a student of St. Robert’s, Justina was familiar with the harmful effects of a school environment that was neither attuned to the needs of gay students, nor publicly supportive of them. Justina drew upon these personal experiences to inform and bolster her advocacy work at the school.

The Foundations of Underrepresented Student Support

The foundations of modern support efforts for minoritized students at St. Robert’s Prep emerged between the 1980s and the early 2000s at St. Robert’s Prep. The work of key

participants, and the structures they created, established the baseline for student support at the school. These early efforts have been added to, expanded upon, and institutionalized over the years. The political battles fought by the earliest advocates paved the way for the efforts that followed. While early efforts of minoritized student support coalesced around the creation of student affinity groups such as the Black Student Union, La Raza Unida, the Asian Society, and the Gay-Straight Faith Sharing Community, each affinity group walked a different path towards its creation. As a result, there was no one set formula for minoritized student support - the framework needed by each group emerged differently due to the larger political context of the school. The following subsections describe the path taken by each of these groups.

Foundations of Support within the Black/African Ancestry Community

The first Black student to graduate from St. Robert's Prep graduated in 1949. In the decades that followed, singular numbers of Black/African Ancestry students enrolled in or graduated from St. Robert's Prep until approximately the late 1970s. When Ernest Truman arrived on campus in the fall of 1980 as the first and only person of African ancestry to have worked at the school, he assessed the demographics of the school as "brother and sister few" (Personal communication, June 12, 2021). From his conversations with Black students enrolled at the school, he knew about racist incidents that were being directed towards them by students and faculty alike. Some of Ernest's own experiences at the school had been marked by racism. For example, at his first Back to School night a white parent had questioned his professional qualifications in a classroom full of parents. For Ernest, it was what he saw and heard on campus that inspired him to think of establishing a Black Student Union as a space of community and support soon after arriving at the school. His first action was to inquire among the Black students if they wanted such a group:

> In 1980/'81, I was interested in knowing if the boys, the young men, wanted to start a Black Student Union, a club to support them, to encourage them, to let them know that they weren't the lone rangers on campus. And the response really was a great hesitancy, a leeriness because they did not want to be ostracized. They didn't want people looking at them and saying, "Oh, you guys are developing a separatist-type group," and so the response was, "No, not really." (E. Truman, personal communication, June 12, 2021)

For the Black students at St. Robert's during the 1980's, their desire to not be seen as disruptors of the school's foundational values of community and brotherhood outweighed their desire for an affinity space. This student decision reveals the social and political context of the school at the time. From the perspective of the Black-identified students, establishing a group such as a Black student union would not only be seen as an affront to the school's values of one unified community, but it would also de-center the white student experience. For these students, the idea of being the first to create a space around their Black identity on campus was not something for which they were ready.

To Ernest's credit, he listened to the students in 1980 and did not push the students to create a Black student union. Not one to sit idle, over the next few years Ernest built out parent engagement structures for the Black parent community. Several parents came forward and offered their partnership. In 1983, a parent stepped forward to offer his home to host a potluck for Black St. Robert's students and families. Another parent stepped forward in the 1984/1985 timeframe to offer her assistance with outreach efforts in the Black community so that more Black students could enroll at St. Robert's Prep. The Black Student Union eventually formed in the Spring of 1988, emerging at the request of students. A junior student named Zachary Strickland came forward and asked Mr. Truman for help in establishing the BSU, knowing that

he would be supportive of the idea. Zachary's rationale was similar to the one Ernest had nearly a decade earlier. Zachary felt that Black students needed a place on campus where they could support one another and feel less alone. The group established itself under the structure of a Faith Sharing Community, housed under Campus Ministry, and began to meet. The Black Student Union was the first cultural identity affinity group established at St. Robert's Prep. Previous cultural clubs had been organized around foreign language and were an extension of the curriculum, such as a French club or a Spanish club. Approximately 12 Black students joined the BSU its first year.

In contrast to the students who weighed the political and social cost of establishing a Black Student Union in the early 1980s, Ernest Truman and Zachary expected resistance from the community and met it head on. These early political battles centered on rationalizing the need for the group. Ernest recalled mixed responses from faculty – with some making comments like, "Why are you doing this?" and "Why are you trying to separate the school?" (Personal communication, June 12, 2021) to others who saw the need for supports for Black students. Mr. Truman and Zachary developed talking points that established the need for the club, citing the high attrition rate for Black students, and the reality that Black students did not feel welcome on campus. Their central argument was that the group would not only be beneficial for Black students, but also for the entire community. Ernest recalled feeling some frustration that the need for the group was being questioned, but recognized a need to "justify, legitimize, be patient, and share the need" for the group (Personal communication, June 12, 2021). For him, the political battle was to ensure the group's creation and success. The students, however, faced a different battle – one that centered on visibility and claiming space. Their first club sweatshirt was a proud political statement – the front of the sweatshirt listed the Black Student Union name and the back

of the sweatshirt said, “If you don’t like it, we don’t care” (E. Truman, personal communication, June 12, 2021). By establishing the Black Student Union, making sweatshirts, and having their club photo in the school yearbook, these students created a historical moment by claiming their rightful space on campus.

These early efforts within the Black community at St. Robert’s Prep established the baseline for all other cultural identity affinity groups on campus. The year after the Black Student Union was founded, the Irish Club was formed. This sequence of events is not noted, or perhaps not discussed, within participants’ histories. The year after that, the Filipino Club, the Islamic club, and the Asian Club were first on record in the yearbook. Currently, 17 identity affinity groups exist at the school. For many years, the Black Student Union sponsored a monthly school liturgy, invited guest speakers to deliver presentations to the larger school community, and hosted African-American alumni as part of their annual student retreat. Currently, there is an annual Black Cultural Event sponsored by the Black Student Union that is well attended by students and families across the community. Ernest Truman’s early work with the parent community established another baseline for underrepresented parent engagement. The Black/African Ancestry family potluck that started in 1982 became a start of school year tradition and has continued for almost four decades. The Black Student Union continues to meet regularly on campus and has been a space of community and support for Black and African Ancestry students at St. Robert’s Prep for over 30 years.

Foundations of Support within the Latino Community

Whereas Ernest Truman immediately saw how a Black Student Union could benefit Black students on campus, the pathway to establishing formal support structures for Latino students at St. Robert’s Prep emerged in a more circuitous manner. This was due to several

factors: (a) there was already a structure that facilitated Latino admissions and engagement through the Minority Scholarship Program (MSP); (b) the MSP allowed students opportunities to build relationships that proved instrumental to their success at the school; (c) there were critical numbers of Latino students enrolled in the school as a result of the MSP, which may have lessened the immediate need for any type of formal structures; (d) the immediate needs of the Latino students that enrolled at St. Robert's Prep due to the MSP in the 1980s were shaped more by class than by racial identity. Taken together, all these factors contributed to the gradual evolution of support structures for Latino students at St. Robert's Prep over the past 30 years.

The first piece of the Latino student support puzzle was found with the relationships that emerged from the MSP. This program was able to facilitate relationships between the school, students, and adults that had positive, lasting impact. The summer program brought middle school students to campus for exposure to the school, giving the younger students the benefit of knowing the physical campus and meeting other St. Robert's teachers before their high school years. High school students, often MSP alumni, staffed the summer program and the academic year tutoring program, so the younger students were able to build relationships with other St. Robert's students over time. In addition, MSP students cultivated relationships with a number of adults. MSP students met Gordon Fidelio when he was director of the program and continued their relationship with him once they enrolled at the school. These students also met Heidi Alvaro in her upper-level Spanish classes, and they met Jesuit scholastics such as Mr. Archie Fitzgerald, SJ and Mr. Keith Harper, SJ through Campus Ministry or soccer. These relationships served as the foundation for the earliest gatherings of low-income Latino students in Gordon Fidelio and Heidi Alvaro's classrooms.

It is noteworthy to mention the importance of physical space to the relationships these students were building with each other and with the adults on campus. As Latino students - most of whom were MSP alumni - sought out the friendly faces of people like Gordon, Heidi, Archie, and Keith, their classrooms became important places where these students could find friendship as well as emotional and psychological safety. Both Gordon and Heidi offered their classrooms as places where students could hang out:

> I was running the program during the summer, and they needed a place and I wanted them to be there, and I was there - the right person at the right time, you know. I remember a classroom full of students and we had a great - it was just greatly attended and really dedicated people. And I just think it stemmed from my work, from the - in the scholarship during the summer. I worked with all these kids, and they knew I was sympathetic, and they knew they had a place, and I was - wanted to be there and they wanted a place. (G. Fidelio, personal communication, July 28, 2021)

> They would come over and they just hang out. And so those are easy ways to really just - creating the community. And it wasn't me, it wasn't because I was there. It was because it was physical place, and the kids can come and go. (H. Alvaro, personal communication, June 14, 2021)

Both Heidi and Gordon note that for many years, this effort came from the students themselves – the adults just created the place, and the students came. The students were seeking community and kinship, and they naturally gravitated towards each other and the adult allies that supported them. These classrooms became places where underrepresented students felt safe, seen, and loved. As students and their needs evolved over time, these classrooms became critical spaces

where adults could stay abreast of what was happening in students' lives and how they could help.

Over time, the security built within these physical spaces gave way to the second piece of the student support puzzle: the need for material resources that go beyond tuition assistance. While Heidi's primary motivation for opening her classroom was "making sure that they [students] had a place to go to" (Personal communication, June 14, 2021), she also noted that the more low-income Latino students gathered in her classroom, the more she could identify what their needs were. Students needed physical resources like typewriters to complete their assignments, library cards, and even food. She also discovered that students were unable to be full participants in the school due to their inability to pay for a senior prom bid, pay co-curricular program fees, or purchase yearbooks. Along with Archie Fitzgerald, SJ and Keith Harper, SJ, Heidi worked to ensure students could attend prom, receive a bus pass, or simply get something to eat from the cafeteria.

Both Heidi and Gordon spoke about the varied responses they encountered providing supports to low-income Latino students. Heidi found a strong ally in the school principal, Fr. Hugh Parker, SJ, and he approved expenses so that she could provide students with the material resources that they needed to be full participants in the life of the school. Heidi remarked that the biggest obstacle that she faced was the absence of structure, so she and the other adult allies doing the work felt like they were constantly reacting to students' needs, rather than being proactive and systematic. However, there were some spaces of philosophical resistance to supporting low-income Latino students, and both Gordon and Heidi encountered these spaces among their colleagues. Gordon remarked that while there were some teachers who wanted to "go beyond the all-white rich kid" (Personal communication, July 28, 2021), there were other

faculty who wondered aloud if the MSP was admitting less-qualified students. He saw these responses as ones that sought to protect the school's tradition, and also a reflection of a lack of understanding that "there's different challenges for students of color" enrolled in a school like St. Robert's Prep (G. Fidelio, personal communication, July 28, 2021). Heidi's reflection on the resistance to supporting Latino youth also noted a desire to protect the school's tradition:

> There was a push back… "Why do we have to do this now? Aren't we doing enough? Aren't we doing well?" And my read on "Aren't we doing well… without them?" So "without them" meaning, do we really need the school to be a diverse school, and … whose place are they taking, right? Who are we going to say no to, right? (H. Alvaro, personal communication, June 14, 2021)

The disruption that supporting low-income Latino students caused within an organization came from the de-centering of the *white and wealthy* narrative, revealing a form of institutional insecurity that manifested itself by asking if a successful, wealthy organization has enough to share with others.

About a decade after the Minority Scholarship Program increased the numbers of racial and economic minority students on the St. Robert's campus, another evolution took place within the Latino student community. In the early years of the MSP, the classroom meetings were informal gatherings of students. As the numbers of Latino students increased in the mid-1980s, the student gatherings formalized into Faith Sharing Communities. For a while, both Gordon Fidelio and Heidi Alvaro facilitated their own FSCs, and over time they combined the groups. Somewhere between 1989 and 1992, a philosophical shift took place among the students, leading them to embrace their cultural and political identity and to seek ownership of their narrative in a new way. This new consciousness led to the formation of the La Raza Unida affinity group, and

also led to the disconnection of Gordon and Heidi from the group. As Gordon describes it: “they kind of rejected the FSC part of it. They didn't want it. They didn't want it to be kind of related to faith. They wanted more of a political group” (Personal communication, July 28, 2021). For a short while, the LRU tried to balance between its FSC origins and its new direction, calling itself LRU FSC. Eventually, the group established itself as just the LRU, and solidified its identity as a group focused on promoting Mexican cultural and political identity:

> I remember this one meeting where somebody stood up and they said, they didn't want to, they really wanted [it] to be Mexican American…they just wanted it to be kind of a La Raza, kind of strictly more of a Mexican thing and more political. (G. Fidelio, personal communication, July 28, 2021)

Over the three decades that followed, the LRU rebranded to the Latino Student Union (LSU) in the early 2000s in a stated effort to be more inclusive to Latino students who were not Mexican. Within the past five years, the group recently returned to its original name of La Raza Unida.

The foundations of support for Latino students at St. Robert’s Prep were varied and evolved over time. Each iteration built upon the previous support structure and ultimately informed the work of numerous structures that followed. The earliest support efforts for Latino students leveraged relationships and resulted in a sense of community and place. The next evolution of Latino student support focused more on class and established a baseline for equitable school experiences for students, regardless of economic status. Over time, students took ownership of their group narrative, and drove the effort to promote visibility for their cultural and political identity. Today, the evolution continues; the 2001 program that enrolled low-income Latino youth from a particular underserved area of the city has subsequently evolved into a program for first-generation college-bound, low-income youth. Current support structures

remain rooted in the work of Gordon Fidelio, the Minority Scholarship program, Heidi Alvaro, and their combined willingness to go above and beyond to meet students' needs, whatever they were.

Foundations of Support within the Asian Community

The purpose of support structures for Asian-American students at St. Robert's Prep largely mirrored those of Black and Latino students on campus – stemming from a desire for community and the search for a safe place to process their experiences as people of color within a predominantly white school community. The status of the Asian-American community within the campus social order, however, allowed the development of support structures for Asian-American students to unfold without the open resistance voiced towards the efforts around Black and Latino students.

The history of Asian student enrollment at St. Robert's Prep stretches back to its days as a boarding school. In the late 1970s, boarding students from Hong Kong comprised the largest group of Asian students on campus. When the boarding school closed in 1983, the number of Asian-American students decreased until the late 1980s, when some numbers of Japanese-American, Chinese-American, and Vietnamese-American students enrolled during the latter half of the decade. When Alton Jun arrived as the school's first lay Chinese teacher in 1979, he was the only Asian-identified faculty member at the school - and remained so for the next 15 years. Upon his arrival, he noted that Asian-American students were a numerical minority, and also noted that there was "a lot of Asian stereotyping going on" (Personal communication, June 24, 2021) within the adult and student community. He recalled that several faculty members, in their attempt to be in relationship with him, were making offensive jokes or comments about Asians. Alton knew that Asian-American students on campus were experiencing similar

microaggressions or overt comments, and he wanted to speak to students about their experiences to help them understand and make sense of their lived reality.

Alton distinguished himself on campus among students because of his efforts to be in relationship with Asian and Asian-American students. When he first arrived at the school, the Asian students at the school were international students boarding at the school from Hong Kong. He characterizes these early relationships as more of a traditional teacher-student relationship: he would go to the dormitory for tutoring sessions and speak to the Asian students in Cantonese. The students felt an affinity towards him because he connected with them through shared language and identity. When the dormitory closed, the number of international Asian students declined, and he began to establish connections with American-born Asian students enrolled at the school.

This second wave of relationships elicited a slightly different side of Alton, for he specifically connected with the students around a shared understanding of an Asian-American identity within a predominantly white context. In the late 1980s, several Asian-American students expressed an interest in creating a science club to discuss Astronomy, which was the precursor to the Asian Society.

> So, we started an astronomy club, I remember that. And we would talk about astronomy stuff and stars. But that was really cool, because that was the first inkling of the Asian Society … I was big on Asian Studies at the time. So, I started talking to them about Asian American issues and assimilation and stereotypes. And they started to understand that. We had some pretty good conversations. (A. Jun, personal communication, June 24, 2021)

Together with students, Alton was developing a space where Asian-American students could process their identity and its meaning within a predominantly white context. The Astronomy club became a safe place where Alton and the students could discuss stars and planets, but also process some of the microaggressions they were experiencing as a result of being Asian on St. Robert's Prep campus. In the span of a few years, the Astronomy club became the St. Robert's Prep Asian Society when Alton and the students decided they were having more discussions about stereotypes than they were about stars.

> [It was] maybe the second or third year of the Astronomy Club. And so, we're not doing much astronomy here. …And I think we're doing more talking about issues than we are astronomy. So, we said, "well maybe we should just call it the Asian Society." (A. Jun, personal communication, June 24, 2021)

After this lunch, the students put an announcement into the daily messages inviting students to attend Asian Society meetings. Alton noted that Asian students felt a part of something at these meetings.

The response among students towards the Asian Society was positive, and attendance grew quickly. Students shared first-hand incidents of racism that they had experienced with one another and discussed the portrayal of Asian characters in films and media. An early controversy emerged around the club's t-shirts one year - in Alton's eyes, the shirts promoted Asian pride but some parents saw them as offensive – but the group largely enjoyed a positive reception on campus. Alton describes several years where the group gained popularity and status, in particular when the St. Robert's Prep student body president was also president of the Asian Society. For many years, the Asian Society hosted a Lunar New Year celebration which was the only cultural celebration for the Asian-American community until the later 2000s. In recent years, additional

events such as Diwali and Santo Niño have been added to showcase the diversity of Asian-American groups on campus. Eventually, the demographics of the St. Robert's Prep student body shifted again. In the mid-to-late 2010s, the Asian-American student population became over 25% of the student body. Slowly, the Asian Society dissolved into several other clubs such as the Chinese Culture Community, the Japanese Culture Community, and the Korean Student Association. After 23 years, 2014 was the first year since 1991 that the Asian Society was not listed in the school yearbook.

As a final note, Alton offered his own assessment of the trajectory of support structures for Asian students at St. Robert's Prep. He offered that at first, "it was a novelty," and the reception across the school was largely positive (Personal communication, June 24, 2021). Alton recalled not receiving any resistance from the adult community in the early years of the Asian Society: "I didn't sense anything negative at all, I think the school had always seen the Asian Society as a positive thing" (A. Jun, personal communication, June 24, 2021). While Alton did remark on later moments of resistance coming from student government towards funding Lunar New Year celebrations - and several articles in the student newspaper cover the debate around the funding of ethnic clubs – he did express that the school largely supported the Asian Society. He continued his assessment by noting that as the percentage of Asian students and overall students of color at the school increased in recent years, he began to sense that faculty no longer felt comfortable voicing their opinions on race or diversity openly and sensed more conversations behind closed doors. His overall opinion is that as a society we have regressed on racial matters, and that the same issues that Asian students faced in the early years of the Asian Society are the same issues that they would face on campus today.

Foundations of Support towards the Gay Community

Initiating supports for sexual and gender minority youth within an all-male Catholic school required a different approach than the paths followed for supporting racial and economic minority students. The driving force behind establishing support for gay students at St. Robert's Prep came solely from adults, and their earliest actions centered the obvious political and religious battles that accompany advocacy for gay students within a traditional Catholic setting. While the most obvious structure that resulted from the work of gay allies at St. Robert's was the establishment of the Gay-Straight Faith Sharing Community (GSFSC) in 2001, the process the community went through changed the school's thinking around the importance of supporting sexual and gender minority youth at St. Robert's Prep for generations to come.

Although St Robert's had begun learning how to support underrepresented racial and economic minority students in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the school had not made any progress in establishing supports for gay students. By the early 2000s, several attempts had been made to formalize support structures for gay youth at St. Robert's Prep without success. Several participants recalled the efforts of a faculty member, long since deceased, who quietly created an underground space for gay students in the mid-1990s; these efforts were known by only a few. Ernest Truman recalled advocacy coming directly from students in 1996, when a student organized a sit-in during the middle of an all-school pep rally in the school gym to raise awareness of injustice around the exclusion of racial and sexual minority students on campus. Both Lisa Williamson and Justina Bowen recalled that several faculty members had been vocal about the need to start a support group for gay students in the late 1990s but were unsuccessful. They suggested that perhaps these faculty members were unsuccessful because one of the advocates was a gay man himself, or perhaps it was because one of the advocates was unflinchingly outspoken in his demands that the school create a support group for gay students.

Certain factors were needed in order to establish a support group for gay students at the school, and these factors all came together during the year 2001.

St. Robert's Prep has heteronormativity deeply ingrained in its foundational fabric, and the school needed to make consistent efforts to interrupt this persistent narrative. From yearbooks to school newspapers to the references teachers made in the classroom, the prevailing message to St. Robert's students is that they will seek the affections of female companions. Because of this cultural context, incidents of bias or harassment against gay students were prevalent at the school, according to the participants. Verbal harassment was common and at least two participants recalled an instance when a gay student's car was vandalized. Starting in 1997, the school offered its first in-service on the topic of homophobia and followed up with a second in-service about the issues facing gay and lesbian students in schools (2001). After the 2001 in-service, several faculty members gathered to discuss "having a safe haven someplace for these gay kids to go and talk with each other and with faculty" (J. Bowen, personal communication, July 17, 2021). The seeds of support for gay students at St. Robert's Prep that had been planted in the late 1990s were finally receiving water.

All the other affinity groups on St. Robert's Prep campus originated from and with students in the room. While Justina noted that she didn't "personally know many students coming forward and saying, "can somebody do something for us?"" (J. Bowen, personal communication, July 17, 2021), it is highly probable that her personal experience as mother of a gay son gave her a deeper level of insight into the everyday experiences of gay students at St. Robert's. As such, she was the one to take the first formal step towards formalizing a space where gay students could feel physically and emotionally safe. Remarkably, her first action was not taken on the grounds of St. Robert's – she went straight to the Bishop's office at the Diocese:

> I just took it upon myself to go over to the Bishop's office and they had a woman there who was in charge of Pastoral Ministry for lesbians and gays and that was at the Bishop's office. So, I made an appointment to see her and I went over and I talked to her because I mean, I knew we needed the permission of the Diocese to start a group. So, I talked to her. She was very, very understanding but she did qualify what we wanted to do. She did say, "Okay, you can do that, but you have to do it under the umbrella of a FSC." Which was fine. No problem with that. (J. Bowen, personal communication, July 17, 2021)

The designation of an FSC meant the group would be organized under Campus Ministry, and not as a club under student activities, like the other affinity groups on campus.

Accepting those terms, Justina obtained permission from the Diocese to start a group for gay students at St. Robert's before she even spoke to her own administration.

> When I came back from the Bishop's office and talk to Owen McCoy [Principal], he was very much in favor of it because apparently Perry Simpson had tried to start something in the past and I think the church just wasn't ready to hear it at that time. But Owen was very good about listening and very much in favor of it. (J. Bowen, personal communication, July 17, 2021)

For most of 2001, Justina and a core group of faculty and staff met to plan and formally launch the group. Several events transpired in September 2001 to prepare the community: The principal wrote to the parent community to announce the formation of the group. A portion of the subsequent faculty/staff in-service was dedicated to professional development on homophobia. Resource materials regarding the Church's position were offered to faculty and staff, and a Jesuit who worked at a peer Jesuit secondary school spoke about how their school had worked to address homophobia. In addition, gay alumni from Jesuit schools spoke on a panel about their

experiences during high school. In October 2001, faculty were given a lesson plan that covered how to announce to students the creation of the GSFSC and a second in-service was held to train faculty on how to directly address homophobic comments or actions on campus. Finally, in November of 2001, the final two pieces of the puzzle snapped into place. All students viewed a web-based presentation about the GSFSC in their mentoring period, and the school's theatre arts department opened its production of *The Laramie Project,* a play which presented the aftermath of a brutal murder of a gay college student in a midwestern town. The Bishop himself attended opening night of the production, on personal invitation from Justina.

The week after *The Laramie Project* opened on campus, the GSFSC had their first meeting. Approximately 30 students attended, and several of them self-identified as gay at this first meeting. Lawrence Reynolds recalled that the faculty's response to this group was tremendous, and many faculty engaged with the group as allies:

> We ended up having almost as many faculty members in the FSC as students. And this went on for a year or two. And finally, maybe it was Ira Moore that said, "You know, we really need to turn this over - the leadership of this club - to the students." (L. Reynolds, personal communication, August 25, 2021)

After several years of faculty leadership, the adults handed responsibility of the club to the students. In 2016, the students of the GSFSC wrote to school administration and requested that they be allowed to drop the FSC designation to promote broader inclusivity as well as reflect society's increased acceptance of sexual and gender minority individuals. The students cited Pope Francis to reflect the Catholic Church's shift in acknowledgement of gay people. As a result of this dialogue, the group was reorganized out of Campus Ministry. Rebranded as the

Gay-Straight Community, the group currently falls under the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion office alongside the school's cultural identity affinity clubs.

The Gay-Straight Community is still the only affinity group for sexual and gender minority youth at St. Robert's Prep. In addition, it is the only affinity group where written documentation exists about the process the community went through to establish this group. The author of this document was one of the early moderators of the club, and outlines with great detail the administrative actions and thorough preparation that enabled the school community to understand the need for this club. Justina Bowen is mentioned in this document as one of the leaders of a faculty/staff group that established the original GSFSC at St. Robert's. Her outreach to the Bishop's office and her initiative with the St. Robert's principal, however, are not mentioned in the club's written history. Documenting her role and participation is an important addition to the school's history.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided rich context on the social, cultural, and demographic forces that shaped St. Robert's Prep over time. The first section traced the social and cultural shifts that took place at the school alongside the social and political context of each decade. The traditional, white, upper-class, and heteronormative values espoused by 1950s American society remained a part of St. Robert's traditional culture for decades longer than they did in popular culture. In addition, change in underrepresented student support at the school typically occurred after similar changes took place in larger society: the counterculture movement of the 1960s informed programs that promoted minority student enrollment in Jesuit schools in the 1970s; cultural affinity groups formed in the late 1980s at St. Robert's even though similar student groups emerged on college campuses in the 1970s; and the Gay-Straight Faith Sharing Community

launched in 2001, nearly 12 years after Gay-Straight Alliances launched in public schools. Even though these efforts at St. Robert's could be seen as behind the times compared to American society, within the context of Jesuit schools across the United States assistancy, St. Robert's Prep is seen as a school on the leading edge of underrepresented student support.

This chapter also offered the personal narrative of each participant in the study. Each participant's approach towards students was shaped by race, gender, cultural heritage, and personal lived experience, as well as shaped by the organizational context of the school during the time they worked at the school. The participants who joined the school in the early 1970s noted how the school viewed all students through the lens of sameness, whereas the participants which joined the school towards the 1980s and 1990s reflected the societal change towards viewing students as individuals whose unique identities were worthy of recognition and support. As they worked to create spaces of support for minoritized students, the participants necessarily navigated an interplay between the school's traditional foundations and the demographic and cultural change that was taking place – creating a new organizational narrative that bridged both tradition and change.

The final third of the chapter documented the origins of underrepresented student support at St. Robert's Prep. The Black Student Union, the Minority Scholarship Program, La Raza Unida, the Asian Society, and the Gay-Straight Faith Sharing Community formed the cornerstones which upheld minoritized student support at the school for generations to come. The Black Student Union was founded in 1988, and their launch strategically addressed the need for cultural affinity groups within the school's traditional environment. This successful effort from the BSU provided the legitimacy required for the other cultural and identity groups to form. As these groups established themselves on campus, some cultural or identity affinity groups

experienced full support from the school community; others experienced a marked ambivalence and even reticence to acknowledge their needs and their place in the larger school community. The final major group to be established, the Gay-Straight Faith Sharing Community, leveraged social and political capital from the local Diocese alongside the school's religious identity to formalize support structures for sexual and gender minority youth at St. Robert's Prep. These major cultural and identity affinity groups allowed for the formation of smaller identity and interest groups at the school for years to come, and to this day remain the blueprint for underrepresented student support at the school.

As the social and cultural reality of St. Robert's changed over the 50 years of this study, and as participants advocated for minoritized students and created support structures, these changes bumped into the existing institutional narratives and created spaces of tension. The next chapter attempts to understand these tensions as they emerged around the efforts to support minoritized students on traditional Jesuit school campuses.

CHAPTER FIVE

FINDINGS

A Note on Researcher's Intent

For the researcher, it is of critical importance to note that a defining characteristic of this study is the presumption of good will. Consistent with the colorblind racism framework put forth by Bonilla-Silva (2002, 2015, 2018), this study rejects the idea of a clinical approach to race relations – one that classifies individuals as "good [or] bad, tolerant [or] intolerant" (p. 15) – and also dismisses the idea that personal views on race and difference are "individual psychosocial dispositions" (p. 7) that render an individual *woke* or not. At its core, this study agrees with Bonilla-Silva's assertion that every individual in a community is materially and ideologically shaped by the prevailing racial ideology. The importance of highlighting individual good will becomes clear when we consider that every participant in this study demonstrated deep and abiding care for all their students during their time at St. Robert's Prep, while also being shaped by the prevailing racial framework in the US. The participants in this study are known for going above and beyond in the care for their students, and saw each student they worked with as valuable, worthy of love, and as a reflection of the divine. The participants in this study were also influenced, as everyone is, by master narratives about race and difference. Any analysis of the actions of the participants is neither a statement about their character nor a suggestion of personal shortcomings. Rather, their individual thoughts and actions are examined through the lens of institutional responses to race and difference. Finally, this study will not provide a list of criticisms or failings of St. Robert's. The school, like all other organizations, is comprised of humans who are fallible and capable of change. What this study hopes to reveal is the underlying

ideological systems that frame how the school approached supports for students in minoritized racial, economic, and sexual and gender minority groups.

Findings

Across St. Robert's historical documents and within the participants' oral histories, narrative themes began to emerge around how the organization viewed efforts to support minoritized students. This chapter presents four overarching narrative themes: (a) the problem of selective sight; (b) an institution's need for legitimacy; (c) varying levels of acceptance; (d) reform within a colorblind context. Selective sight interrogates the organizational tension between on-campus student advocacy and off-campus social justice efforts. The institutional need for legitimacy presents the realities that exist in traditional school settings around credibility and achievement of buy-in to new initiatives regarding race and difference. The third narrative theme emerges around the ways in which certain groups or strategies were deemed acceptable within the school community, while others were not. The final section explores how organizational narratives can be changed by individuals through creating spaces of reform. Findings related to the narratives are explored in the sections that follow.

Narrative Theme 1: The Problem of Selective Sight

This study revealed a palpable ambivalence between the community's apprehension towards creating specific supports for minoritized students on campus while encouraging student and institutional participation in local and international charitable social justice work. Encouraging companionship with the marginalized and promoting service to minoritized communities has been part of the school's program since its inception. Over its more than 170-year history, St. Robert's has cultivated a strong reputation for providing service and accompaniment to those in need. In addition, one of the school's foundational goals is for St.

Robert's students to develop an understanding of unjust systems plus gain a deeper understating of the life experiences of people growing up in circumstances different than their own. To this end, the school built a strong global immersion program which takes students to impoverished communities across the globe to perform service and develop solidarity with others. Given this institutional support for understanding others' experiences, a perceptible contradiction emerged in this study between the community's somewhat apprehensive approach to supporting minoritized students on campus as compared to the dedication to social justice missions abroad.

Misunderstood Advocacy at Home

As advocacy work unfolded between the early 1980s to the early 2000s, the community's response to these efforts revealed an inability to see that the shifting demographics of the school necessitated change in many ways. As programs such as the MSP took hold, increasing numbers of students of color enrolled in St. Robert's, followed by the emergence of non-white cultural affinity groups. The response to these groups was mixed. The school's commitment to social justice work off-campus theoretically should have served as foundation for the same level of commitment to supporting minoritized student groups within the school's own community. However, many faculty did not see the need for supports for minoritized students, reflecting a colorblind ideology. An unwillingness to acknowledge important identity-based differences among students led some faculty to question the need for dedicated institutional support structures.

Admittedly, there were some faculty who supported the school's efforts to recruit and support students from minoritized groups. Gordon Fidelio noted the response of some of his most supportive peers: "a lot of teachers, they just didn't want to teach the best rich kids. I mean they really, they felt bad about that [and] they wanted to not just be teaching the best, most

advantaged kids in the world" (Personal communication, July 28, 2021). Lisa Williamson noted that the feeling among her colleagues was that "obviously in our own classrooms, we were certainly wanting to be inclusive and recognize differences" (Personal communication, September 9, 2021). What the school was missing, however, was a broad understanding of why targeted supports for racial, economic, and sexual and gender minority youth were necessary. This gap in understanding is consistent with the abstract liberalist frame of colorblind racism, and additionally reflects a fundamental lack of understanding around how students' lived experiences around race, class, and sexual and gender identity intersect with one another. As the school shifted from being a predominantly white school to one with increasing diversity, it was challenged to move beyond the idea that what was good for white students would be good for all students.

Since St. Robert's school culture mirrors the dominant American racial ideology, it uses the "frameworks of the dominant race [as its] master frameworks" (Bonilla-Silva, 2018, p. 9), and normalizes the needs and experiences of white students by using a colorblind approach. The prevailing sentiment on campus was that the school was one community - a place where everyone was the same. Consistent the universalism ideal within abstract liberalism, the school's perception of sameness among its students reflects the institution's colorblindness. Edward Hunter noted that when the dormitory accepted students from all different backgrounds, they were not seen as different but were all seen through the same lens: "We had a pretty mixed bag of students and ethnicity. We didn't have any special programs for them. We were just boarders. Their tag was boarders. That's the way we all - we just meshed that way" (Personal communication, August 27, 2021). Gordon Fidelio echoed that this sentiment of sameness caused faculty to question why specific supports were necessary. He further noted that many

faculty did not understand how the lived experiences of students of color was different than that of white students:

> But I think that kind of tension is - was back there, then, you know, that they don't really see the extra struggle that Latino students have. And they just, you know, they don't see what - why it's harder for them or for Black [students] … they just didn't see it as much. (G. Fidelio, personal communication, July 28, 2021)

Lawrence Reynolds added that while the larger response to targeted advocacy efforts was almost all positive, he noted that there was a very strong desire within the community to embrace the idea of sameness:

> There was always that little pocket of thinking, "Why are the Black students asking for this special attention? Asian students - why, why do we need to have that?" You know, the idea that, "Aren't we all really just people?" (L. Reynolds, personal communication, August 25, 2021)

These individual questions reveal a colorblind narrative at the institutional level which "otherizes softly" (Bonilla-Silva, 2018, p. 3). Holding on to the idea that all students are the same directly contradicts the idea of care for the individual person.

The institution's colorblind lens impeded its ability to understand the need for change. Alton Jun reflected on the school's demographic composition as a predominantly white school and how that influenced institutional thinking: "there just wasn't a lot of color. So, it was hard for the school to learn" (Personal communication, June 24, 2021). Heidi Alvaro recalled how the faculty's resistance to change revealed an underlying sense of insecurity:

> There was a push back, "Why do we have to do all these things? Why change it if, you know, if things are not broken?" And so that's kind of my sense, from the beginning and

> in working with students of color that resistance came more from, "Why do we have to do this now? Aren't we doing enough? Aren't we doing well?" (H. Alvaro, personal communication, June 14, 2021)

The opposition to new structures of support for minoritized youth reflects abstract liberalism's opposition to preferential treatment. Participants also revealed how the school embraced the naturalization lens of colorblind racism. St. Robert's used the "myth of nonracialism" (Bonilla-Silva, 2018, p. 56) to explain why the curriculum and admissions strategies reflected whiteness. Evidence of this can be seen in a memory shared by Ernest. In 1993, Ernest was approached by a student who challenged the English curriculum at St. Robert's Prep:

> He came to me and said, "Mr. Truman, I've been at St. Robert's Prep for four years. And in all that time, I have never read any literature written by a Black person, a brown person, or a yellow/Asian person. Why? Because the only thing I've ever read that involved a black character was N--- Jim in Huck Finn."… So, I said, "Ellis, what do you want to do?" And he said, "Well, I really wanted to have a discussion with the English Department to find out why, and can we do better as an institution?" …And we met with members of the English Department and Ellis started off. …And the English Department was kind of stunned and said, "Wow, we really never considered that." (E. Truman, personal communication, June 12, 2021)

Ernest continued to share that one of the English department members became defensive during the conversation and mentioned a play that he used with his students that had Black characters. Ernest retorted that the Black characters were all in subservient positions to the main white character, underscoring the point of the student's advocacy for curricular change. The defense of the existing curriculum is an example of an institutional tendency to protect its own interest by

dismissing the experiences of non-white voices. A school's curricular choices reflect institutional choices and expose which narratives are prioritized over others. Aldana's (2015) work highlights how the perspectives of students of color and economic minority youth are often disregarded in Jesuit school classrooms, even in schools whose mission it is to serve marginalized youth. Colorblind lenses allow academic departments to rationalize decisions which promote a traditional, white, and wealthy narrative – which perpetuates an exclusionary institutional narrative.

A second example of the naturalization lens of colorblind racism emerged around the need to change recruitment strategies for incoming students. Long after Gordon Fidelio stepped down as Director of the MSP, the then-Director of the program remarked that not enough low-income youth of color were applying. When Ernest Truman became aware of these program enrollment struggles, he was incredulous that the school was not changing its marketing and recruitment strategies:

> And I said, "That sounds ridiculous to me. That sounds like I can't understand what you're saying. Are you looking in the right place?" It's kind of like Ms. Warren [a parent] had said 10 years earlier, "Are you looking in the right places? Are you knocking on the right doors? Are you considering advertising at [names of Black Churches]? Have you considered talking to [Black sororities]? Have you gone to [Latino Churches] in [on the East Side of the City]?" I said, "Kids are there, but if you're not looking and extending an invitation to the kids in the right places, you won't get anybody." (E. Truman, personal communication, June 12, 2021)

Here, Ernest described the school's inability to understand the dominant structure's "color coded inequality" (Bonilla-Silva, 2018, p.2) because it had adopted a colorblind approach. By using the

naturalization frame of colorblind racism, the school rationalized its use of the same recruitment strategies it used for white students as appropriate recruitment strategies for students of color. By extension, the school was then able to claim that unequal access was the result of a natural social process, and not because the school's market and recruitment strategies were informed by color coded inequality. Because of its history as a predominantly white institution, and because the institutional lenses used were the abstract liberalism and naturalization frames of colorblind racism, may members of the school community could not see the need for specific programs and strategies that benefitted minoritized students.

Yet Social Justice Work is Deeply Valued Off-Campus

Interestingly, and despite the school's colorblind narrative, St. Robert's consistently promotes social justice missions outside of the St. Robert's Prep campus. The school's earliest yearbooks from the 1950s reflected a deep commitment to the work of sodalities, or student groups that are focused on ministry within the school and outreach to the local community. Articles highlighted student efforts to deliver food baskets to the hungry and to assist with sacramental preparation for underserved communities in the area. Sodalities evolved into a Local Service Ministry office in 1971 which promoted service to the community and outreach to the poor through food and clothing drives. The school adopted a compulsory service requirement in 1992 which stated that in order to graduate, St. Robert's Prep students needed to perform 100 hours of service over their four years at the school. That same decade, the school began taking students on international trips to perform service and gain cross-cultural understanding in what are now known as service immersion trips. This work began in 1993, with students traveling to Mexico and El Salvador where students served meals and built homes. In the decades since, the immersion program at St. Robert's has become one of the central mission moments in a student's

four years at the school. Going on an immersion is seen as a pivotal experience, offering students insights into the experiences of others and setting their hearts on fire to work for justice.

Over the years, these social justice messages were promoted within the community at the same time that the needs of minoritized students were largely absent from the school narrative. Nearly every edition of the school newspaper included service opportunities such as food drives, coastal cleanups, and volunteer opportunities, alongside traditional articles about athletics and complaints about school administration. While there were a few exceptions, articles about the experiences of students of color were rare and often included an air of controversy or unease. For example, during academic year 1990-1991, there was a small article in the school newspaper that explained a debate over funding for emerging ethnic clubs (Barthell, 1990). In another example, after a racist incident involving the football team in the fall of 1995, two articles appeared in subsequent issues of the school newspaper. These articles encouraged cross-community understanding but not at the expense of the school's sense of a unified community ("Diversity without division," 1995). In a third example, when the school introduced Diversity Week in the late 1990s, one of the editorials in the school newspaper was titled "Two opinions about the merits of the controversial 'Diversity Week" ("Two opinions," 1998, p. 3). All of these examples demonstrate the school's ambivalence towards on-campus issues pertaining to minoritized students while promoting service to the marginalized off-campus.

Several participants noted they were unaware of the full range of issues pertaining to minoritized students but were attuned to the school's commitment to social justice. Lisa Williamson gave voice to this dichotomy as she reflected on what she knew about the school:

> The social justice thing, the theme - as why we are different than the public schools where I was - became really apparent really early. And then, Eric Jenkins was taking kids

> to surprising places, I don't remember - El Salvador, you know, sister cities in Mexico and Wilbur Hudson was doing that and that floated on my radar, because some of my students would go and they would come back changed. (L. Williamson, personal communication, September 9, 2021)

Lisa was deeply attuned to the students in her classroom, and she was open to creating an inclusive environment for all her students. In fact, her work with the Speech and Debate program allowed her to interface with a large number of Southeast Asian students during her time at the school. And yet, she recalls the earliest messages from the school to be about social justice abroad rather than injustices that minoritized students were facing on campus. Edward Hunter noted that he saw faculty being open to other topics but not to the advocacy work for students of color, "They were open to other things, but not really in embracing this whole diversity thing or inclusion" (Personal communication, August 27, 2021).

The narrative that results from valuing efforts off-campus over advocacy on-campus furthers the idea that injustice only occurs outside of the St. Robert's community. While a strong sense of social justice is enormously helpful in shaping a school's approach to minoritized communities, it can become a double edged sword if a community develops the sense that social justice is something to pursue only outside of the walls of its own school.

Narrative Theme 2: An Institution's Need for Legitimacy

The second major narrative that emerged from this study centered around the school's requirement that emerging support systems first garner buy-in from credible people and structures before underrepresented student support programs could take hold within the school. This need for legitimacy emerged as a pivotal factor when building out support systems for minoritized youth at St. Robert's Prep. For some participants, the credibility of specific people brought validity to their advocacy efforts. For others, legitimacy came from the way in which advocacy efforts were structured. The significance of obtaining legitimacy through specific people and structures means that the experiences and needs of students in minoritized groups were not legitimate on their own - creating unnecessary obstacles to changing the status quo. These ideological barriers to change reflect colorblind racism's abstract liberalist frame, which allows institutions to rationalize the need for specific qualifications and processes before they can reshape exclusionary cultures.

Legitimacy Through People

As she reflected on the origins of student advocacy at St. Robert's Prep, Lisa Williamson remarked that "who starts it, who pushes it along, the power of that personality and the positive drive of that person makes all the difference" (Personal communication, September 9, 2021). Several participants argued that the people who initiated supports for racial, economic, sexual or gender minority youth, and the reputations of these people as deeply respected members of the St Robert's community, were critically important pieces of the puzzle. By the time they started to formalize their work with minoritized youth, participants like Ernest Truman, Alton Jun, and Heidi Alvaro had established very strong reputations at the school. Heidi and Alton both were part of the team of teachers who created the Advanced Placement program at the school, and

efforts such as these garnered them the respect of their colleagues and administrators. Many participants noted Ernest Truman's impeccable reputation, and Lisa specifically mentioned his after-hours work in prison ministry, his work tutoring the maintenance workers' sons, and his honest yet invitational approach towards dialogue on race and racism. As such, when Ernest worked to establish the Black Student Union/African American Student Union, Lisa recalled that his reputation provided ample justification for the group:

> I'm trying to remember about the AASU, and I think the credibility that certain teachers bring to things and certain student leaders bring to things just make it, "yeah, that's what we need right there." (L. Williamson, personal communication, September 9, 2021)

St. Robert's deeply values loyalty, and the fidelity to the school's mission shown by Ernest, Heidi, and Alton gave them political capital and protection from criticism. Because of this, the key participants were able to leverage their status within the school to legitimize spaces of support for minoritized students.

Abstract liberalism also holds that change in the power structure should occur at its own pace and not be demanded of communities or organizations by government or leadership. Part of the legitimacy that Ernest, Heidi, and Alton brought to their advocacy was their ability to work within the St. Robert's system. They knew that in order to be successful within the St. Robert's structure they had to proceed methodically, with intent and patience. Ernest described his approach as one of patient resolve. Heidi humbly described herself as someone who was just responding to a need. Alton also characterized himself as more of a science teacher than a change agent:

> Ernest, I think, was a much more of a change agent for the institution - more so than I was. I didn't see that - I didn't see that necessarily as my primary role. My primary role

> was science, too. I was a science teacher. …So, issues that definitely - diversity, issues of racial awareness of that - they were there, they were there, but it was an adjunct to my main role. (A. Jun, personal communication, June 24, 2021)

None of these key advocates were complicit with the dominant social order at the school. All of them were vocal in naming spaces of inequity or bias on campus. Heidi was not shy about going to Fr. Hugh Parker, SJ and advocating for resources for students in need. Alton recalled challenging unfair funding practices for student ethnic groups and calling out what he saw as bias against the Asian Society. Ernest was vocal about the need for professional development on race and difference and accompanied students when they confronted the school or individuals on situations they saw as unjust. And yet, the challenge each of them faced was the need to legitimize their advocacy work within the St. Robert's community. Ernest Truman summarized these feelings aptly:

> And there was a part of me that embraced a little bit of my Zachary Strickland [student founder of the Black Student Union], "You don't like it, I don't care." But there was also that part of me that said, "I will justify, I will legitimize, I will give, I will be patient, and I will share the need." (E. Truman, personal communication, June 12, 2021)

The school accepted Ernest, Alton, and Heidi's leadership – as people of color advocating for minoritized youth – for two reasons: because these leaders fit into the prevailing social structure and also because their efforts fit into abstract liberalism's need for evolutionary processes, rather than social revolutions.

The power of legitimizing the needs of minoritized students through people became even more clear when it came to the GSFSC. Both Lisa Williamson and Justina Bowen mentioned that there had been previous, unsuccessful attempts to provide formal support for gay students at St.

Robert's. Some of the faculty responsible for these efforts were openly gay, and others were heterosexual. As a group, they wanted to push the school beyond what it was willing to do at the time. The initiative finally gained traction when new voices became involved. Ultimately, what the initiative needed was the legitimacy that came from heterosexual and well-respected faculty who lent their support to the effort. Lisa explains:

> I think when some straight - or known straight - or whatever you want to call it, teachers joined on board, I don't know why that gave it more credibility, but it did, and so they kind of started it. (L. Williamson, personal communication, September 9, 2021)

It was not just the fact that these faculty were heterosexual, it was their reputation within St. Robert's that bolstered their position. Lisa further explained the calming effect of these well-respected faculty:

> The thing about Henry [Sanders], because he just carried a lot of gravitas and just awesomeness. I think the thing took off when he and Justina were sort of on board, not for these …youngsters and their crazy ideas. So, I think he gave it a legitimacy maybe that the rebels, you know, who were known to be a little rebellious, I think. Henry's gravitas just settled it all down and, "Of course we need this. Of course it's a thing." (L. Williamson, personal communication, September 9, 2021)

Henry Sanders - the other co-founder of the GSFSC with Justina Bowen - was an older teacher who was also an alum of the school. He was deeply respected as a teacher and seen as a faith leader at the school. His presence worked on two levels: his approval gave the GSFSC the legitimacy it needed to get started as well as giving the community the sense of peace they desired when facing a new - and possibly controversial - initiative.

The persona of the messenger revealed its significance again with Justina Bowen and the Bishop. Justina's personality is quiet and unassuming. She believed it was precisely this quality that allowed the group to gain approval from the Bishop. For her, she saw legitimacy at play in the way she approached the Bishop:

> I'm hard to turn down. I know that because I'm very quiet, shy kind of person. And so, people listen. I don't know why, I'm just saying, I think that's true. And so, when I went to the Bishop's office, they were very kind and helped me out. So, and maybe that's part of it. I don't know, maybe part of it is how you present it - your ideas, because that's a pretty touchy subject. (J. Bowen, personal communication, July 17, 2021)

The significance of the Bishop's approval in legitimizing the effort to support gay students cannot be overstated. Justina went to the Bishop's office for approval before she went to her own school administration. Gaining approval from the head of the local church, plus the support of faculty with "gravitas" allowed the GSFSC the leverage they needed to gain acceptance within the St. Robert's community. These examples demonstrate the influence of status and its ability to effect change within a traditional system. While abstract liberalism holds that the dominant power structure does not like to change when pushed, evidence from this study suggests that social and professional reputations can be leveraged to overcome resistance to change. In a similar way, the strategic use of existing institutional structures can be used to create a pathway for change.

Legitimacy Through Structures

Colorblind racism's abstract liberalist frame allows institutions to dictate specific structures and processes as legitimate, while deeming others illegitimate. In order to exist within the institution, only the institutions' preferred process and structures may be employed. While

predetermined practices can often be restrictive, preferences such as these can be used as opportunities for institutional change. The strategic use of structures and processes within St. Robert's dominant culture appeared in the narratives collected for this study. For example, in the 1980s, FSCs became a popular and widely accepted activity for St. Robert's Prep students. Hundreds of students participated in these groups that promoted prayer and service. FSCs were a precursor to many of the cultural and identity affinity groups on campus, and Edward Hunter noted that their connection to Campus Ministry provided a protective factor to the group and their members:

> I'd like to think that we [Campus Ministry] had a part in being supportive to the underrepresented. Whatever, whether it was the gay students or students of color. I hope we did - I think we were kind of a safe place for them to land and be supported. (E. Hunter, personal communication, August 27, 2021)

In the earliest days of student affinity groups, the school did not have a structure within which to place these emerging groups that focused on student identity rather than a co-curricular interest. As demonstrated earlier in this section, the need for targeted supports for minoritized students was often misunderstood or dismissed by the school community. Because of this, the first cultural affinity groups had the potential to elicit controversy on campus. Placing these affinity groups within Campus Ministry offered legitimacy to these groups by connecting them to the school's religious identity. Their potential to elicit controversy was ameliorated by the community's ability to justify their presence as religious – not political – groups. The presence of this protective factor was made visible once the LRU dropped its Faith Sharing Community identity and adopted a more overtly political identity.

> When it [LRU] was a CLC, it was kind of softer, and, you know, they could identify with that. And it was a, you know, a religious kind of thing and, but when it got more active and more, you know, more political I think they found it more threatening. (G. Fidelio, personal communication, July 28, 2021)

This new identity – political and disconnected from a Faith Sharing Community – led to the disconnection of the adult leaders from the group and also created a sense of unease within the larger community.

A similar situation emerged with the GSFSC and the requirement it be a Faith Sharing Community under the umbrella of Campus Ministry. When Justina Bowen requested permission from the Bishop to form the group, the response she received from his staff was conditional that it had to be formed as an extension of the school's religious identity. The original structure of the GSFSC was mentioned in a yearbook article from academic year 2001-2002 and the article noted how the original group expressed frustration at having to adopt a Faith Sharing Community identity, "as opposed to a standard organization…while many were frustrated, they felt it more important to move on to the important business of raising awareness" (St. Robert's Carillon, 2002, p. 70). The earliest affinity spaces for Black, Latino, and gay students at St. Robert's Prep had to navigate the waters of legitimacy in order to become accepted by the school. In the end, widespread support for minoritized student groups became legitimized once they solidified a structural connection to the school's religious identity. As support systems for minoritized youth at St. Robert's continued to evolve, these efforts experienced varying levels of acceptance, as discussed in the next subsection.

Narrative Theme 3: Varying Levels of Acceptance

This study found that the St. Robert's community grew to accept the presence of support structures for racial, economic, and sexual and gender minority youth, but that the school's response varied depending on the student group being served and the supports being requested – plus minoritized student support was often framed by conditions. Faculty and staff responded to support structures for Black, Latino, and economic minority students differently than they did for those targeting Asian-American and gay students. While some faculty saw the benefit of specific spaces of support for Black, low-income, and Latino students, others questioned why specific supports were needed and some went as far as questioning if these students belonged at the school. Dedicated spaces for these students were labeled as potentially divisive, contrary to the school's vision of having one unified community. And yet, this same school community responded positively towards an affinity space for Asian-American students and overwhelmingly supported a dedicated effort to support gay students.

This finding is worthy of a moment of reflection. Black, low-income, and Latino students from the abovementioned programs all experienced racism and microaggressions on the St. Robert's Prep campus, as did Asian-American and gay students. Black, low-income, and Latino students also faced stereotypes and isolation on a campus filled with people who were not like them, again similar to Asian-American and gay students. The central aim of all the affinity groups was the same – to build community around a shared identity and experience. Given these similarities in experience and purpose, it is plausible to suggest that the positive support for Asian-American and gay students stemmed from their status within the St. Robert's community as compared to the status of Black, low-income, and Latino students within the school. To put it simply, St. Robert's Prep could literally hold more space for Asian-American and gay students

than it could for Black, low-income, or Latino students. This finding underscores the saliency of understanding colorblind racism within a predominantly white and heteronormative school context. Consistent with the characteristics of cultural racism, supports toward Black, low-income, and Latino students were presumed to be problematic. They were seen as fostering division and were often branded as a lowering of academic standards. They were also positioned as burdensome for teaching faculty. Conversely, supports for Asian students fit into a framework that reflected the group's model minority status (Quach et al., 2009), and notably did not include any concerns around socioeconomic class needs or cultural division. In addition, the overwhelming support from faculty and staff towards the GSFSC reflected a desire to protect gay students rather than question them, possibly because the needs of the students in the group cut across race and class (French, 2017).

Another pertinent finding is the manner in which the school community eventually accepted the presence of cultural affinity groups but drew a conditional line around their participation in the life of the school. In the early 1990s, student clubs could receive funding for club events and t-shirts by applying to ASB/student government for financial support. As cultural identity clubs emerged at the school, there was great campus debate around whether the student government should provide funding for ethnic clubs to have events or programs. The debate stemmed from the idea that only a select number of students would benefit from funding given to ethnic clubs. For the Asian Society in particular, this issue of access to funding changed the way the group was seen on campus; Alton Jun pointed out that his work with Asian students was seen in a very positive light until the Asian Society requested funding for their events from the student government. Once culturally specific groups asked to be treated as full participants in campus life and access the community's resources just like all other student clubs, then their presence on

campus was questioned. Since abstract liberalism claims that racial inequality is a result of individual choices rather than systematic exclusion, the school was able to accept the existence of cultural groups within and for themselves. However, it balked at providing equal financial support to these groups in the same way it did other student clubs.

Ultimately, while students and faculty did experience varying levels of institutional support, the roots of institutional change were taking hold. The next section describes how both intentional strategy and deliberate rejection of the institutional framework of colorblind racism were used to create change at St. Robert's Prep.

Narrative Theme 4: Reform Within a Colorblind Context

Finally, this study revealed the ways in which organizational change occurs within a colorblind context: through intentional use of strategy which acknowledges and navigates the traditional school environment, plus through targeted structural changes which purposefully leverage school resources to reject harmful social and racial ideology. Organizational narratives can be resisted and reformed, even within a context that espouses colorblindness. Reform is often thought of as the end product of substantial time spent planning, strategizing, and leveraging power with an eye towards social or structural upheaval. And yet, oftentimes significant reforms happen when ordinary people simply decide to change things within their sphere of influence. The St. Robert's Prep context presented unique challenges to all students as they navigated their teenage years within the school. The predominantly white context created challenges for white students, forming within them an underdeveloped sense of difference. It also created challenges for students of color who were excluded and isolated within the St. Robert's community based on their personal identities. Additionally, the private, tuition-based setting was not built to support low-income youth. Finally, the school's all-male, Catholic and Jesuit context fostered

misunderstanding (at best) and hostility (at worst) towards sexual and gender minority students. Given the dominant culture of the school, many participants in this study noted examples of colorblind racism all around them. This included the normalization of whiteness, the minimization of race and difference, and the naturalization of the prevailing racial order. As a response, these educators led the way by building spaces and places of support for minoritized students within the existing context. Participants' reflections revealed two subthemes regarding the manner in which organizational change happened within a colorblind system: through strategy, and through structural change that rejected the dominant paradigm.

Using Strategy

For the affinity groups that were attempting to be the first in the school's history - namely, the first cultural affinity group and the first affinity group for sexual or gender minority students – strategy proved to be an instrumental tool in the pursuit of reform at St. Robert's. Both groups had to contend with abstract liberalism's propensity to maintain a discriminatory status quo, as well as having to legitimize themselves within the dominant structure of the school. Both Ernest Truman's work to establish the BSU, and the work to establish the GSFSC, demonstrate the use of strategy to make change.

Ernest Truman's work to establish the Black Student Union demonstrates the use of strategy to counter the obstacles created by the school's desire to maintain the status quo. Ernest had attempted to start a BSU in 1980 but the students were not ready for it. Had he pushed the issue, Ernest would have run the risk of activating the organization's abstract liberalism frame of resisting change. Given Ernest's close attention to his students, it is more likely that he did not push the issue because he deeply respected his students and simply wanted to follow their lead. However, it is significant that as a person who has been socialized by America's colorblind

racism framework, he deferred on pushing the institution into a space it was not ready for. This required patience as he waited for the right time to start the club that would benefit Black students on St. Robert's predominantly white campus. Eventually, the Black Student Union began in the spring of 1988 once a student came forward and asked for support in starting the club, giving Ernest and the school the organic start that rationalized the need to move forward.

Similarly, the creation of the GSFSC was strategic from its first origins. Building upon her experience as the mother of a gay son, Justina knew something needed to be done after hearing about bullying and physical aggression towards gay students on campus. She also knew that strategy would be critical for any advocacy efforts to be successful. She knew that previous efforts had failed, and she knew that she needed the support of key players in the St. Robert's landscape. As mentioned in Chapter 4, Justina approached the Bishop's office for permission before she spoke to her own administration. This order of operations reflects profound strategic insight. Within a Catholic setting, there is no stronger authority than the Bishop; gaining his approval gave the idea powerful legitimacy as Justina approached her principal. Additionally, it is worth underscoring that Justina met with the Bishop's office to speak about starting the group on campus before informing the principal she was advocating for this work. Within a Catholic school setting, this sequence of events is astounding. It demonstrates a brilliant use of strategy that maximizes status, support, and legitimacy in order to achieve the goal of supporting sexual and gender minority students on a traditional Jesuit school campus.

Both of these participants' actions were strategic moves made on the chessboard of colorblind racism. Their awareness of the dominant paradigm and their understanding of how to successfully navigate that system allowed them to establish the school's first ever cultural affinity group and the school's first space for sexual and gender minority students. These two

participants shifted the dominant paradigm of the school forever. As a result of their strategic action, St. Robert's Prep is currently seen as one of the more progressive schools in the Jesuit Schools Network in part because it has had affinity groups longer than most schools in the United States conference. Patience and strategy were key elements in these moments of reform. Other reforms came through the school's direct rejection of US social and racial ideology.

Structural Change that Rejects the Dominant Framework

Several structural changes took place at St. Robert's that resulted from the school's intentional rejection of the dominant US social and racial ideology. The analysis that follows focuses on the positive aspects of re-centering efforts on the needs of racial, economic, sexual and gender minority communities. Efforts that stem from the intentional rejection of racist paradigms are different than charity-based efforts, which often accept the subordinate position of marginalized communities and do little to enact change. The structural changes made at St. Robert's during the 1970-2020 timeframe were direct responses to the larger, unjust US social order and were enacted specifically to disrupt the school's exclusionary history.

Consistent with the documents coming out of the Society of Jesus in the late 1970s, former principal Fr. Hugh Parker, SJ, likely saw the creation of the MSP as a way to live out the school's Jesuit mission more fully. In this case, Fr. Parker, SJ rejected the historical tendency to exclude racial and economic minorities from Jesuit education, and instead intentionally allocated school resources to create educational access. Gordon Fidelio recalled how the MSP reflected Hugh's priorities during his years in administration:

> Hugh Parker really was modeling the whole Minority Scholarship Program after a program called Project 50 at King's University. … And our hopes were that we would enrich - it was kind of an enrichment program, you know, get [students] thinking about

> college and help them, motivation, and we would do follow up during the year, you know, as counselors and go to the school and have study nights and, you know, study programs and tutoring things. (G. Fidelio, personal communication, July 28, 2021)

Meaningful structural change means more than just borrowing a model. For Fr. Parker, SJ, achieving this goal meant allocating school resources in a major way. For example, the school earmarked summer scholarships for low-income students, provided time so that staff could visit students at school and families at home as wraparound support, and made staff available for study nights and tutoring during the academic year. Once the school intentionally centered the needs of the poor and decided this initiative was a priority, staffing and resources were reallocated in service of the new mission. The MSP was instrumental in increasing the ethnic, cultural, and economic diversity of the school in the 1980s and 1990s and continues to introduce low-income youth of color to the school in its current form, the STRIVE program.

In the early 2000s, St. Robert's again initiated structural change that resulted from intentionally rejecting dominant ideologies, particularly those rooted in cultural racism. In response to an opportunity presented by the governing board to expand access to the school, Owen McCoy, the school's first lay principal, decided that the school would establish an outreach program to identify low-income Latino youth from a neighborhood traditionally underserved by St. Robert's. This program was distinct from the summer STRIVE program in that it was an academic year program and not a summer program. To further bolster the program, Owen allocated 15 full tuition scholarships for Outreach students so that finances would not be an obstacle to enrollment. Establishing this program required an intentional rejection of cultural racism's claims that minority communities are intellectually deficient, a suggestion that often serves as the rationale for the exclusion of cultural minorities from many educational

opportunities. In the excerpt that follows, Lawrence Reynolds recalls the Admissions committee's first glimpse at applicant files for Outreach candidates. The committee was not accustomed to seeing academic profiles from under-resourced communities:

> We have no idea what to do. Are we going to tell these kids - No? Are we going to tell all these kids - Yes? I mean, we really didn't know! What can St. Robert's Prep – can we do a good job teaching these kids? And God bless him. Owen McCoy says, to the committee, "I'm going to take these 30 application files." He went home that night, he went through all 30 himself, which must have taken a while. He personally came back …And said, "Okay, these." I forget the number, I think it was roughly 15. "These 15 guys might be able to make it at St. Robert's Prep. Let's talk about them." (L. Reynolds, personal communication, August 25, 2021)

By intentionally rejecting colorblind racism's arguments of cultural racism and inferiority, St. Robert's created a space of reform by purposefully embracing the potential of low-income Latino youth.

Finally, the principal went a step further and directed the Admissions office to create a position and staff it with great specificity. "Owen said, 'I would like an assistant director of admissions who can also serve as director of diversity. Who is Spanish speaking'" (L. Reynolds, personal communication, August 25, 2021). Not only did the principal allocate resources for scholarships, he ensured the school had specific staffing that possessed the type of skills needed for the students and program to be successful. Again, through structural changes that centered the needs of underrepresented students and through the outright rejection of colorblind racism's tenets of cultural racism, St. Robert's set up an advocacy program promoting the success of underrepresented students. At St. Robert's Prep, lasting institutional advocacy work came from

structural change that centered the needs of underrepresented students and actively rejected the prevailing racial and social order. These moments of change did not require an outright rejection of the school, nor a complete upheaval of the school's mission or purpose. What these moments of reform did require, however, was intention. This section demonstrates that individuals can effect change within a colorblind paradigm when they intentionally use strategy to support their purpose. In addition, this section demonstrates that schools can create structural reform when they purposefully reject the dominant American social and racial paradigm.

Summary of Findings

This chapter explored four overarching narratives that emerged from participants' reflections and experiences: (a) the problem of selective sight; (b) an institution's need for legitimacy; (c) varying levels of acceptance; (d) reform within a colorblind context. These findings shed light on the interplay between individuals and institutions and reveal considerations for both. The findings reveal that Catholic and Jesuit schools should consider the ways in which they are defining service to the marginalized vis-à-vis underrepresented students on their campus and social justice work abroad. In addition, schools may be challenged to reflect on the various ways in which they require advocates or advocacy efforts to legitimize themselves to gain support for their work. Organizations would be well-served to reflect on how and why certain groups or support efforts are found more acceptable than others. Finally, the analysis in this section suggests that lasting change often stems from individuals and schools which intentionally enact spaces of reform.

CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

This study illuminates the significance of 50 years of advocacy in the service of minoritized students at one traditional Jesuit high school. By reviewing historical documents and analyzing participant narratives, four overarching narratives emerged: (a) the problem of selective sight; (b) the institution's need for legitimacy; (c) varying levels of acceptance; (d) reform within a colorblind context. These findings expose the potential for change. Adopting a structural framework that explains the danger of institutional colorblind racism allowed this study to explore how an organization can unknowingly replicate an unjust social order that normalizes whiteness and heteronormativity and marginalizes racial, economic, sexual and gender minority youth. This chapter addresses the study's research questions and connects its findings to existing literature. The final sections offer recommendations for practice as well as considerations for future research.

Discussion

Research Question 1: Opportunities and Actions

The first set of research questions for this study explored the ways in which early advocates for minoritized youth identified the need for their particular work. These questions included:

- What historical actions did key personnel take in support of underrepresented students at a traditional, predominantly white Jesuit secondary school?
- In what ways did opportunities to support underrepresented students present themselves?

The findings demonstrate that for racial and economic minority students, developing a close teacher-student relationship was a crucial starting point, and their efforts were bolstered by the

key participants' culturally-based understanding of their students. The adults were able to leverage their own identities and life experiences to develop a richer understanding of the supports these students needed. The findings also revealed that for sexual and gender minority students, adults' life experiences played a pivotal role in identifying students' needs. For all the participants, their life experiences served as their source of strength – and, in some cases, courage - as they began to advocate within the institution and beyond.

The defining characteristic of the key participants in this study was their ability to see something that needed to be done and their willingness to do it. The social and political reality surrounding some of the participants required them to be strategic and intentional as they built out affinity groups – in particular for Black/African Ancestry and sexual and gender minority youth. And yet, none of the key participants were in positions of formal leadership when they started building spaces of support for students. They saw an opportunity to serve racial, economic, sexual and gender minority students and they got to work. What is perhaps most notable about the actions taken by the participants in this study, is that they built a framework of support in the absence of existing structures. Within a traditional, predominantly white and heteronormative organization, they saw what needed to be done to support racial, economic, sexual and gender minority youth and they did it.

Opportunities Presented Themselves

For most of the key participants, their individual relationships with students were the key that allowed a deeper understanding of students' needs and revealed opportunities for support, consistent with Murdock et al.'s work (2000). For Ernest, Alton, Heidi, and Gordon, their first movements were to purposefully connect with racial and economic minority students on the students' terms. Ernest reported trying to encounter Black students on campus simply to ask how

they were doing. Alton intentionally went to the dormitory to engage with the Asian boarding students, just to hang out with them. Heidi consciously encountered Latino students in the classroom and noted their behaviors and engagement. Gordon freely opened up his office and his classroom to Minority Scholarship Program (MSP) summer alumni to engage with them during the academic year. In line with research on the benefits of race-matching between teachers and students, Ernest, Heidi, and Alton benefitted from sharing the same racial identity as that of their students (Aldana, 2012; Cherng & Halpin, 2016; Ladson-Billings, 2009), underscoring this finding's relevance within Catholic schools. In sum, for all the key participants, their motivations emerged from their own personal experiences as people who identified as *other* within the walls of St. Robert's Prep. It is worthy to note that these key participants let the students set the terms of the relationship; the participants were present to students and offered kinship, but none of them pushed any agenda on the students.

These individual relationships allowed the key participants to listen deeply as students shared their experiences of racism and isolation on campus. Heidi characterized herself as someone who questions her students to find out more about them, and this strategy allowed her to hear students' voice everything from the need for food to the need for emotional support. Gordon self-describes as a person who lent a friendly ear to students, allowing them to share their feelings of disconnection and isolation with him. Listening deeply brought to light the isolating and challenging experiences racial and economic minority students face in predominantly white schools (e.g., Coleman, 2017; Fergus, 2017; Newcomb, 2020). Key participants connected with Black, Asian, Asian-American, and Latino students through conversation, over lunch, and within the daily rhythm of high school life, allowing the adults to know the students as whole people, as outlined by Ozer et al. (2008). Prayer and service further

reinforced relationships. By listening with their hearts to the needs of minoritized students, opportunities to initiate formal supports for racial and economic minority youth at St. Robert's emerged for these key participants.

Opportunities to support gay youth at St. Robert's Prep presented themselves differently than they did for racial and economic minority students. Consistent with research that shows how Catholic schools and Dioceses are gaining new awareness around the needs of sexual and gender minority youth in their schools (Callaghan, 2014; Callaghan, 2016; Parodi-Brown, 2019), the local Diocese had established an office of pastoral ministry for gays and lesbians in 1989 and St. Robert's was introducing new in-service programming on the topic of homophobia about a decade later. The adults on campus were able to strategically leverage these openings as opportunities to support sexual and gender minority students on campus. While the adults involved with supporting racial and economic minorities were able to follow students' leads, due to St. Robert's social and religious climate that discouraged students from openly discussing their sexual identities (Love & Tosolt, 2013), adults needed to assume direct responsibility for the effort to support sexual and gender minority students, consistent with Maher and Sever's findings (2007).

Participants Took Action

Commensurate with research that identifies the presence of affinity groups as a major factor in ameliorating negative outcomes for underrepresented students, all key participants chose to establish affinity groups for their students as a primary means of support (Arrington et al., 2006; Carter, 2007; Oto & Chikkatur, 2019). The cultural and identity affinity groups created spaces that reinforced students' identities, built their peer networks, and allowed students to process their minoritized identity within a predominantly white and heteronormative school

setting (Aguilar & Gross, 1999; Arrington et al., 2006; Carter, 2007). In line with Brosnan's (2001) findings, the first affinity groups at St. Robert's Prep were organized around cultural identity, and the presence of those groups paved the way for the Gay-Straight Faith Sharing Community (GSFSC). As noted by Maher and Sever (2007) who conducted research on Gay-Straight Alliances in Catholic schools, the St. Robert's GSFSC was required to be structured as a Faith Sharing Community and housed within Campus Ministry as a condition of their existence (Maher & Sever, 2007). In the face of social and political resistance, advocates for minoritized youth took action to create spaces of support for minoritized youth at St. Robert's simply because it was what the students needed.

Research Question 2: Institutional Opportunities and Constraints

The second set of research questions explored the institutional response to underrepresented student advocacy. These question that guided this part of the study was: *Within a traditional, Catholic, Jesuit school, what spaces of institutional opportunity allowed for advocacy work towards underrepresented students, and what institutional constraints existed or emerged due to this advocacy?* The findings of this study reveal that spaces of opportunity emerged through the philosophical leadership offered by the Society of Jesus, and its subsequent translation by institutional leadership. Institutional constraints included the school's historical embrace of colorblind racism, and the presence of conflicting messages around community and inclusion.

Institutional Opportunity

Jesuit schools are often perceived as institutions that were established to serve children of the economic elite. From their inception, however, Jesuit schools were directed to serve a cultural, religious, and ideologically diverse student population (Padberg, 1996). Jesuit schools

of today seek racial, economic, and religious diversity within their communities. While the next section will explore the cultural realities and contradictions of Jesuit schools, the Society's foundational documents and philosophical aspirations do provide spaces of opportunity for underrepresented student advocacy.

In particular, several Jesuit documents within the past 50 years supply arguments for the support of minoritized students within Jesuit schools. Notably, Arrupe's *The Interracial Apostolate* (1967) directed Jesuit organizations to combat injustice by increasing the numbers of racial and economic minorities within their ministries in a systematic, not individual, manner. The document concludes with 10 specific directives to guide thought and action so as to be more inclusive of racial and economic minorities. An additional, seminal, piece by Arrupe is his "Men for Others" address in 1973 which called Jesuit ministries ground their works in service and the pursuit of justice. Specifically, this document asks Jesuit ministries to develop within them an awareness of the need to change with the times, and their responsibility to actively work to dismantle unjust systems. Documents related to General Congregation 32 (December 1974 - March 1975), addressed the post-Vatican II social reality and specifically directed Jesuit ministries dedicate staff and resources towards the pursuit of justice as a central component of our Catholic faith. For St. Robert's, the decades that followed the publication of these documents saw an increase in new programs such as minority scholarship programs, an increase in targeted admissions efforts towards students of color, and an increase in support programs for minoritized students. In their own way, Jesuit schools (associated with the Society of Jesus) distinguish themselves from Catholic schools (associated with the local Diocese) by taking the initiative to engage with and enroll minoritized students, rather than waiting for minority students to make the first move (Heft, 1991).

Ultimately, spaces of institutional opportunity emerged through the way school leadership translated the abovementioned Jesuit documents into action during the 1970-2020 timeframe. By embracing the need for change and committing school resources towards creating a more representative and supportive community, the principals at St. Robert's laid the foundation for future reform. The creation of the MSP in 1980 by Fr. Hugh Parker SJ may have originally been intended to simply increase the numbers of racial and economic minority students on campus. However, that program and the students that enrolled because of it indirectly led to the establishment of cultural affinity spaces in the 1990s. In addition, that program laid the groundwork for a program that emerged two decades later, and that still provides comprehensive support to low-income, first-generation college bound youth and their parents. One program in 1980 laid the groundwork for decades of sea change towards underrepresented student support at St. Robert's Prep. The principal that followed, Owen McCoy, built upon the work of Fr. Hugh Parker, SJ, and Robert Goodman built upon his work after that. While more recent research shows predominantly white and suburban Catholic schools' growing interest in increasing their numbers of minoritized students (Alliance for Catholic Education, 2013; Darder, 2016; Suhy, 2013), it is noteworthy that the foundations for the systems that provide minoritized student support at St. Robert's Prep were laid nearly 40 years ago.

Institutional Constraints

In the face of philosophical and programmatic opportunities to support underrepresented students at St. Robert's Prep, two major constraints emerged: the school's culture of colorblind racism and the institution's inability to reconcile inconsistent messages around justice and inclusion. The role of these constraints is discussed in the subsections that follow.

Colorblind Racism. Given its Catholic, Jesuit identity, decades of a predominantly white student body, and its structure as a private, tuition-based school, St. Robert's Prep adopted the dominant narrative of its community – the ideology of the heteronormative white elite. As Bonilla-Silva (2002, 2015, 2018) outlines in his theory of colorblind racism, this ideology is one which promotes meritocracy, explains away racial phenomena as a reflection of natural social order, promotes culturally-based deficit perspectives, and minimizes experiences and effects of discrimination. St. Robert's is not immune to the presence and persistence of colorblind racism, and this proved to be the most salient institutional constraint that pushed back against efforts to support underrepresented students.

Consistent with legions of Catholic, Jesuit, and independent schools before it, St. Robert's promoted the idea that individual effort and meritocracy as the way to achieve success (Beaumier, 2013; Darder, 2016; O'Malley, 1993). In addition, its curriculum normalized the voices and experiences of white and heteronormative communities (Aldana, 2015; Bryk, 1993; Maher & Sever, 2007; O'Malley, 1993). As a result, the community was able to minimize the appearance of discrimination on its campus. Within this overall context, it is not surprising that reports of cultural racism emerged from the participants. Ernest noted 13 specific instances of racism towards himself or towards Black and Latino students. Alton spoke of microaggressions and institutional bias towards him and Asian students. Heidi referenced microaggressions due to gender or ethnicity. Justina and Lisa recalled hearing of discrimination and harassment towards sexual and gender minority students at St. Robert's Prep. In the face of these experiences, however, there were decades of institutional silence regarding the needs of racial and economic minority students on this Catholic and Jesuit campus, plus a particular silence around the presence and experiences of gay youth (Love & Tosolt, 2013; Maher, 2007). Those at the school

who were looking through the normalized colorblind lens were unable to see or hear these negative experiences. This constrained the efforts of those who were attempting to support marginalized students at St. Robert's.

This colorblind approach placed additional institutional constraints on St. Robert's Prep by promoting the idea that the school and its staff should not see difference. As a result, the need for targeted supports for minoritized students was minimized. Despite these constraints, many minoritized students found success within this colorblind framework, so long as they adopted the norms and mannerisms of traditional, white, and heterosexual St. Robert's Prep students. However, there is significant personal price to pay for acceptance and achievement if the cost is a compartmentalization of identity or endurance of microaggressions (Coleman, 2017; Simmons, 2014; Thomas, et al., 2020). In addition, this colorblind approach required underrepresented student advocates to legitimize their efforts through strategic alliances and structural loopholes (Callaghan, 2014; Callaghan, 2016; Liboro et al., 2015), and by marketing cultural affinity groups as non-threatening to the community (Herr, 1999). St. Robert's institutional colorblind lens rendered at least one academic department unable to see the Eurocentric nature of its curriculum while racial minority students enrolled at St. Robert's clearly saw what they were not learning (Martin, 1995). Finally, the school's colorblind lens inhibited the ability of core programs such as the service immersion program to consider how their approach towards the countries and people they visited in developing nations were tinged by colonial lenses that promoted whiteness and reinforced privilege (Haarman & Selak, 2021), as well as further isolating students of color whose personal histories were rooted in the countries being examined by their classmates. A colorblind lens constrains institutions by allowing them to dismiss the

lived experiences and needs of minoritized students. This approach hurts all members of the community, and within Jesuit schools, it contradicts the school's message of acceptance.

Conflicting Messages. Inconsistent institutional messages about community and inclusion served as additional constraints within the St. Robert's Prep community. These messages manifested in multiple ways. One of the central findings of this study is the conflict between the promotion of social justice efforts off-campus and the active dismissal of the needs of minoritized students on campus. Within a school that promoted *cura personalis*, or care for the individual person, affinity spaces based on individual identity were questioned as divisive (Chun, 2016; French, 2017; Simmons, 2014). In addition, the St. Robert's community promoted messages of individualism, yet the institution reflected assimilationist values (Bryk et al., 1993; Louie & Holdaway, 2009), communicating to students that in order to be successful, there was a specific norm to which they should aspire (Darder, 2016). Finally, the school promoted conditional acceptance for all its affinity groups – allowing them to exist so long as they were not seen as divisive, and funding their events so long as they were open to all students (Herr, 1999). In particular, the fact that the affinity group for sexual and gender minority youth had to be situated within Campus Ministry communicated a conflicting message about full acceptance (Maher & Sever, 2007). All these conflicting messages led to many minoritized youth feeling like *welcomed outsiders* within the St. Robert's Prep community (Darder, 2016).

Research Question 3: Changing Narratives

The next set of research questions explored if and how the school's perception of underrepresented students changed over time. These questions included:

- In what ways did the narrative around underrepresented students change at the school over time?

- How did this shifting narrative impact subsequent efforts at underrepresented student support?

The findings reveal that the school moved from reactive to proactive over time. However, the influence of deeply established school tradition on future, systematic, support of underrepresented youth remains a question.

The shift in student composition at St. Robert's over the past 50 years has been quite striking, and the way in which this demographic change took place aided in establishing the institutional narrative around underrepresented students. In the latter half of the 20th century, St. Robert's mirrored the national trend seen in Catholic and Jesuit schools nationwide as they enrolled increasing numbers of racial and economic minority students (Jesuit Schools Network, 2020; McGreevy, 1996). For St. Robert's, the demographic shift was aided by several programs which intentionally increased the numbers of racial and economic minority students at the school. Significantly, these programs were initiatives rooted in the school's Jesuit mission to serve marginalized communities, consistent with the Jesuit documents that were disseminated after Vatican II. This service-based perspective stands in marked contrast to the way that Brosnan (2001) and French (2017) characterize private independent schools' outreach efforts to minority communities - as charitable attempts to right past exclusionary wrongs. This distinction is subtle but potentially meaningful; the early outreach efforts at St. Robert's indicated a sense of responsibility to share resources with underserved communities, even though the lived experiences of students from these communities were not fully understood by the larger institution.

The key participants played a major role in crafting the narrative around minoritized youth at St. Robert's Prep. While the school administration created programs that increased the

numbers of racial and economic minority students at the school, individuals such as Heidi, Ernest, Alton, and Gordon set the tone for how these students should be received at the school. In a special way, Justina led the way for the school to create space for sexual and gender minority youth. These participants were not trying to be martyrs; they were not trying to gain status or recognition for their efforts. Their actions were consistent with Bryk et al.'s (1993) finding that teachers in Catholic schools viewed their work as a type of ministry. The participants in this study simply noticed that certain students would benefit from extra support, and they worked to provide whatever it was those students needed. These five key participants taught the St. Robert's school community that consistently walking with the students who are most in need is precisely what Catholic and Jesuit educators should be doing.

Over the past 50 years, the most significant shift in narrative around minoritized youth that has taken place at St. Robert's has been a result of a change in the school's diversity climate. Brand et al. (2003) and Hurtado et al., (1998) contextualized a school's diversity climate as connected to their history of inclusion (or exclusion) of minority groups, their numerical diversity, their psychological climate around diversity, and the ways in which underrepresented groups function within the school. St. Robert' Prep evolved from having no centralized effort to support marginalized students to having a centralized office for this purpose, and institutional alignment on the need for these supports. In addition, the school has increased the number of faculty of color at the school, allowing students to benefit from seeing themselves in the faces of their teachers (Atkins et al., 2014; Egalite & Kisida, 2017). By making conscientious decisions around hiring, program development, and funding, the school has moved from being reactive to the needs of racial, economic, sexual, and gender minority youth, to proactively meeting their needs by creating an institutional approach to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts. In

1996, the school established a Diversity Coordinator position to raise awareness about race and difference. This position now oversees the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, which is staffed by a Director and an Assistant Director. The office centralizes support of all identity affinity groups plus implements specific programs for first-generation college bound, low-income students and their parents. In addition, the Assistant DEI Director is tasked specifically with providing professional development on race and gender to faculty and staff plus supporting curriculum development so that the DEI lens is activated throughout each academic department (Mayhew et al., 2005). In addition, programs that raise the visibility and awareness of underrepresented students have grown over time and are now essential elements of the school calendar.

Some examples of these programs include:

- the Gay-Straight Community hosts an annual Day of Silence to protest the continued harassment of and discrimination against sexual and gender minority youth;
- the Unity Council, a student group that reflects all the identity affinity groups on campus, hosts an all-school Unity Assembly to showcase the cultural diversity of the student body;
- the Latino, Asian, and Black student communities host several large cultural celebrations which hundreds of people attend every year; and
- the DEI office recently organized an all-school racial justice teach-in.

The school's approach towards marginalized students continues to evolve, more recently moving from a programmatic emphasis to one that more structurally addresses the everyday experiences of racial, economic, and sexual and gender minority youth on St. Robert's campus. Faculty and staff now have new opportunities to provide input into the development of the school's multi-

year DEI strategic plan through the faculty/staff Equity and Inclusion Committee. The draft strategic plan addresses a comprehensive curriculum review across all academic departments to ensure students learn about multicultural perspectives, places emphasis on hiring and retention strategies to attract and retain faculty and staff of color, calls for comprehensive professional development for faculty and staff around inclusion and bias, and recommends strategies to promote a welcoming and inclusive school community for students and parents alike. Finally, the school recently redrafted its anti-hate and discrimination policy in response to recent incidents of racism and discrimination on campus. All these efforts support Smith et al.'s (2020) assertion that schools should demonstrate their commitment to diversity and cultural pluralism in concrete ways.

This study demonstrates that a few committed individuals can change an institutional narrative over time. However, it is important to note that all of the support strategies enacted at St. Robert's are still essentially islands of support within a traditional school context. Regardless of the number of supports present for minoritized students at the school, and despite the increasing prevalence of faculty diversity, St. Robert's Prep is still structured as a traditional prep school. The school as an institution still speaks the language of privilege and power. The structures and programs at St. Robert's benefit minoritized students and their families by providing moments of refuge rather than normalizing their experiences, language, or culture. For example, the Latino parent nights are helpful to parents who wish to understand the school's academic program, and parents benefit from the program being conducted in Spanish. However, the dominant academic program remains at the center of the conversation, and Spanish-language families are still treated as *other* within the traditional school community (Ospino & Weitzel-O'Neill, 2014). French's (2017) powerfully demonstrates how traditional schools approach

diversity efforts and questions their effectiveness in dismantling or even interrupting the status quo. Until traditional schools clearly understand the ways in which they have been built to uphold and promote the US social order, schools will continue to provide *ports in the storm*, rather than dismantling unjust systems present on their campuses (Darder, 2016).

Research Question 4: Off-Campus Social Movements

The final research question explored the influence of off-campus social movements on the work of the key participants in this study. The question that guided this part of the inquiry was: *In what ways did larger, off-campus social movements influence the work of these key personnel in their service of underrepresented students, particularly as they related to the school's justice-centered mission?* Numerous flashpoints occurred during the 1970-2020 timeframe that likely shaped the thinking of St. Robert's Prep students, faculty, and staff. The key participants mentioned major historical moments such as significant American presidential elections (Reagan, Obama, Trump), the 9/11 national tragedy, the uprisings following the Rodney King verdict, the national reaction to the OJ Simpson verdict, and recent social movements such as Black Lives Matter and Stop AAPI Hate. Participants also noted cultural shifts that took place in society over time, such as the increased acceptance of LGBTQAI+ in visual and digital media as well as an increased desire among Americans to declare our nation as *post-racial.* None of the participants, however, directly connected their work with minoritized students with any of these social movements. Participants did note that some of these historical moments may have led to a momentary increase in discriminatory or racist incidents, and their relationships with students allowed them to support underrepresented students in these moments of need. But none of the participants noted that their efforts were in reaction to off-campus social movements, were inspired by social unrest, or were an extension of what was happening in

America. Consistently, the key participants noted that their work with students was inspired by the everyday experiences their students were having on campus.

Participants did note, however, some ways in which students responded to off-campus historical moments or social movements. Often, when an off-campus flashpoint took place, students expressed a desire to process how they felt. Participants noted that students felt rejected or misunderstood by adults that were not willing or able to create space for this type of dialogue at St. Robert's Prep. Moments such as these stand in stark contrast to the Jesuit ethos of being on the intellectual and philosophical frontiers – of creating space for the most pressing issues of our times (Aldana, 2015). In addition, two on-campus flashpoints stood out to several participants: the 1996 student sit-in during an athletics rally to protest homophobia and racism at St. Robert's, and members of the 2017 varsity football team taking a knee during the national anthem to protest on-campus bigotry and injustice. Kneeling during the national anthem was a direct reflection of what was happening in professional athletics, and the participants that mentioned this moment noted that it was profoundly controversial within the St. Robert's school community. Both of these moments directly challenged the school's understanding of social justice as it related to the experiences of underrepresented students enrolled at St. Robert's.

The ways in which students expressed their voices on school campuses often led the way for adults to consider if, as Ernest Truman stated, the school is "practicing what it preached" about justice. Participants noted the ways in which students challenged the institution through public activism or direct conversation. Examples such as Black students challenging the English curriculum's dominant white narrative in 1994, white students leading a sit-in in 1996 to protest the treatment of people of color and gay students on campus, and both white students and students of color kneeling in 2017 during the national anthem to protest the presence of racism

and discrimination on campus led to an increased awareness of the experiences of minoritized students both across the school community and within the minds of administrators and key personnel. These moments of student activism led to institutional responses such as diversifying the curriculum and creating a position for a diversity practitioner. While this study did not specifically focus on the symbiotic relationship between student activism and institutional change, this is an important area for future research.

In sum, off-campus social movements did not appear to be major factors in the establishment of supports for underrepresented students at St. Robert's Prep. Large-scale student activism plus everyday student voice, however, did appear to influence the work of key personnel and challenged the institution to consider the ways in which it was supporting underrepresented students vis-à-vis its mission of justice and values of inclusion. Taken together, the findings in this section allow the researcher to make several recommendations related to practice and future research. These recommendations are reviewed in the next section.

Recommendations for Practice

This study emerged from a desire to understand how adults identify, imagine, and implement efforts to support minoritized students within traditional Jesuit school settings. Additionally, this study sought to explore how schools are shaped over time by people and programs. The historical experience of St. Robert's Prep is not unique. As its student body diversified and minoritized students encountered the challenges of a predominantly white school community and heteronormative culture, the key participants identified opportunities to support racial, economic, sexual and gender minority students. As Catholic and Jesuit schools will likely serve an increasingly diverse student population in the future, this study may be useful as schools consider their next steps towards fully supporting all students within their community.

Oftentimes, personnel see a need within a school and immediately advocate for new programs and added staffing. There is often a necessary urgency around this approach. For example, if there are already underrepresented students on a Catholic or Jesuit school campus, it is certain their daily experiences are being shaped by the dominant social order which marginalizes non-white and non-heteronormative voices and experiences. The immediate needs of these students usually trump the need for process, and schools generally press forward by allocating resources and identifying someone to lead the charge - typically in addition to their regular duties - establishing an unsustainable precedent. It is worth noting that the first steps a school takes in support of minoritized students will set the tone for future efforts. Subsequent efforts will use what was previously done as a reference point, and the cycle will continue until it is intentionally reimagined. This pattern reveals why our organizations seem to ask the same questions and face the same problems year after year, simply because the institutional vocabulary and well of experience are limited to that which has already been imagined by the school and its personnel.

As an educator who has worked in Jesuit schools for the past 16 years, and now as a researcher who has explored the history of advocacy efforts for marginalized students at St. Robert's Prep, I have several perspectives that inform the recommendations for practice that follow. I am a woman of color who serves in a predominantly male, predominantly white institution, and I have learned to navigate that space by using strategy and intention. I have served as an educator who saw the needs of marginalized students and built structures to support them – with varying levels of success. I have served as an administrator who was looking for ways that the institution can align its mission towards the pursuit of racial justice – driving some initiatives to launch while other ideas withered on the vine. I have been that student of color in a

predominantly white institution who was looking for a port in the storm, and also been the person who leverages their personal, lived experiences to be a voice for other marginalized persons. As someone who is deeply committed to the future of Jesuit schools, and as a person who possesses a profound desire to improve Jesuit schools for marginalized students, I offer the following recommendations for practice.

Recommendations for Governing Boards

For many educators, the purview and reach of their school's governing board is limited at best and misunderstood at worst. But as entities which steward the mission of the school, governing boards can have tremendous influence on the institution's direction and focus. Governing boards have the power to allow institutional change or inhibit it, based on their own willingness to embrace risk. To that end, a key recommendation for Catholic and Jesuit school governing boards is to understand their role as stewards of a mission that calls them towards the pursuit of justice, and to identify ways in which their governing and fiduciary responsibilities can move the school towards racial and economic justice.

One way in which boards can effect change is to hire school leaders who are change makers and to let them make change. The key participants in this study all benefitted from leaders who were willing to make changes at St. Robert's for the benefit of marginalized communities – consistent with the school's mission and the Society of Jesus's directives. Boards would be well-served to hire school leaders who will lead the school into what it can become, not leaders who simply will maintain the school as it is. As seen in this study, governing boards can support school leaders by actively supporting initiatives that are mission-aligned towards racial justice – such as the St. Robert's Prep board of 2001 which offered an opportunity to Owen McCoy to build an outreach program for underserved, low-income Latino youth.

In addition, governing boards have the power to reflect the school's priorities by how they structure the annual budget. It is said that the conscience of a school is reflected in its annual budget, and boards have the authority and responsibility to ensure that their fiscal expenditures reflect the values of the school. St. Robert's commitment to racial and economic diversity was reflected in its tuition assistance plan, which increased over time as the local economic landscape changed plus as the school underscored its desire to ensure broad educational access to various communities.

Finally, governing boards need to deepen their understanding of what it means to oversee schools in this post-George Floyd era. Not only are students, faculty, and parents willing and ready to point out the tensions around embedded structural racism, historical and current exclusion and marginalization, and contradictions between the school's stated values and the community's lived reality, but Catholic and Jesuit schools are increasingly being called by their religious orders to face these tensions head on. The Jesuit Schools Network's 2021 revision of the standards and benchmarks governing all Jesuit schools are a prime example of the larger conference holding individual schools accountable to providing anti-racism training for boards, faculty/staff, and students, and to practices such as hiring a diverse faculty and staff (Jesuit Schools Network, 2021). Governing boards can no longer delegate issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion to program directors. They must assume full responsibility of a school mission that is calling them towards increased racial and economic justice.

Recommendations for Catholic and Jesuit School Leaders

Similar to the recommendations for governing boards, Catholic and Jesuit school leaders are encouraged to be proactive within their schools and face diversity, equity, and inclusion conversations head-on. While the key participants in this study found success by working within

the system and accepting incremental change, faculty and staff of today are increasingly unwilling to wait years (or even months) for substantive change. As our feeder communities become more aware of issue facing racial, economic and sexual and gender minority populations, Catholic and Jesuit school leaders will be increasingly called upon to address the inequities facing these communities and implement changes in real time. To paraphrase an alum of St. Robert's Prep, historically marginalized families are no longer willing to endure the emotional and psychological cost of attending a predominantly white school if they have to compartmentalize their identity in any way. Families are increasingly and justifiably demanding equity of experience, acceptance, and outcomes – and as such, school leaders can be proactive in their communities by being intentional within two major areas: people and perspectives.

Catholic and Jesuit school leaders would be well-served to intentionally ensure a broad range of backgrounds, experiences, and viewpoints in their school community. Schools can proceed with intention related to people in a variety of ways: (a) by focusing on increasing faculty and staff diversity; (b) by ensuring that their student body reflects the diversity of their surrounding area. The relationships that the key participants in the study had with their students were enriched by a shared cultural and identity background, consistent with the research on the benefits of race-matching between students and teachers (Aldana, 2012; Cherng & Halpin, 2016; Ladson-Billings, 2009). These findings call school leaders towards a deeper commitment to increasing faculty and staff diversity. This study recommends that school leaders consider how they can be intentional about hiring faculty and staff of color and those with LGBTQIA+ identities. Either by retaining search firms that specifically recruit faculty of color or building partnerships with universities or programs that identify diverse candidates for employment,

schools can no longer wait to see who applies for open positions and hope that there is diversity in their applicant pool.

Additionally, Catholic and Jesuit school leaders of today can and should double down on having a diverse student body. A varied student body promotes a strong diversity climate (Brand et al., 2003; Hurtado et al., 1998; Mayhew et al., 2005) and brings together critical masses of students with shared identity experiences who can support one another. The prevailing practice within Catholic and Jesuit schools is to wait for racial and economic minority students to apply, and then the school will offer its available resources (Heft, 1991). If Catholic and Jesuit schools wish to change their student demographics, they need to stop waiting and make the first move. To accomplish this goal, schools should consider how to leverage partnerships with external community agencies that serve communities of color or low-income communities. The success of the St. Robert's Minority Scholarship Program was aided by the fact that students who were unfamiliar with St. Robert's Prep could come to the school during the summer and use all its facilities – classrooms, basketball courts, the gymnasium, and the theatre. As such, Catholic and Jesuit school leaders would be well-served to consider how they can use their athletic facilities, robotics labs, and co-curricular spaces to intentionally engage youth from varied backgrounds and create a pipeline of diverse youth to enroll in their schools.

Finally, schools that wish to support minoritized students must intentionally consider how they can disrupt the dominant narrative promoted by their school's curriculum. Ernest Truman's experience accompanying a student who challenged the St. Robert's English department's curriculum is a powerful example of the way in which a school's curriculum reflects an institution's values. Schools can make significant headway in advancing perspectives that center the voices of racial, economic, sexual and gender minorities by making intentional choices

around curriculum. Diversifying the curriculum goes beyond changing the books read by the English and Social Science departments. Considering the hidden curriculum advanced within Mathematics and Science courses, analyzing which artists and composers are underrepresented in Visual and Performing Arts classes, and using Foreign Language classes as opportunities to explore conquest and colonialism are powerful ways to intentionally interrupt the canon. In addition, Religion classes have the opportunity to specifically explore the contradictions within the Catholic church as they analyze unjust systems across the globe. Investigating and adopting culturally relevant teaching practices not only centers the voices of students of non-white, non-heteronormative backgrounds but allows schools to narrow the gap between their stated values of community and their exclusionary curricular practices and culture (Aldana, 2015).

Recommendations for DEI Practitioners

St. Robert's Prep has had a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion practitioner since 1996, an anomaly for most Jesuit schools in the United States conference. As schools increasingly hire diversity professionals and establish centralized DEI offices, several recommendations emerge around the role of the DEI office and its function. Even for schools that do not have a formal DEI office, every person who considers how to support racial, economic, sexual and gender minority youth should consider themselves agents of change. The key participants in this study did not lean on a centralized diversity office to identify marginalized students or build out potential supports. If they did the work back then in the absence of structure and without a formal DEI office, so can you.

First and foremost, the research around cultural and identity affinity spaces plus the experiences of the key participants in this study lead to a strong recommendation that every school should have affinity spaces for racial, economic, and sexual and gender minority youth.

The benefits of these spaces are well documented (e.g., Kosciw et al., 2018; Oto & Chikkatur, 2019; Simmons, 2014) and affinity spaces are major contributors to positive outcomes for marginalized students in schools. For schools who have yet to create these spaces on campus, please consider why this work hasn't moved forward. Is the hesitation coming from students or adults? The key participants in this study allowed their students to lead them, and perhaps that is a place where schools new to this work can start.

With regards to schools that have affinity groups, schools are encouraged to consider how these organizations are seen on campus, in order to gain insight into the larger narrative around minoritized youth on campus. Are their cultural celebrations the only opportunity for visibility for these group on campus? At St. Robert's Prep, many of the cultural and identity affinity groups host community-wide celebrations to raise awareness about their community and promote school-wide visibility. Given these practices, what exactly is the school community learning through food and cultural presentations? These events are often spaces of pride and visibility, and schools can and should continue them. However, schools should also intentionally take care that these showcases are not the only visibility for minoritized communities, or that these celebrations are not using communities of color for the benefit of white communities (French, 2017). The Day of Silence should not be the only time the Gay-Straight Community has all-school visibility. By relegating these groups to spaces of narrowly defined visibility, the narrative around these groups continues to be that their stories simply need to be inserted into the dominant narrative like pegs into a larger board.

In addition, this study recommends that DEI practitioners reimagine their lens of broad inclusivity and move towards a specific focus on race and class in their programming and professional development efforts. French's (2017) work illuminates the ways in which an

inclusivity lens can be used to redirect DEI efforts towards the inclusion of white students who already have privilege and power on their private school campuses. This recommendation does not intend to suppress any focus on sexual or gender minority youth. In addition, increasing numbers of mixed race students in Catholic and Jesuit schools further complicate the dialogue around racial identity. However, narrowing an institutional focus specifically towards race and class names the centrality of racism as a driver of unequal outcomes that persist for racial and economic minority youth (French, 2017). Efforts to address the exclusion of sexual and gender minority youth, then, could ideally be explored through the lens of race and class in order to fully understand the interplay between race, class, and gender in the perpetuation of imbalanced power systems within school communities.

Recommendations for St. Robert's Prep

Finally, this study wishes to offer two additional recommendations specifically to the St. Robert's Prep community. All of the aforementioned recommendations apply to St. Robert's, but there were two specific areas where St. Robert's could build upon its existing work to further prepare students to understand difference and advance institutional goals around racial justice.

The first recommendation is programmatic and specific to the school's service immersion program. This initiative began in 1993 with trips to Mexico and El Salvador, and over the years this program has expanded to nearly 20 trips that take students out of their daily reality and into the lived reality of poor and marginalized communities. In the nearly 30 years of this program, these trips have become seminal mission-based experiences at the school. However, the school has never deeply considered the narratives this program is perpetuating regarding economically depressed communities and communities of color, nor how those narratives could inform the experiences of racial and economic minority students on campus. Haarman & Selak's (2021)

recent study examining service immersion trips highlights the ways in which narratives of whiteness and colonialism are reinforced in the absence of intentional work around power and privilege. The narratives that emerge from programs like the service immersion are felt across campus, both by white students who are being taught to visit and observe poor communities of color, as well as by marginalized students on campus whose life experience may (or may not) mirror the host communities in developing countries. A strong recommendation is to offer a comprehensive preparation class before students leave for their immersion trips. The class could introduce students to concepts like colonialism and imperialism and present a comprehensive overview of the host country's history of conquest or disruption. This knowledge could reveal the invisible systems within the host country that support unjust systems which lead to generational poverty and poor health and educational outcomes. In addition, the learning from this class will inform students' understanding of similar unjust systems that are at play here in the United States. St. Robert's students need to be prepared with more than just compassion when they seek to encounter people that are different from them.

The second recommendation is for the institution as a whole and calls the school to clearly and explicitly name racial justice intentions for the school. French (2017) encourages schools to move away from the narrative that diversity efforts benefit all students, and in particular, help white students to learn about difference. With this in mind, St. Robert's Prep has an opportunity to embrace racial justice as a core value for the school. Stating numeric goals around the enrollment of students of color provides an opportunity to rectify generations of exclusionary admissions practices and unequal educational outcomes for communities of color. Building intentional programs to promote hiring faculty and staff from marginalized backgrounds will address the lack of educators of color in the profession. Supporting them

wholly in their identity will promote not only their personal well-being and respect their inherent dignity, but likely will help with retention. Once the school proceeds with intentionality around racial justice, then it will begin to fully capitalize on the gains it has made in its almost 30 year head start of walking with and supporting minoritized youth on its campus.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study examined advocacy efforts for racial, economic, sexual, and gender minority youth within a traditional Jesuit school. Through Bonilla-Silva's (2018) concept of colorblind racism, this study explored how the dominant racial and social order shapes the ways in which underrepresented student support is approached by individuals and institutions. As noted in the literature review, there is minimal empirical work on the socioemotional experiences of students of color or low-income youth in Catholic school settings (Aldana, 2016; Burke & Gilbert, 2016; O'Keefe, 1994; Simmons, 2014), and this study suggests several potential areas for future research:

- Individual identities do not fit solely into one category, and individuals' lived experiences within a dominant racial and social order suggest that certain identities may either compound or lessen the degree of marginalization that underrepresented students experience on traditional school campuses. As such, potential questions arise: What are the implications for students when multiple identities intersect within a Catholic, Jesuit school setting? Is the sense of marginalization of students of color on Catholic school campuses lessened by economic privilege? Are white gay students protected from marginalization more than heterosexual students of color, or does sexual identity on a Catholic campus isolate students further? Are legacy students of color more or less isolated than other legacy students? Future research exploring these questions could

explore the nuances of intersectionality within traditional Catholic and Jesuit school settings.

• This study touched upon several conflicting messages perpetuated within Catholic and Jesuit schools. Future research that explores how Catholic and Jesuit schools reconcile their promotion of a welcoming and inclusive community with the lived experiences of community members that report isolation and exclusion due to a marginalized identity would provide important insights for these ministries. This type of a study would prove particularly useful for Catholic and Jesuit schools' relationships with LGBTQAI+ students and families.

• This study revealed a tension between Catholic and Jesuit schools' embrace of off-campus social justice issues and a concurrent ambivalence towards advocacy efforts for underrepresented youth within their school community. This finding is an important area for future research.

• Finally, this study offers insights for future historical inquiry within Catholic and Jesuit education. The richness of the narratives in this study call future researchers to consider whose stories are centered when an institution shares its history in formal or informal ways. Educators who are insiders within Catholic and Jesuit institutions would be well-served to consider their own responsibilities as they document and preserve the school's practices - whose stories and practices are being documented? Educators who join a community are enculturated to their new school's history and culture through stories and narratives – are we probing these stories to determine whose experience is being centered? Catholic and Jesuit schools' histories are not solely about the nuns and priests

who founded our schools; our histories are also about the laypeople and advocates who translated a larger mission into the lives of individual students.

Conclusion

This study explored the efforts of educators in one Jesuit school, over 50 years, as they advocated for minoritized youth. The participants in this study were effective by being gentle - finding a student the hallway to offer a supportive word, offering their classroom as a safe space to gather, and listening deeply to the struggles and concerns of a young person as they attempted to find their way within a school setting that did not know how to receive them. At the same time, they effected change by being strong - they challenged the school to do better in the service of all its students, they pointed out spaces of inequity and bias, and they consistently worked towards change within a predominantly white, heteronormative system that was not built to support them or their efforts with underrepresented students. Their efforts live on in the thousands of lives they touched through their presence and their person. Their work at St. Robert's Prep changed the school forever.

The experiences of these key participants and the underrepresented students they served are not unique. Across the United States Conference, Catholic and Jesuit secondary schools are experiencing tremendous change in their student demographics. As such, our schools should be considering what the pursuit of *cura personalis* really means, because students deserve to be seen and cared for as their whole selves. For young people whose racial, economic, sexual and gender identities do not fit the traditional Catholic or Jesuit school mold, our schools as currently structured will continue to be places of marginalization unless we do something now. This precise moment in history offers schools the opportunity to reimagine how their school understands and responds to minoritized students. Current high school students were newborns

when the original #MeToo movement began in 2006, and within the past 15 years additional social movements raised the visibility of underrepresented students across the nation. From Black Lives Matter to the Women's March, from protesting climate change to raising awareness about gun violence in schools, our current students have been shaped by an awareness that offering limited solutions to deeply rooted structural problems is neither a solution nor a new occurrence.

Catholic and Jesuit schools are called towards many priorities. We hear from the global Society of Jesus the call towards the Universal Apostolic Preferences. We hear priorities from our Provincial, our local ordinary, and even our own community. And yet, as we look to the future of our schools, we must ask ourselves if we are willing to do what it takes to substantively change the experiences of minoritized students in our schools. Our Jesuit identity calls us to the frontiers of change. And yet, we must ask ourselves, how far do we really have to go to find the frontiers within our own schools?

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Appendix A

Interview Guide

Each oral history interview will begin with questions related to participants' background information to establish their positionality within the school. The central focus of the key participant interview will be to review the historical efforts they undertook within their targeted student community, and the primary aim of the supplementary participant interview is to document their reflections on the cultural and institutional response to the advocacy work being done by others. The study's research questions are presented below as well as referenced within the interview questions.

RQ1: What historical actions did key personnel take in support of underrepresented students at a traditional, predominantly white Jesuit secondary school? In what ways did opportunities to support underrepresented students present themselves?

RQ2: Within a traditional, Catholic, Jesuit school, what spaces of institutional opportunity allowed for advocacy work towards underrepresented students, and what institutional constraints existed or emerged due to this advocacy?

RQ3: In what ways did the narrative around underrepresented students change at the school over time? How did this shifting narrative impact subsequent efforts at underrepresented student support?

RQ4: In what ways did larger, off-campus social movements influence the work of these key personnel in their service of underrepresented students, particularly as they related to the school's justice-centered mission?

Participant Background

1) Name, current affiliation with St. Robert's Prep.
2) What year did you arrive at the school? In what capacity?
3) How long did you serve in that initial role? Any other roles you had at the school over the course of your tenure?

Participant Reflection Questions

1) *(All participants)* Tell me about the demographics of the St. Robert's student body when you first arrived at the school. From your perspective, what were the needs of the _____ community at St. Robert's at the time? (RQ1)
2) *(Key participants)* What was/were the first steps you undertook specifically to support/engage the _____ community? (RQ1) How did your colleagues (faculty, school administration) respond to your work? (RQ2)

   (Supplementary participants) How did you notice that someone was doing work specifically to support/engage underrepresented students? How did you and your colleagues (faculty, school administration) respond to this work? (RQ2)
3) *(All participants)* If you reflect upon these early efforts with students, what were some of the "easy wins" you observed, and what (if any) obstacles arose? (R2)
4) *(All participants)* What stories or themes around underrepresented students began to surface as this work unfolded? Did those stories or themes change over time? (RQ3)
5) *(Key participants)* Did your strategies with the _____ community change over time? How? Why? Were your energies focused mainly on the students, or at any point did you turn your gaze to other parts of the institution? (RQ1 & RQ3)

(Supplementary participants) How did you see the work with underrepresented students unfolding – were your colleagues working just with students directly, or was it larger than that? (RQ1 & RQ3)

6) *(All participants)* Underrepresented alumni often talk to me about being a student back in their day as opposed to being an underrepresented student on campus today. Do you think these are different experiences? Why or why not? Do you think external factors like social movements play a role in the experiences of our underrepresented students? (RQ4)
7) *(All participants)* Some would say that in this day and age, the pursuit of *cura personalis* means that we see, support, and stand with each of our students, recognizing their individual background and identity. Given your experiences with _____/underrepresented students at St. Roberts over several decades, what are the opportunities and challenges you see with that philosophy? (RQ4)
8) *(All participants)* There are Jesuit schools nationwide who do not have student support structures like St. Robert's has for _____ students. Knowing what you know now, what advice would you give to Jesuit schools who are in the early stages of thinking about how to support _____ students? (RQ 1-4)

Additional questions may arise during the interview for purposes of clarification or expansion. In addition, a follow-up interview may be required.

Appendix B

Consent Form

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

Below is a description of the research procedures and an explanation of your rights as a research participant. You should read this information carefully. If you agree to participate, you will sign in the space provided to indicate that you have read and understand the information on this consent form. You are entitled to and will receive a copy of this form.

You have been asked to participate in a research study conducted by Sonya Arriola, a graduate student in the Department of Catholic Educational Leadership at the University of San Francisco. This faculty supervisor for this study is Dr. Ursula Aldana, a professor in the Department of Catholic Educational Leadership at the University of San Francisco.

What the study is about

This research study will collect the oral histories of educators who worked at St. Robert's Prep (a pseudonym) during the 1970-2020 timeframe. Several participants served as key advocates for underrepresented students (defined as non-white, low-income, or LGBTQ+ youth). The oral histories will be used to understand advocacy efforts towards underrepresented students within traditional Jesuit school secondary schools.

What we will ask you to do

During this study, you will be asked to share your historical memories and/or experience at St. Robert's during the time you worked at the school. You will be asked to take part in one interview over Zoom of approximately 90-120 minutes. A follow-up interview may be required in the event of incomplete accounts or if follow-up will help clarify any portion of the oral histories.

Duration and Location of the Study

Your participation in this study will involve at least one interview session which is expected to last 90-120 minutes. The study will take place in virtual format, with all interviews taking place over Zoom. Interviews are anticipated to take place between June 2021 and August 2021, not to extend past June 2022.

Potential Risks and Discomforts

The research procedures described above may involve the following risks and/or discomforts: Possible emotional discomfort. Negative emotions may arise from recalling difficult memories. If you wish, you may choose to withdraw your consent and discontinue your participation at any time during the study without penalty.

Benefits

You will receive no direct benefit from your participation in this study. However, this research has the potential to benefit other Catholic or Jesuit secondary schools who are seeking to support underrepresented students within traditional school settings.

Compensation for participation

There is no payment or other form of compensation for your participation in this study.

Audio/Video Recording

By signing this form, you are giving your permission to the interviewer named below to interview you by Zoom, to create an audio and video recording which will include your name, likeness, image, and/or voice, and to use your interview as part of a research paper and/or project, which may be eventually published or incorporated into a public internet site.

The video and/or audio recording of your interview will be archived in digital form (after transcription) at Bellarmine College Preparatory for future viewing and may be displayed, in full or in part, on a public internet site and/or in a film.

These interviews (in digital form and their transcripts) will be deposited in the Bellarmine College Preparatory library archives for the potential use of future students, educators, and researchers. Responsibility for the reproduction, distribution, display, and creation of derivative works will be at the discretion of the librarian and/or archivist. No financial compensation will be provided to you for any future uses of the images, recordings, or transcripts.

By signing this consent form, you are conveying to the Bellarmine College Preparatory library and archives all legal title and literary property rights that you have or may be deemed to

have in your interview or as well as your right, title, and interest in any copyright related to this oral history interview that may be secured under the laws now or later in force and effect in the United States of America. This gift, however, does not preclude any use that you yourself may want to make of the information in the transcripts and recordings.

Privacy/Confidentiality

Pseudonyms will be used for all names and locations in this study's published report. In any publication that results from this study, all efforts will be made to present information in a way so as to protect your identity and that of any other individual participant. Consent forms and other identifiable data will be kept in a password-protected document for three (3) years.

Please note that oral history interviews are neither private nor secure, unless you wish to place any restrictions on the recordings for any period of time. Though the researcher is taking precautions to protect your privacy, you should be aware that your oral history interview could be accessed through the library archives and read by a third party at some point in the future.

Voluntary Nature of the Study

Your participation is voluntary, and you may refuse to participate without penalty. Furthermore, you may skip any questions or tasks that make you uncomfortable and may discontinue your participation at any time without penalty. In addition, the researcher has the right to withdraw you from participation in the study at any time.

If you have questions

Please ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you should contact the principal investigator: Sonya Arriola at 415-516-2272 or scarriola@usfca.edu. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a participant in this study, you may contact the University of San Francisco Institutional Review Board at IRBPHS@usfca.edu.

You will receive a copy of this consent form.

Statement of Consent

I have read the above information and have received answers to any questions I asked. I consent to take part in the study.

Participant's Signature_____ Date_____

Participant's Name (printed)_____