

“COUNTED AND SEEN”: COMPLICATING
THE GOVERNANCE OF (A)GENDER(S) BY
UNIVERSITY REGISTRAR PRACTICES

by

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ABSTRACT

Trans students are more visible on college campuses, coming to postsecondary institutions already out in their (a)gender(s), and they have additional needs than their cisgender peers in regards to student record inclusion (Beemyn et al. 2005a; Brauer, 2017; James et al., 2016; Nicolazzo, 2016c). Overall, institutional change in relation to trans inclusivity, has been slow to transpire in university registrar practices. The university registrar often facilitates the relationship between students and the institution, interprets and implements university policy, and governs the management of student record data (Walters & Hightower, 2016; Wells, 2015). Therefore, the university registrar is in a unique position to advance trans inclusivity through advocating for trans inclusive student record practices (i.e. allowing for chosen name field in the student record, pronouns on class rosters and front facing screens, changing a gender marker without medical intervention, etc.) (Beemyn & Brauer, 2015). However, as student information system vendors and the American Association for Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) address the issue of trans inclusive records there are still issues with their approaches being grounded in closed logic systems.

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the tensions between trans students' perceptions of their (a)gender(s) and the manner in which their (a)gender(s) are governed through university registrar practices. Using Foucault's (1991a; 1991b; 1991c; 1997) concepts of governmentality, the self, and subjectivities as the theoretical framework, I explored these tensions. Through using a Foucauldian approach to narrative inquiry, the data were analyzed in

developing trans students' counternarratives. The narratives highlighted the complex issues surrounding the management of (a)gender(s) in the student record and the need for student record systems and university registrar practices to be (re)imagined.

DEDICATION

I am dedicating this dissertation to my partner in life, Dr. Hawken Brackett. Without your daily encouragement, commitment, belief in my success, and love this dissertation would not have been possible. Thank you for always having my back. I love you.

This dissertation is dedicated to my aunt, mentor, and friend, Dr. Lisa Bennett Harris. Thank you for paving the way for women like me through your courage, strength, and persistence. I do not know where I would be without your guidance and words of wisdom. Thank you for showing me that this is possible. I love you.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AACRAO	American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
F	Female
FAFSA	Free Application for Federal Student Aid
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
IPEDS	Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System
K	Kindergarten
LGB	Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual
LGBTQ	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer
LGBTQ+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Questioning
LGBTQQ	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning, and Queer
M	Male
MU	Midwest University
NSSE	National Survey of Student Engagement
NU	Northeast University
QTPOC	Queer and Trans People of Color
SU	Southeast University
T	Testosterone

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This past year in grad school I've learned how much policies actually control us. They control everything we do. – John

The quote above is from a student in this study, John. John was a first-year graduate student in higher education at Northeast University. At the time of our interview, John identified as non-binary. John noticed the control and governing possibilities of policies on students. This is especially relevant and troubling due to United States President Donald Trump's agenda to strip the civil rights and protections from trans people. President Trump has worked to remove the protections President Obama implemented for trans¹ Americans, including: stripping gender identity out of Title IX, banning trans people from serving in the military, and pushing for a federal definition of gender that is equivalent to biological sex (Green, Benner, & Pear, 2018; Hodges, 2019; U.S. Department of Justice, 2017). In relation to the Trump administration's actions and scrutiny on trans individuals, there is a growing concern about the increased management and governance of trans identities. Despite the Trump administration's actions continually focusing on erasing trans people, by way of federal definitions and classifications, trans people cannot and will not be erased; this is because trans people already exist and will continue to exist even if they are not represented within the federally defined population.

¹ The use of trans is intended to be inclusive of multiple gender identities. Later in this chapter I discuss my use of this word and definitions I will use throughout this dissertation.

In May of 2016, the Department of Education and Justice, under former President Obama, released joint guidance to ensure the civil rights of trans students. Through a Dear Colleague letter, the Obama administration noted that under the 1972 Title IX educational amendment, which prohibits discrimination based on sex at postsecondary institutions using Title IV funds, included gender identity, and more specifically, trans students are included in the protections provided by Title IX (U.S. Department of Education & U.S. Department of Justice, 2016). The Departments of Education and Justice stated, “a school must not treat a transgender student differently from the way it treats other students of the same gender identity” and provided guidelines on the following areas: (1) providing a safe and nondiscriminatory environment, (2) identification documents, names, and pronouns, (3) sex-segregated activities and facilities, and (4) privacy and education records” (U.S. Department of Education & U.S. Department of Justice, 2016, p. 2). This action brought visibility to trans individuals by including them in the Title IX protections. In addition, this letter provided support for trans individuals by validating the need for postsecondary institutions to provide trans specific resources and therefore acknowledging trans as a gender identity.

In February 2017, under President Trump’s administration, the Departments of Education and Justice rescinded the guidelines formerly established to ensure trans protections under Title IX through issuing another guidance letter (U.S. Department of Education & U.S. Department of Justice, 2017). The departments stated that their interpretation of sex discrimination refers to biological sex and not gender identity. The letter stated that, “the withdrawal of these guidance documents does not leave students without protections from discrimination, bullying, or harassment. All schools must ensure that all students, including LGBT students, are able to learn and thrive in a safe environment” (U.S. Department of Education & U.S. Department of Justice,

2017, p. 2). This action further marginalized trans students by not only equating gender to biological sex but also by grouping trans identities with sexual minority identities and thus conflating sexual identity and (a)gender(s).² The Trump administration's actions have direct implications for higher education administrators and students.

Colleges and universities are complex institutions where political, societal, and material environments are layered with various actors and power dynamics. These dynamics produce genderist and heteronormative environments where trans students' (a)gender(s) and experiences are not recognized (Nicolazzo, 2016c). In addition, when trans students' gender is recognized it often has dangerous consequences for them. Specifically, trans students experience increased harassment on college campuses in relation to their gender compared to their cisgender peers (Rankin, Weber, Blumenfeld, & Frazer, 2010); Trans students also are faced with a lack of inclusion in the classroom, decreased access to healthcare and counseling services, a lack of inclusive programming, and lack of access to appropriate facilities on campus (Nicolazzo, 2016c). Further, trans individuals are often excluded from policy considerations and lack the ability to align their gender and student records at higher education institutions (Beemyn, 2012; Rankin et al., 2010). Providing access to appropriate resources for students and granting the ability to accurately represent their (a)gender(s) should be a concern for higher education administrators, particularly because higher education institutional policy speaks to the institution's identity, vision, mission, and values (Harper, 2012; Harper, Smith, & Davis III, 2016). Creating and adhering to inclusive policies and practices that consider marginalized populations at higher education institutions fosters understanding and highlights that underrecognized student identities are present and valued on campus.

² The use of (a)gender(s) instead of gender is intentional and explained at the end of this chapter.

In a dizzying political fury where policies are seemingly enacted in a vacuum disparate of practical consequence considerations, marginalized populations are often left underserved. The most recent letter leaves trans students in a space without federal protections by denying the complexity of identity. This is increasingly significant in states that have passed specific legislation to police trans individuals' actions and bodies, while simultaneously limiting the resources that postsecondary institutions can provide to trans individuals. For example, through the passing of House Bill 2 (HB2) in the state of North Carolina, postsecondary institutions were banned from allowing trans individuals to use the bathroom associated with their gender; therefore, individuals were required to use the bathroom associated with their sex assigned at birth (Logue, 2016). By way of this legislation, the North Carolina state legislature was controlling the (in)actions of postsecondary institutions — through the threat of removing state appropriations to institutions that did not fall in compliance with the tenants of HB2.

A complex culture emerges when multiple actors interact with and compose the environment of postsecondary campuses (federal government, state legislature, governing board, the local community, faculty, staff, students, etc.); this culture influences the policy and practices of these higher education institutions. This culture surrounds and influences campus administrators, including university registrars, who are charged with assisting students through their entry into and throughout college, regardless of a student's (a)gender(s). Therefore, it is a key component of a university registrar to support trans students by providing accurate data/identity options when managing and maintaining student records.

History of the University Registrar

Registrar's offices, much like the institutions they are part of, are complex entities comprised of various assemblages and multiplicities. The university registrar is a unique

position within higher education institutions because of the scope of the office. It impacts a multitude of areas, thus making it, “the beating heart of the institution,” because the office serves the community within and outside of the institution, “through a set of valves – opening, closing, accepting, releasing, with regularity” (Young, 2006, p. 1). These valves weave through the community and institution to influence and manage the operation of the university through academic policy discussions that serve to provide a regulating balance between the faculty, administration, and the students (Schipporeit, 2006; Young, 2006).

Having a historical perspective of the role of the university registrar is important when researching the context of the management of student identities through student records and higher education policy. The role of the registrar is one of the oldest administrative positions, as it emerged in the fifteenth century at Oxford University; this emergence came by way of tensions between the scholars at the University and the townsfolk not officially enrolled as students at Oxford University (Schipporeit, 2006; Young, 2006). Oxford University’s response to the tensions provided a, “small measure of control,” resulting in its masters (faculty) keeping a list of the students attending their lectures (Young, 2006, p. 2). In addition to keeping the records of students attending Oxford, records were also kept regarding the matriculation of students. In this case, these societal influences required Oxford University to begin to manage the classroom and determine the definition of a student and a university (Young, 2006). Through these influences, Oxford University decided to manage the classroom, thus producing, defining, and creating what it meant to be a student and in turn what it meant to be a university. Bringing surveillance into the classroom began the quantification and management of the student, through drawing distinction between the student and others (non-students) (Foucault, 1991a).

In United States (U.S.) higher education, the role of the university registrar began as a part-time position at Harvard University. The responsibilities of this administrative position increased as postsecondary institutions increased their enrollment (Young, 2006). The registrar's role expanded after the Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890, which led to the expansion of U.S. higher education. This expansion of institutions required administrative roles to increase at colleges and universities (Thelin, 2011). By 1900, the university registrar was considered a full-time administrative position. The registrar frequently visited with prospective university students, collected admissions applications, advised students on courses and career paths, oversaw scholarship and financial aid awards, and managed student data (grades, biographical and academic information, application, schedule, etc.) (Quann, 1979; Young, 2006). After the creation of the Higher Education Act of 1965, admissions, financial aid, and registrar's offices were three distinct units within U.S. higher education (Thelin, 2011). This contributed to the registrar role being more defined and limited in scope, as it became a more specialized position that focused on student record maintenance, management, and degree certification; this shift can be seen as a move toward a role that had an even greater focus on governing responsibilities. Increased student enrollments, decentralization, and more legislative oversight impacted the university registrar's role through the management, accuracy, integrity, and delivery of data (student information, scheduling, course information, curriculum, etc.) (Young, 2006).

The university registrar's role continues to be impacted by the rising cost of higher education and the increased demand for accountability that is placed on colleges and universities by both internal and external stakeholders who are concerned with rising attendance costs for students. Advances in technology, the globalization of higher education, and greater access to higher education all contributed to shaping and shifting the university registrar role (Berdahl,

Altbach, & Gumport, 2011; Walters & Hightower, 2016). While the university registrar was once considered a mid-level position on postsecondary campuses, the role has shifted to a high-level administrative role (Walters & Hightower, 2016). This shift calls for university registrars to be leaders in the field by responding to the fluctuating landscape in higher education.

University registrars facilitate the relationship between students and the institution (Wells, 2015).

The university registrar is tasked with interpreting and implementing university policy.

Therefore, the university registrar should help to advance the diversity mission of the institution, through supporting and assisting access to higher education for underrepresented populations, more specifically trans students (Wells, 2015). This provides an opening for university registrars to question their logic, effects of their practices, and (re)imagine the management of (a)gender(s) in student records.

Statement of the Problem

Currently, in higher education practice, there is an issue of visibility of trans students to their institution through the means of their student record. This misalignment between how trans students identify their (a)gender(s) and how this information is collected in the student record. Higher education institutions and university registrars have struggled to develop trans inclusive policies and practices for their campuses. In response, both the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) and for-profit student information system (SIS) vendors have begun highlighting the importance of moving beyond the gender binary in college student records. Below, I outline the statement of the problem for this study. I discuss the current practices for higher education institutions related to the management of (a)gender(s) information in the student record and the changes in student information systems

(SIS) that relate to the management/governing of gender. Finally, I conclude with problematizing the way (a)gender(s) information is collected in the student record.

Higher Education Institutional Practices

Institutional change, in relation to trans inclusivity, has been slow to transpire in higher education enrollment management practice. In 2009, the University of Vermont was the first higher education institution to allow students to designate their pronouns and chosen name on the class roster through a modification to their student information system (Brauer, 2017). Shortly after, the University of Iowa expanded its management of gender in the student record. It became the first university to separate sex and gender in its student record system and admissions application and allowed potential students to designate their pronouns, sex, gender, and sexual orientation on their admissions application (Linley & Kilgo, 2018).

Since the University of Vermont first allowed for students to designate pronouns and chosen name on their class roster there are a reported 255 higher education institutions that have allowed students to use a chosen name in their student records, and 38 institutions allow students to designate their pronouns through their student record (Campus Pride, 2019). In more upsetting and stark numbers, Campus Pride (2019) reports that only 60 higher education institutions allow student to change their gender on their campus record without evidence of medical intervention. Another issue involves the level of transparency with which these higher education institutions provide the information to their students about these record changing resources and policies. Of the 38 institutions that allow pronouns to be designated on the class roster, only eight have instructions on their institutional website that inform student of this possibility and guide them through the process of updating their record (Campus Pride, 2019).

Student Information Systems

In Peoplesoft Campus Solutions 9.2 SIS, Oracle developed database fields where gender identification, sexual orientation, and personal pronouns can be provided to fit the institutional needs (Borgione, 2017). In the SIS upgrade to Banner9, Ellucian (2016) added baseline functionality of separating sex, gender designation, and pronouns. Adding this as a baseline function allows for institutions to implement this functionality without needing to invest additional resources in costly and complicated patches to update their SIS system. In Banner9 there are two data tables that contain gender information. Ellucian (2016) included two data tables containing sex and gender: gender and personal gender. The field “gender” is referring to sex and the field “personal gender” is referring to gender. In Banner9, the gender field, “is maintained as a way for an institution to collect a designated birth gender” (Ellucian, 2016, p. 5); this definition is a conflation of sex and gender and serves to perpetuate misunderstanding. In the “personal gender” database field, institutions have the option of creating their own list of (a)gender(s); however, the list will still be limited in options for the front-end user (students). While Ellucian’s (2016) update demonstrates a willingness to include trans students in its product, sex and gender are still being conflated and marginalizing language will still be utilized for these categories.

Moving Beyond Checkboxes

Even as Ellucian, Oracle, and AACRAO work to implement changes, there are still issues when the approach is limited to creating additional fields that are part of a closed logic system; this happens when operating within a logic of checkboxes that excludes a critical consideration of the limit and impacts of these changes. AACRAO, higher education institutions, and SIS vendors are still conflating sex and gender. These are two distinct identities that are not being recognized as separate (Stryker, 2017). AACRAO recently recognized the importance of trans

and gender non-conforming individuals by establishing a student identity work group that will examine and develop recommendations for inclusive policies and practices for higher education practitioners. At the 2017 AACRAO meeting, the committee chair for this group presented the goals and rationale for creating the group. In particular, they acknowledged that university registrar's offices are met with a growing concern for understanding (a)gender(s), how best to manage student records, and stressed the importance of updating student information systems to classify and identify students whose (a)gender(s) exists beyond the binary (Carter & Miner, 2017). The formation of this work group highlights an increased focus on trans inclusive practices, magnifying the importance of university registrars developing new approaches.

While the formation of the student identity work group emphasizes the importance of recognizing student identities within registrar offices, I argue that an infusion of caution, criticality, and ethics must be present when working with marginalized student identities. Specifically, university registrars need to be cautious when developing policies and practices related to student identities; this caution can serve to decrease the likelihood of unintentional harm. Student identities are complex in a manner that is not easily defined through one theory (Jones & Abes, 2013; Patton, Renn, Guido, & Quaye, 2016); this theoretical complexity necessitates that higher education administrators focus with care and dedication to collecting, managing, and distributing student identity data.

Through my experiences at the AACRAO meeting and through my full-time practice, I recognized the importance of highlighting the complexities of identity, power, and knowledge that are inherent to the role of the university registrar. At the same time, I was left questioning the kind of understanding of the actors in power. It is important for university registrars to

consider the potential harmful effects, on students, through their collection of data on students' (a)gender(s).

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The purpose of my study is to explore the tensions between students' perceptions of their (a)gender(s) and the manner in which their (a)genders(s) are governed by university registrar practices that collect and manage students' (a)gender(s) information within the student record. While accepting that collecting self-reported student information is a necessary reality for university registrars, it is just as vital to accept that there is the potential for harmful effects on the students that are required to self-report this information. Therefore, it is an ethical necessity for college registrars to critically consider the potential harmful effects of their practices that serve to manage (a)gender(s) of students through the student record. It is through this lens that I examine the consequences of collecting, managing, and disseminating information regarding student (a)gender(s) information; those consequences relate to how trans students' understandings are impacted by having to self-identify their (a)gender(s) in pre-determined ways that are defined by student information systems' data fields. Additionally, examining the logic(s) of the student record practices that govern (a)gender(s) allows for a more complex exploration into the effects of these governing practices. Through this study, I explored the intricacies of how students' subjectivities shift in relation to the collection of their (a)gender(s) information within the student record and how that information is used to develop policies that govern (or control) students.

This study focused on the experiences of trans students as their (a)gender(s) were managed through the collection, management, and dissemination of their (a)gender(s) by way of their student record. The following questions guided my inquiry:

1. How do trans college students describe their (a)gender(s)?
2. How do trans college students experience their (a)gender(s) when governed by the institutional logic(s) of student record systems?

Significance of the Study

I came to this subject through my own experience as a practitioner working in a professional position in a registrar's office at a large southeastern university. While working in that office, on a daily basis I encountered the inequities created and maintained by institutional policies and practices; additionally, I became more aware of the effects these practices and policies had on students, and I began to recognize the various ways in which my own practices perpetuated those inequities. More specifically, I have become particularly aware of the impact of practices surrounding the management of (a)gender(s) within the student record. For students who identify outside of the gender binary, changing their student record to accurately reflect their (a)gender(s) can be a challenging and dehumanizing process (Beemyn & Brauer, 2015; Beemyn 2003, 2005, 2015; Beemyn, Curtis, Davis, & Tubbs, 2005a).

Through reviewing policies governing (a)gender(s), I found that my institution had an active and current policy for changing the gender marker for students within our student information system. This policy required that students undergo gender affirmation surgery and bring a medical note from their doctor to our office before we could change the student's gender marker (Bennett, 2016). This is a harsh and unnecessary policy, because there is the potential for harm when a university is requiring medical intervention for students to align their gender marker to their gender identity (Beemyn et al., 2005a; Nicolazzo, 2016c). I began to pause, stutter, and question the logic behind this practice – *If a cisgender person accidentally checked the wrong box on their application, would we make them show proof of gender affirmation surgery*

to change their gender marker? Of course not! Further investigation of the practices of the office, surrounding trans identities, led me to conclude that there was more work to do to make the office's practices more inclusive and less oppressive—beyond completing the 'easy' checklist items, such as having office staff complete Ally training. Some examples of these practices/policies included that only a full legal name could be provided on a graduate's diploma (no exceptions) and the pronouns that could be chosen by students to represent them on class rosters only included limited binary options.

This led me to question not only why and how institutions were managing trans identities within the student record, but what the effect of these practices were on the trans students that were being managed. In this moment of discontinuity research possibilities opened up for me. I began to stutter through my questions with the help of Foucault's (1991c) theory,

Practices – with the aim of grasping the conditions which make these acceptable at a given moment; the hypothesis being that these types of practice are not just governed by institutions, prescribed by ideologies, guided by pragmatic circumstances- whatever role these elements may actually play – but possess up to a point their own specific regularities, logic, strategy, self-evidence and 'reason'. It is a question of analyzing a 'regime of practices' – practices being understood here as places where what is said and what is done, rules imposed and reasons given, the planned and the taken for granted meet and interconnect. (p. 75, emphasis original)

I did not necessarily want to know the origins of policies; rather, I was interested in the effects of the university registrar's management of (a)gender(s), by way of various practices, and the logic(s) that make such practices appear as if they are common sense. I have come to realize that considering the rationale behind practices, the effects of practices, and reimagining the *how* of our practices in registrar offices can open up different possibilities for how students' identities are managed.

The significance of this study extends beyond just the role of the university registrar and higher education practice, the implications can be extended globally to anyone operating a

database. Through this study I question logic(s) of databases and the actions of administrators who are governing those databases. Data is not stagnant and used to inform policies and practices to further the governing of individuals; this is evident in higher education practices. The implications of this work for university registrars and higher education administrators are immense. These implications include (re)thinking subjectivities as being dynamic/fluid and not as an achievable end point. Thinking creatively, in order to extend the quantification of students beyond forced and normalized binaries, is a challenge related to higher education institutions' practices. In order to enhance the capacity for creative and critical thinking regarding how policies and practices are informed, there must be opportunities for quality education, within registrar offices, regarding student identities. If registrar's offices are, "the beating heart of the institution," we should extend and grow that heart to complicate the nature of how we are governing the ways in which students are able to identify (Young, 2006, p. 1). We should consider the implications of trans people being absent from the conscious of policy developers. Questioning the logic(s) that inform practices is important when challenging practitioners to think creatively and explore new possibilities.

Definition of Terms

Before defining terms, I want to note that language is a fluid and ever evolving body. I have carefully thought and researched the use of the terms below. I also recognize that gender and sex are both distinct and separate identities.

When I met James, they were out in their (a)gender(s) at Midwest University. I remember feeling really positive about our rapport in the interview and was in awe of their strength as they told their story. At the end of the interview, I asked James if they had anything else they wanted to share. They looked down at the table, tugged on their shirt and responded:

Um...not really...Well, I suppose the language that is used is constantly updating and so it can be kind of easy to be like a little ticked off when there's this misconception of like, 'oh, you have a gender and I have a gender identity.' That sort of vague othering or essentialist about groups of people on campus, specifically trans folks.

Keeping James's experience in mind, when I discuss gender identity in this dissertation I use the term (a)gender(s). This is an intentional use to normalize trans identities and not further marginalize their experiences. The use of (a) is to remind myself and the reader, that not all people identify with a gender or feel comfortable being gendered. Therefore, by using the term gender to discuss their experiences further perpetuates the assumption that everyone identifies with a gender. I use the (s) to encompass the multiplicities of gender and to ensure that I do not limit my participants to one (a)gender(s). However, when citing the literature I use the language that the original authors use in their work

Table 1
Definition of Terms

Term	Definition
Trans	In this context, the use of trans is intended to be an umbrella term representing multiple gender identities including: agender, genderqueer, gender non-conforming, non-binary, and transgender, among others. Nicolazzo (2016c) defines trans as “those who transgress the socially constructed discourse of how we identify, express, and embody our genders” (p. 169).
Agender	Individuals who do not identify with any gender (Nicolazzo, 2016c).
(A)gender(s)	(A)gender(s) is the term I use when discussing gender and gender identity through this dissertation. The (a) is used intentionally to note that all people do not identify with a gender and the (s) is used to encompass multiple gender(s).
Alumnx	A term that is used to disrupt the gender binary when discussing graduates. The term alumni/ae and alumnus/a are designations used based on gender. Therefore, alumnx is used intentionally to represent graduates across the gender spectrum (Garvey & Drezner, 2019).
Cisgender	Individuals whose gender aligns with the sex that was assigned at birth and their internal identity. This term has also been used to describe nontrans people (Johnson, 2013; Schilt & Westbrook, 2009).

Cissexism	A social system where trans people, non-binary people, and cisgender women are continually reduced to the dominate cisgender masculine discourse (Sumerau & Grollman, 2018; Westbrook & Schilt, 2014).
Dead Name	Dead name is referred to a person's legal name when they have changed their legal name and no longer refer to themselves by that name (Gratton, 2016).
Gender	Gender is socially constructed through discourse and norms related to a person's sex assigned at birth. Additionally, gender is a fluid entity that changes and evolves across time; it does not exist on a binary of just man/woman (Butler, 1990; Nicolazzo, 2016c; Stryker, 2017).
Gender affirming medical intervention	The use of hormone therapy and/or gender affirming surgeries to help trans people change the embodiment of their gender (Nicolazzo, 2016c).
Gender binary	This term refers to the false logic that there are only two natural options for gender (man/woman). This thinking is usually tethered with the conflation of sex assigned at birth and gender (Nicolazzo, 2016c; Schilt & Westbrook, 2009).
Gender dysphoria	The sense of unhappiness over how one understands their gender and how one's gender is perceived by others (Stryker, 2017).
Genderfluid	Individuals who identify with multiple genders and are fluid in their (a)gender(s) (Stryker, 2017).
Gender identity	Gender identity signifies one's internal identity, or how one senses their gender regardless of their gender expression (Nicolazzo, 2016c; Stryker, 2017).
Genderism	Genderism is a social system that assumes there are only two genders (man/woman) and reinforces the gender binary (Bilodeau, 2009).
Gender marker	The data point in which a person's gender is categorized in a data system.
Genderqueer	Individuals who, "intentionally queer, or destabilize, their (a)gender(s), expression, or embodiment" (Nicolazzo, 2016c, p. 168).
Heterosexism	A ideological system which is prejudice against any, "nonheterosexual form of behavior, identity, relationship, or community" (Herek, 1990, p. 316).

Homophobia	The systematic prejudice and dislike of anyone who is not a heterosexual (Vaccaro 2012).
Intersex	People who are born with several variations of biological sex variations (Stryker, 2017).
Misgender	The act of referring to someone as a gender in which they do not identify, usually through using incorrect pronouns (Nicolazzo, 2016c).
Misname	The act of using the wrong name to refer to a person, usually through using a trans persons dead name (Linley & Kilgo, 2018).
Sexism	Sexism is the act of discrimination based on sex (Sumerau & Grollman, 2018).
Transgender	People who identify outside of the gender binary of man/woman and those who identify as a different gender than the assigned sex at birth (Stryker, 2017).
Transphobia	The systematic prejudice and dislike of trans people (Stryker, 2017).
Sex assigned at birth	Sex assigned at birth refers to the biological sex that is assigned at birth. The assignment of sex at birth creates a binary logic where individuals can only be male or female (Stryker, 2017).

Summary

Recognizing that universities and registrar offices are complex allows for the understanding of their interconnectedness to the world (Barnett, 2011). Through expanding the (a)gender(s) options in the student record and allowing trans students to represent their (a)gender(s) in their student records makes students visible to the university. I explored the logic(s) behind the practices of the university registrar by using poststructural theories as a foundation for my approach. Exploring these logic(s) through such a theoretical understanding allows for a tracing of how specific logic(s) manifest into specific practices that have material effects on the experiences of students. Partnering with narrative inquiry allows for participants to tell their own story and allows for the engagement in complex narratives with this topic.

In Chapter Two, I review the higher education literature surrounding trans identities and discuss my theoretical framework, Foucault's (1991a; 1991b; 1991c; 1997) governmentality. In Chapter Three, I detail the methodology and methods for my study. I begin by weaving poststructural theories and narrative inquiry together, and then I discuss my use of counternarratives. Chapter Four details the findings of my study through highlighting the narratives of the trans students who participated in my study. I conclude this dissertation in Chapter Five, where I discuss the findings of this study and provide implications for research and practice.

CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Higher education literature surrounding trans students' experiences is sparse and research focusing specifically on trans students' institutional records is mostly nonexistent. There is a dearth of trans students' identities literature exists within higher education, and critical or poststructural approaches to this topic are even further limited (Renn, 2010). Renn (2010) argued for more postmodern approaches in queer scholarship, so researchers could "explore the theoretical depth" of (a)gender(s) (p. 135). In this chapter, I synthesize the limited literature that does exist on trans college students (visibility and erasure, collegiate environments, and college policies/practices). After the synthesis of this literature, I discuss in depth my theoretical framework (moving from traditional student identity development theory toward a poststructural approach to researching trans identities) through Foucault's (1991a; 1991b; 1991c; 1997) work on the self, subjectivities, and governmentality.

One important note before beginning this chapter is the way I used language when synthesizing the literature. Sex and (a)gender(s) are often conflated in higher education literature, with most often researchers claiming to use gender but providing sex options (male or female) (Kilgo, in press). Additionally, higher education researchers frequently use gender identity instead of (a)gender(s) when discussing trans individuals. I recognize the effects of further marginalizing trans people by referring to their (a)gender(s) as an identity and not just as their (a)gender(s). When synthesizing the literature, however, I use the terms the authors used in

order to stay consistent with their work. Therefore, it is likely that you will see multiple variations of (a)gender(s) and sex throughout this chapter.

Reports on Trans Individuals

Although the research on trans individuals in higher education is slim, there are three national reports on the experiences of trans individuals that are pivotal points of reference. These three reports are the *2010 State of Higher Education for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender People* (Rankin et al., 2010), *Injustice at Every Turn: A Report of the National Transgender* (Grant, Mottett, Tanis, Herman, & Keisling, 2011), and the *2015 United States Trans Survey* (James, Herman, Rankin, Keisling, Mottett, & Anafi, 2016).

2010 State of Higher Education for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender People

Rankin and colleagues (2010) surveyed 5,149 individuals in higher education to investigate how lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, and queer (LGBTQQ) individuals' experience campus climate at their institutions. Their study is regarded as one of the most comprehensive studies examining the campus climate for LGBTQQ people in higher education (Garvey, Taylor, & Rankin, 2014). They used snowball sampling to disseminate their survey and received responses from students, faculty, staff, and administrators in higher education. Their sample included representation in every U.S. state and Carnegie Basic Classification of Institutions (Rankin et al., 2010).

In their methods, the researchers recognized the social construction of their identity categories through the survey and identified the process of creating categories as “troubling terminology” (Rankin et al., 2010, p. 8). The gender categories included several options for participants to respond related to their gender identity: man, woman, transmasculine, transfeminine, and other (Rankin et al., 2010). Of their sample, 48% reported identifying as

woman, 38% as a man, 3 percent as transmasculine, two percent as transfeminine, and 8 percent as another gender identity. For the purposes of this literature review, I focused on the findings for trans individuals within their report. I acknowledge the limitations here, however, as trans students who have transitioned (or not) may respond as a woman or man.

In the survey, the questions posed related to how LGBTQQ students' experienced and perceived the campus climate at their institutions. Generally, trans individuals experienced higher rates of harassment, discrimination, isolation, and often concealed their gender identity to avoid the negative climate at their institution (Rankin et al., 2010). Transmasculine, transfeminine, and gender non-conforming individuals had more negative perceptions of campus climate than cisgender respondents. They were also four times more likely to experience harassment based on their gender identity than individuals who identified as a man or woman. Further, transmasculine, transfeminine, and gender non-conforming people of color were more likely than men and women of color to experience harassment on higher education campuses.

Overall, trans students are more at risk than trans faculty when experiencing an unwelcome climate which affects their ability to live and learn on campus (Rankin et al., 2010). With regards to attributions to campus climate, trans individuals reported retention, personal safety, and outness were all attributed to a negative climate. LGBTQQ students reported disagreeing with their institutions' policies on gender and sexuality, a lack of appropriate resources, limitations in institutional responses to bias and harassment, and exclusive curriculum.

Injustice at Every Turn: A Report of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey

In a joint effort from the National Center for Transgender Equality and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, Grant and colleagues (2011) examined the ways that trans and gender non-conforming individuals experienced discrimination. Their sampling plan involved sending

the survey to 800 trans-related community resources and 150 listservs in the United States, and their overall sample included 6,450 trans and gender non-conforming individuals (Grant et al., 2011). Their analysis was in comparison to the U.S. Census *Current Population Survey* for 2008 (Grant et al., 2011).

This study found that their participants were four times more likely to be living in extreme poverty (reported income of less than 10,000 dollars earned a year) and attempt suicide (41% compared to 1.6% of general population) (Grant et al., 2011). Fifty-three percent of participants reported being harassed in public accommodations. Overall, participants reported higher rates unemployment, discrimination in the workplace, discrimination and lack of access to health care, and higher rates of homelessness than the general population (Grant et al., 2011). However, this study also highlighted the resilience of the participants to navigate systems and persevere. Even as the participants experienced major barriers to access trans inclusive health care, 76% of the participants were able to receive hormone therapy. The participants in this study also demonstrated the determination to return to school and achieve an education over the general population. Around 22% of the participants returned to school between the ages of 25 to 44 compared to seven percent of the general population. Additionally, 78% of the participants reported feeling more comfortable at work after they transitioned (Grant et al., 2011).

Some of the greatest barriers for participants were access to updated identification documentation. Only one-fifth of participants who medically transitioned their gender were able to update all of their identification and records to match their gender identity (Grant et al., 2011). Further, one-third of participants who medically transitioned had none of their identification and records changed (Grant et al., 2011). Of all participants, only 59% had a driver's license that represented their gender identity (Grant et al., 2011). Finally, related to education, 78% of

participants who were out in their gender identity while in grades K through 12 experienced harassment, while 12% of participants reported leaving school (K-12 and postsecondary) because of the continued harassment (Grant et al., 2011). For current students, less than half of participants had updated student records.

2015 U.S. Transgender Survey

The *U.S. Transgender Survey* is currently the largest report examining trans peoples' experiences in the United States with 27,715 trans (entire sample) participants (James et al., 2016). Similar to earlier reports, participants reported high levels of harassment and discrimination because of their gender identity, with participants of color reporting an even higher rate of discrimination and harassment than white participants (James et al., 2016). Participants also experienced severe economic hardships with one-third of participants surveyed living in poverty. Additionally, participants were nine times more likely to attempt suicide than the general U.S. population. Almost all participants who were out during school experienced some form of harassment (James et al., 2016).

Even though trans people are still facing negative environments, increased harassment, and discrimination, this report did find that the trans community is becoming more visible in the U.S. (James et al., 2016). Increased visibility was correlated to higher rates of outness (James et al., 2016). This trend also extended to participants who were out in school, with roughly half of participants reporting being out in school (James et al., 2016). Further, of those participants, over half reported that their peers supported their gender identity (James et al., 2016). While this does not negate the negative experiences that trans students have been found to have in secondary or higher education, it does suggest that there are positive and affirming spaces for some trans students.

At the same time, however, participants who were out as trans in college experienced a wide range of harassment. One participant stated,

“Every single day at college, I was harassed for being a visibly trans woman. People slowed their cars down to stare at me, they shouted slurs at me from their dorm windows, insulted me in class, and a lot more I’d rather not think about. It got so bad that I tried to kill myself twice over the course of three months. Getting out of that school has been the best thing to have happened to me” (James et al., 2016, p. 134).

This quote illustrates the pervasive nature of harassment trans students face within school settings. In addition to experiencing difficulty with harassment and discrimination, trans individuals are still facing barriers to accessing appropriate identification where their legal gender and legal name match their gender identity. Only 11% of participants reported having matching identification on all legal documentation which corresponded to their gender identity, and those without noted cost of changing documentation as the biggest obstacle (James et al., 2016). Additionally, 32% of participants who did not have identification documentation which matched their gender presentation were harassed, denied benefits, refused service, or assaulted (James et al., 2016). For participants who were currently attending or had attended at least some college, only 31% had an updated name and 18% had an updated gender in their student record from the last school they attended. Focusing on name change in student records, 61% percent of participants who were currently attending or had at least some college changed their name, 3% were denied a name change, 6% were in the process of changing their name during the survey, and 30% wanted to change their name but had not tried.

When looking at gender designation markers in college records, 55% of participants who were currently attending or had at least some college changed their gender successfully, 5% were denied a gender marker change, and 35% wanted to change their gender marker but had not attempted to change their gender marker in their student record (James et al., 2016). While the

United States Trans Survey was not specifically focused solely on education or higher education, at this time, it provides some of the best overall information about trans peoples experiences. In the next section, I begin to synthesize the literature specific to trans college students' experiences within higher education settings.

Visibility of Trans Individuals in Higher Education

Trans students, faculty, and staff are becoming more visible on college campuses and a growing number of trans people are identifying outside of the gender binary (man/woman) (Beemyn, 2015; Beemyn & Rankin, 2011; James et al., 2016; Richards et al., 2016). Similar to the findings from the reports above, Garvey and Rankin (2015) also found that trans youth are recognizing their identities and coming out in high school or middle school (Garvey & Rankin, 2015). Therefore, trans students are coming to college and university campuses already out and visible with their (a)gender(s). Higher education institutions should be addressing trans students' needs and providing the same services for them as their cisgender peers (Nicolazzo, 2016c). Despite the increase of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) resource centers at higher education institutions, trans individuals who are more visible and out with their identity still face an increase in risk of harassment and discrimination (Nicolazzo, 2017; Rankin et al., 2010; Renn, 2010; Sausa, 2002). In addition, trans students regularly face heterosexism, cissexism, and systematic genderism in higher education contexts (Woodford, Silverschanz, Swank, Scherrer, & Raiz, 2012). Below, I first discuss the literature in higher education related to trans outness. Next, I discuss the literature surrounding visibility and invisibility of trans individuals.

Trans Outness in Higher Education

There is little research on trans students' outness in relation to their success at higher education institutions. Research has suggested, however, that trans students are more likely to be out to their peers and faculty or staff who share their same identity, than they are to be out to their family (Bilodeau, 2005; Dentato, Craig, Messinger, Lloyd, & McInroy, 2013; Pusch, 2005). Trans outness at higher education institutions is related to their experiences and comfort with their own identity. The more students feel affirmed and supported through trans inclusive curriculum, resources, and supportive policies at their institution, the more likely they are to be out with their gender identity (Dentato et al., 2013; Rankin & Garvey, 2015). When trans students are out with their gender, they face a more negative classroom climate than their cisgender peers (Garvey & Rankin, 2015). Further, if trans students are out with their identity, they are more likely to confront bias (Garvey & Rankin, 2015).

Just as trans students are more out with their gender identity with faculty or staff who shared a similar gender identity, they are also more likely to be out to their peers than faculty (Dentato et al., 2013). Ultimately, the more welcoming and inviting trans students perceive the campus climate, the more out they tend to be with their gender identity (Dentato, et al., 2013). In addition to support on campus, trans students have found the virtual domain as a place to come out because of the ability to connect with other trans people virtually (Nicolazzo et al., 2017). Disclosure of a trans identity is typically met with anxiety, fear of acceptance, and isolation from family and friends (Pusch, 2005). Therefore, higher education professionals should be prepared to work with trans students. Inclusive curriculum, non-discrimination policies, trans resources on campus, perceived knowledge of trans issues from staff all contribute to trans students' feelings of support at their institution (Dentato et al., 2013; Garvey & Rankin, 2015). With regards to outness, it should be noted that outness is not necessarily the goal or endpoint for all

trans people. Although the researchers in higher education point to outness as a positive experience for the students in their studies, outness is not a goal that should be used to encompass all trans people's experiences (Dentato et al., 2013; Garvey & Rankin, 2015; Nicolazzo, Pitcher, Renn, & Woodford, 2017).

Visibly Invisible

Even though trans people are becoming more visible and out within higher education, there is still a dearth of scholarship on gender identity. Further, experiences are ignored in the higher education literature (Renn, 2010). There are a number of articles in which authors' claim to focus on trans students, but instead these authors further marginalize trans students by erasing them from their study or conflating (a)gender(s) and sexuality. This conflation of both sexuality and (a)gender(s) into one category further disregards trans identities and experiences as unique and separate from LGBTQ students. Dean Spade (2004) referred to this phenomenon as the LGBfakeT movement. Within higher education literature, this most often occurs when researchers erase the T from LGBTQ, by claiming to research the experiences of both LGBTQ and T individuals while instead only focusing on LGBTQ students (Marine & Nicolazzo, 2014; Renn, 2010; e.g., Bilimoria & Stewart, 2009; Brown, Clarke, Gortmaker, & Robinson-Keilig, 2004; Brown & Gortmaker, 2009; Evans & Herriott, 2004; Garvey et al., 2014; Githens, 2012; Ivory, 2005; Sanlo & Espinoza, 2012). This conflation of gender identity and sexuality is common within practice, as well, through LGBTQ resource centers and faculty/staff efforts in higher education (Beemyn et al., 2005a; Marine & Nicolazzo, 2014; Nicolazzo et al., 2017). Marine and Nicolazzo (2014) examined the tensions surrounding trans inclusion at LGBTQ centers on college campuses. Through an examination of 19 different LGBTQ centers, they found that staff regularly conflated gender identity, sex assigned at birth, and sexuality. Additionally, none of

the staff members surveyed expressed advocating for trans individuals throughout their campuses by addressing the misinterpretations that gender identity and sex assigned at birth are connected and linked (Marine & Nicolazzo, 2014). The conflation of (a)gender(s), sex, and sexuality is routine in higher education practice and is encompassed in higher education environments for trans individuals. In the next section, I review the literature for the environments in higher education for trans individuals.

Environments in Higher Education for Trans Individuals

As evident in the research above, trans people in higher education face genderist and transphobic environments. In these environments, trans students are often ignored or are invisible because of genderism and the normalizing reinforcement of gender at their postsecondary institutions (Nagoshi et al., 2008; Nicolazzo, 2016a; 2016c). In spite of the persistent transphobia and genderism experienced in higher education institutions, trans students demonstrate resiliency through practices and strategies developed to navigate their environment successfully (Nicolazzo, 2016a; 2016b; 2016c; 2017). Nicolazzo (2016a) suggested moving beyond best practices approaches and focus on creating inclusive environments for marginalized student populations in higher education institutions in order to create a culture change. In this section, I synthesize the literature surrounding environments in higher education for trans individuals. Specifically, I focus on (a) campus climate, (b) academic climate, (c) peer, faculty, and staff support, (d) resources, and (e) the need for education on trans issues in higher education.

Campus Climate

Trans students experience harassment, marginalization, and oppression at postsecondary institutions in the United States (Woodford et al., 2012). As discussed above, Rankin and

colleagues (2010) conducted one of the largest campus climate study for LGBT students, faculty, and staff in higher education. The higher education literature suggests consistent findings to their report, including: increased harassment and discrimination, exclusion in and of resources and facilities, lack of inclusive policies and practices, and systemic transphobia at higher education institutions (Beemyn, 2012; 2015; Beemyn & Rankin, 2011; Bilodeau, 2005; Catalano, 2015; Dugan, Kusel, & Simounet, 2012; Effrig, Bieschke, & Locke, 2011; Garvey & Rankin, 2015; Hart & Lester, 2011; Manning, Pring, & Glider, 2012; McKinney, 2005; Pitcher, 2017; Pitcher, Camacho, Renn, & Woodford, 2016; Vaccaro, 2012; Worthen, 2014). Additionally, Garvey and Rankin (2015) discovered cisgender students had a higher perception of campus climate than trans students.

Vaccaro (2012) found that transphobia, genderism, homophobia, and heterosexism influenced all participants, however personal relationships and experiences influenced students', faculty's, and staff's perceptions of campus climate and that perceptions of climate can vary across campus units and departments. Additionally, her study revealed that sense of belonging and students' experiences were influenced by the perceived campus climate. Dugan and colleagues (2012) examined the climate for trans students independently of their lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) and heterosexual peers. In their study they used data from a larger climate survey and defined their transgender category as male to female, female to male, intersexed, or prefer not to say. They discovered trans students experienced the campus climate more negatively than their LGB and heterosexual peers, had a lower sense of belonging within the campus community, and participated less in meaningful experiences on campus than their cisgender peers (Dugan et al., 2012). In contrast, Pitcher and colleagues (2016) found that

lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning (LGBTQ+) students reported their institution as warm or neutral towards LGBTQ+ students.

Trans people experience institutional discrimination and a hostile campus environment (Hart & Lester, 2011; Pitcher, 2017). There are tensions surrounding trans inclusion at same-sex colleges. In a study by Hart and Lester (2011), which examined the campus climate at one women's college, highlighted the discriminatory practices by the institution towards trans students. They found that the institution ignored trans students on campus and worked purposely to remove their visibility by hiding gender inclusive bathrooms and reinforcing genderism through discourse and gender homogeneity (Hart & Lester, 2011). In addition to students, Pitcher (2017) found that trans faculty are faced with a hostile campus climate. Pitcher (2017) examined microaggressions and institutional belonging for trans faculty. The lack of support in inclusive policies, sex-segregated facilities, healthcare options, identification documentation, and the refusal to use the correct pronouns for trans faculty all contributed to microaggressions and an overall negative view of their institutions. These studies illustrate a largely negative campus climate for trans students, faculty, and staff; however, within the microenvironment of departments or other campus units, this environment is not exclusively negative.

Academic Climate

Consistent with campus climate, trans individuals face a lack of inclusion across the curriculum and within the curriculum (Beemyn & Rankin, 2016; Case & Stewart, 2009; Garvey & Rankin, 2015; Rankin & Garvey, 2015; Rankin, Weber, & Garvey, 2014; Seelman, 2014; Wentling, 2015). Across the curriculum, the literature is quite limited. There is a small amount of published work with examples of faculty including trans identities within individual course content, by centering trans issues and experiences (Boucher, 2011; Drabinski, 2014).

Researchers, however, have continued to argue for trans inclusion across the curriculum, rather than in small course sections or in specific departments (Rankin & Garvey, 2015; Seelman, 2014). Pryor (2015) researched trans students experiences in the classroom and found that trans students felt more empowered and comfortable in smaller classrooms to disclose their gender to their peers and faculty. Scholars have revealed that inclusion throughout the curriculum increases visibility of trans people, decreases transphobia, and provides a warm classroom climate for trans individuals (Beemyn & Rankin, 2016; Case & Stewart, 2009).

The research on classroom climate for trans students and faculty reveals a variety of concerning factors. Rankin and Garvey (2015) found that alongside poor curricula, a lack of institutional support, and poor response to discrimination in the classroom all contributed to a negative classroom climate for trans individuals (Rankin & Garvey, 2015). Further, trans students regularly experience incorrect pronoun usage by faculty and peers (Case & Stewart, 2009; Wentling, 2015; Woodford, Joslin, Pitcher, & Renn, 2017). Among trans faculty, colleagues frequently using the incorrect pronouns contributed to feelings of discomfort within the academic climate at their institution (Pitcher, 2017). The literature surrounding academic climate for trans students, faculty, and staff demonstrate a chilling environment, exclusion in the curriculum, and continual misgendering through misusing pronouns (Case & Stewart, 2009; Rankin & Garvey, 2015; Pitcher, 2017; Woodford et al., 2017).

Peer, Faculty, and Staff Interactions/Support

Despite an overall negative academic climate, there is literature that portrays affirming environments and positive relationships with peers, faculty, and staff for trans students (Bilodeau, 2005; Dugan et al., 2012; Linley et al., 2016; Nicolazzo et al., 2017; Pitcher et al., 2016; Renn, 2007; Renn & Bilodeau, 2005b). Linley and colleagues (2016) found that having

positive relationships with trans peers, faculty, and staff helped create a warm environment and increased the visibility of trans people on college and university campuses. Informal interactions with faculty and staff at LGBTQ events or programs on campus contributed to students' success and a supportive environment (Linley et al., 2016). Interactions inside and outside of the classroom by faculty contributed to trans students' feelings of support (Linley et al., 2016). When faculty confronted homophobic and transphobic language, challenged cisgender discourses, used inclusive language in the classroom, and provided an inclusive curriculum, trans students felt supported (Linley et al, 2016). Overall, LGBTQ students felt supported by their faculty advisors; however, LGBTQ students frequently turned to LGBTQ faculty members for personal support related to their LGBTQ experiences. Knowing out LGBTQ or trans faculty gave students a sense of belonging on campus (Linley et al., 2016).

Along the lines of belonging, participation in trans or LGBTQ student groups also related to an increase in overall perception of experience, visibility, and participation in other leadership activities for trans students (Renn, 2007; Renn & Bilodeau, 2005a; 2005b). Overall, interactions with trans student leaders led to trans students becoming more affirmed in their gender identity (Renn, 2007). There is a need for trans support groups on campus, not only to provide visibility for trans people, but to support students who are not out in their gender identity (Seelman, 2014; Westbrook, 2009). For example, in Westbrook's (2009) study, students reported the need to share their sexual and gender identity with individuals who identified the same way. Trans kinship networks, defined as peer and student groups – both on- and off-campus, increased retention rates and helped provide support needed to persist in college (Nicolazzo et al., 2017). This finding was consistent with Bilodeau's (2005) research which found that trans identity support groups helped trans students to feel more affirmed. Pitcher and colleagues (2016) found

that peer support groups contributed to trans students' sense of belonging on campus and ultimately their retention at the institution.

Resources and Education

Institutions vary in the resources they provide for trans students. Fine (2012) found that larger, public institutions were more likely to have a LGBTQ student center on campus than smaller, private institutions. Further, institutions in more politically conservative states were also less likely to have a LGBTQ student center than institutions in more politically liberal states (Fine, 2012). Similarly, researchers have identified the challenges of LGBTQ student's experiences at community colleges (Beemyn, 2012; Zamani-Gallaher & Choudhuri, 2011).

Zamani-Gallaher and Choudhuri (2011) examined the experiences of LGBTQ students at community colleges. Through their research, they found that participants often felt ignored by faculty they encountered and wanted an inclusive LGBTQ curriculum. Additionally, they found that cisgender privilege was something their participants encountered and was manifested through the lack of gender inclusive facilities and the conflation of gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation by members outside of the LGBTQ community on campus (Zamani-Gallaher & Choudhuri, 2011). Beemyn (2012) identified the challenges of trans students at community colleges mainly being the lack of resources, access to a LGBTQ student center, and awareness of trans issues by the faculty, staff, and administration. Four-year colleges and universities were more likely than community colleges to provide resources for trans students, due to the increased likelihood of having a LGBTQ student center (Beemyn, 2012).

Several scholars have noted the importance of campus resources and student services for trans students' identity development, student experience, safety, outness, and overall well-being (Beemyn, 2012; Beemyn et al., 2005a; Beemyn, Domingue, Pettit, & Smith, 2005b; Garvey &

Rankin, 2015; Nguyen et al., 2015; Rankin & Garvey, 2015; Westbrook, 2009). Most of the literature focuses on the lack of resources (e.g. access to gender inclusive facilities, trans inclusive healthcare, trans specific programming, ability to provide chosen name and pronoun in the student record, etc.), specifically for trans students at postsecondary institutions (Beemyn, 2003; 2005; 2012; Beemyn et al., 2005a; Beemyn et al. 2005b; Evans, 2002; Fine, 2012; Marine & Nicolazzo, 2014; McKinney, 2005; Seelman, 2014). Further, the more out a student is with their gender or sexual identity the poorer they perceived the campus resources availability for their gender identity and the less important they view campus resources (Rankin & Garvey, 2015). Further complicating the lack of resources, trans students are also often grouped together under the LGBTQ resources umbrella and oftentimes overlooked within the acronym umbrella through the conflation of gender and sexuality (Marine & Nicolazzo, 2014; Nicolazzo, 2016c). When resources are provided for trans students on college campuses, trans students use resources more frequently than their cisgender, LGBQ peers (Garvey & Rankin, 2015).

Building a trans community on campus and providing appropriate medical care (including access to mental health professionals) is a barrier for trans students at higher education institutions (Seelman, 2014). Some literature has offered suggested steps for how to make higher education institutions more trans friendly. Specific recommendations included the creation a well-funded LGBTQ center with full-time professional staff, increased offerings of campus programming and support for trans individuals – including counselors and healthcare providers who are familiar with trans people, additional training for university staff on trans issues, and support for a trans student group (Beemyn, 2003; 2005; 2012; Beemyn et al., 2005a; Beemyn et al. 2005b; Seelman, 2014; Spade, 2011; Westbrook, 2009).

In addition to providing access to trans friendly resources on campus, a main theme in the literature focused on higher education professionals' lack of knowledge about trans issues (Beemyn, 2003; 2005a; Marine & Nicolazzo, 2014; McKinney, 2005; Nicolazzo, 2016a; Sausa, 2002; Seelman, 2014; Sing, Meng, & Hasen, 2013). This lack of education included a lack of awareness of trans-affirming language (including correct pronoun usage), awareness about gendered facilities (i.e. bathrooms, locker rooms, housing), conflation of sexual and gender identity, and non-inclusive campus policies and practices (Sausa, 2002; Schneider, 2010; Singh et al., 2013). Lacking education about trans individuals further marginalizes their college and university experience. Researchers suggested providing workshops and trainings across departments on college campuses to educate staff, faculty, and administrators about trans experiences and issues (McKinney, 2005; Sausa, 2002; Seelman, 2014; Singh et al., 2013; Squire & Norris, 2014). Woodford, Kolb, Durocher-Radeka, and Javier (2014) urged higher education practitioners to move towards offering more focused ally trainings which would allow for different modules to address the nuanced programmatic goals and complex steps to being an ally for LGBTQ individuals.

At the same time, however, higher education professionals should be aware of the marginalizing potential of developing educational workshops and trainings about trans individuals. For example, Marine and Nicolazzo (2014) warned about providing training, workshops, and programing “*about* trans individuals and communities, rather than *with* or *among* these communities” (p. 271, emphasis original). They also noted that workshops which educate about trans issues often places trans individuals as ‘the other’ by emphasizing the need for the cisgender community to educate themselves about trans individuals (Marine & Nicolazzo, 2014). Providing trainings dedicated to educating higher education professionals about trans identities is

needed as the literature highlights the lack of awareness of systematic genderism at college and university campuses (Marine & Nicolazzo, 2014; McKinney, 2005; Seelman, 2014).

Policies and Practices for (A)gender(s)

Trans individuals face challenges navigating campuses daily because of the policies and practices encountered at postsecondary institutions, such as: not accessing gender inclusive restrooms, encountering sex assigned at birth on college forms or student records, not being able to indicate their chosen name and pronouns in the student information system, and being misgendered or misnamed (Linley & Kilgo, 2018; Woodford et al., 2017). Research focusing on policies and practices around (a)gender(s) centers on nondiscrimination policies, facility use (on-campus housing, locker rooms, and bathrooms), and formal and informal records or forms. Having a formal written policy can help guide practices towards trans inclusion at postsecondary institutions (Beemyn et al., 2005a; Beemyn et al. 2005b). Additionally, equal opportunity and nondiscrimination policies that include gender identity and expression helps protect trans students from potential harassment and discrimination (Zemskey & Sanlo, 2005). When writing policies, however, higher education administrators should be cognizant of the language that is used within the policy to ensure that it is not depicting trans people as vulnerable (Dirks, 2016; Nicolazzo, 2016b). Change to (a)gendered-based policies at college or universities is often a slow and arduous process (Messinger, 2009; Nicolazzo, 2016c). Students are frequently frustrated with the slow process of policy change, partially because they might leave the campus before they even see the change enacted (Messinger, 2009). Senior leadership changes, adaptation at other institutions, changes in local and state government, public departure of key administrators or faculty, and donors withdrawal of support because of the lack of LGBTQ policies are all key factors towards policy change at colleges and universities (Messinger, 2009).

Additionally, personal testimonials from trans individuals to key administrators and university stakeholders, as well as, benchmarking of peer and aspirational institutions play an important role when advocating for policy change (Githens, 2012; Linley & Kilgo, 2018).

It should be noted that policies set by campus administrators can help acknowledge, ignore, or govern student identities (Catalano, 2015). Additionally, university policies can contribute to negative practices and microaggressions towards trans individuals (Pitcher, 2017). Therefore, just having a policy protecting trans individuals on college and university campuses is not enough, inclusive practices to ensure they are afforded the same respect and opportunities as cisgender individuals are necessary (Beemyn 2003; 2005; 2012; Beemyn et al., 2005a; Beemyn et al. 2005b; Beemyn & Brauer, 2015). Below I outline the literature on policies and practices related to nondiscrimination, facilities, and university registrars.

Nondiscrimination Policies and Practices

The majority of the literature concentrates on including (a)gender(s), gender identity, and gender expression in university nondiscrimination policies to help protect trans individuals from harassment and discrimination at postsecondary institutions (Beemyn 2003; 2005; 2012; Beemyn et al., 2005a; Beemyn et al. 2005b; Beemyn & Rankin, 2016; Case, Kanenberg, Erich, Tittsworth, 2012; Morrish & O'Mara, 2011; Zemsky & Sanlo, 2005). Over 1,000 postsecondary institutions have nondiscrimination policies that include gender and gender identity (Campus Pride, 2019). Adding gender, gender identity, and gender expression to nondiscrimination policies not only demonstrates the institution's support of trans students' visibility, but also can contribute to college choice (Beemyn & Rankin, 2016). Because more students are now entering college out in their (a)gender(s), students and their families are looking at university policies and

the ways such policies support (or do not support) trans students when choosing what institution to attend (Beemyn & Rankin, 2016).

Even though trans visibility is increasing, some institutional nondiscrimination statements still need to be improved. For example, Morrish and O'Mara (2011) found that diversity was discussed in nondiscrimination policies in vague language which concealed the accountability change. They found that in nondiscrimination policies, the term queer is not often used, and sexual orientation is included more often than gender identity (Morrish & O'Mara, 2011).

Adding gender identity and expression in the university nondiscrimination policy acknowledges gender beyond the binary and recognizes the identities of trans students on university campuses (Beemyn et al., 2005a; Beemyn et al. 2005b; Marine & Catalano, 2014; Pitcher et al., 2016).

The inclusion of gender identity and expression in nondiscrimination policies also helps students feel publicly supported by their institution (Pitcher et al., 2016). At the same time, just having the policy is not enough to protect and support trans students and make the campus safer for them (Spade, 2015). Creating an inclusive and affirming campus climate where policies are intertwined with inclusive practices is critical for supporting trans students (Pitcher et al., 2016).

Facility Policies and Practices

Another theme in the literature related to the policies and practices surrounding gendered facilities on college and university campuses, such as, locker rooms, bathrooms, and housing. Modifying facilities, policies, and practices towards trans inclusion is needed in order for trans students to navigate college successfully (Garvey, Chang, Nicolazzo, & Jackson, 2018; Nicolazzo & Marine, 2015). Additionally, creating gender inclusive options for housing, locker rooms, and bathrooms all contributed to creating a safe environment and acknowledgement of trans individuals (Beemyn 2003; 2005; Sausa, 2002). Marine, Wagner, and Nicolazzo (2019)

highlighted that just providing gender inclusive housing options is not enough. Trans students still experienced anxiety and fear of sanctions when resisting the dominate normalizing discourse from housing and residential life (Marine, Wagner, & Nicolazzo, 2019).

Colleges and universities have struggled to adapt gender inclusive housing options and often the reaction from housing and residential life administrators is reactive to trans students rather than proactive (Krum, Davis, & Galupo, 2012; Nicolazzo & Marine, 2015; Sausa, 2002). For example, many colleges require trans students live in an individual or single room, rather than a shared room, thus creating a financial burden for these students and further marginalizing them by limiting their housing options (Garvey et al., 2018; Nicolazzo & Marine, 2015). Housing assignments are also usually made based on a student's sex at birth rather than their (a)gender(s) (Nicolazzo & Marine, 2015). Housing policies and forms should be updated to allow for housing assignments based on gender identity rather than biological sex (Beemyn 2003, 2005b; Nicolazzo & Marine, 2015).

Garvey and colleagues (2018) explored policies and trans students' experiences in housing and residential life. They argued for housing and residential life practitioners to not just have a gender inclusive housing policy, but to create a process to implement gender inclusive housing on their campus. Inclusive housing practices moves beyond just having a policy, it is important to have both physical spaces and inclusive discourses which affirm and support students' (a)gender(s). Additionally, Garvey and colleagues (2018) stressed the importance of hiring and supporting trans housing staff. All of these steps are key when moving housing and residential life towards supporting gender equity in higher education.

University Registrar Policies and Practices

The literature focusing specifically on university registrar and student records practices is minimal; however, the literature that is available calls for a change in practices and policies to make it easier for trans students to update their student record (Beemyn, 2003; 2005; Beemyn et al., 2005b; Beemyn & Brauer, 2015; Marine & Catalano, 2014; Sausa, 2002; Seelman, 2014). Most of the literature suggested that university registrar offices could create a more trans-inclusive environment, including allowing students to easily and frequently update their gender marker on their student record, allowing them use their chosen name instead of their deadname (or legal name) on all front facing forms (class rosters, advising screens, etc.), providing the space for trans students to designate their pronouns on class rosters, and printing a name other than their legal name on transcripts (Beemyn 2003; 2005; 2012; Beemyn et al., 2005b; Beemyn & Brauer, 2015; Seelman, 2014). Allowing for students to change their gender marker, update their chosen name in the student information system, and designate their pronouns on class rosters reduces the likelihood of the student being outed as trans (Beemyn & Brauer, 2015; Woodford et al., 2017). It also prevents the student from having to come out or disclose their trans identity multiple times during their college experience, given faculty and staff would have access to their correct name and pronouns (Beemyn & Brauer, 2015; Woodford et al., 2017).

When updating gender marker policies, it is important to highlight the potentially problematic nature of these policies. Many federal and state agencies and institutions require medical intervention when issuing a gender change on government-issued identification documentation (Spade, 2015). Gender-affirming medical intervention is often not covered by health insurance and considered elective procedures, therefore, many trans individuals are not financially able to undergo medical interventions (Beeymn & Brauer, 2015). According to the Campus Pride Trans Policy Clearinghouse, only slightly over 100 colleges and universities offer

trans-affirming medical intervention on student health insurance (Campus Pride, 2019). Even without the financial burden, it can be difficult to find health care providers who understand trans issues and experiences and who are willing to provide appropriate care (Beemyn 2003; 2005; Beemyn & Brauer, 2015; Spade, 2015). All of these challenges highlight that requiring medical intervention to change a gender marker in college records disproportionately and negatively affects trans students. With these challenges in mind, colleges and universities should allow students to change their gender marker without undergoing surgeries and medical intervention (Seelman, 2014).

Trans inclusive record management policies and practices are important, particular when considering the interactions students have with the institution before enrolling as a student. The interaction they have with the admissions application may be the first interaction a student has with an institution, thereby setting the stage for inclusion or exclusion. Further, the information students provide on admissions applications is then created as their student record. Student information systems are built on genderist ideas of a gender binary where biological sex is conflated with gender identity (Beemyn & Brauer, 2015; Brauer, 2017; Seelman, 2014). Additionally, there is an assumption with these systems that individuals are correctly identified by their legal name, biological sex, and the pronouns attached to their biological sex (Beemyn & Brauer, 2015). This can not only cause a problem for students while they are matriculating through the institution, but also when they are alumnx (Brauer, 2017). Therefore, these student record systems need to be (re)imagined to encompass more (a)gender(s) and move outside of binary.

Summary of the Literature Review

As this literature review demonstrated, trans collegians face incredible barriers within higher education, related to visibility on- and off-campus, transphobic and often hostile campus environments, and genderist policies and practices. As noted within the section on policies and practices, there is limited work on the effects of the management of (a)gender(s) in the student record. Given the limited literature on student records and the increased visibility and outness of trans students within the K-12 and postsecondary sections, more research is needed to explore the intersection of higher education policies and practices with identities.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical frameworks in higher education research which consider trans experiences is minimal. Researchers have called for theoretical frameworks to consider the experiences of trans individuals and called out the lack of trans representation in theoretical approaches (Bilodeau & Renn, 2005; Nicolazzo, 2016c; Renn 2010). Renn (2010) highlighted this by advocating for higher education scholarship to consider poststructuralist theories when researching gender identity.

Poststructural theories emphasize the complex nature of identities that are constantly under construction, unbounded, and interconnected (St. Pierre, 2000). These theories allow for a more complicated and layered theoretical lens when considering the logic of university registrar practices on student records for trans students. For example, poststructural theories emphasize the complex nature of power/knowledge relationships, dialogic processes, and the “production of meaning” through social, political and cultural contexts (Fawcett, 2012; Parkes, 2012, p. 667). Poststructuralism also allows for the connection between cultural values, knowledge systems, and discursive environments to become considered and entangled within research (Sandu, 2011). Below, I begin by reviewing student identity development theories specific to trans collegians,

the need for poststructural research in higher education, and Foucault's (1991a; 1991b; 1991c; 1997) concepts of the self, subjectivities, and governmentality.

Student Identity Development

Through mapping out the policies and practices that govern trans identities within higher education, it is important to examine trans identity development. While research on trans identities is limited; however, research on the specific identity development processes is almost nonexistent. A few notable exceptions exist, including the work of Bilodeau (2005; 2009), Bilodeau and Renn (2005), Catalano (2015), Nicolazzo (2016a; 2016c), and Renn and Bilodeau (2005a). Bilodeau (2005) recognized the lack of inclusion for trans students in identity development models and adapted D'Augelli's (1994) lifespan model of lesbian, gay, and bisexual development for trans students. Through his model D'Augelli's (1994) stated that an individual's development and sexual identity begins and ends through six stages: (1) exiting heterosexuality, (2) developing a personal LGB identity, (3) developing an LGB social identity, (4) becoming an LGB offspring, (5) developing an LGB intimacy status, and (6) entering an LGB community. Bilodeau (2005) explored the identity development of trans students and found the coming out processes of trans students was similar to the six processes of sexual identity in D'Augelli's (1994) model. The six processes of Bilodeau's (2005) model for transgender identity are: (1) exiting a traditionally gendered identity, (2) developing a personal transgender identity, (3) developing a transgender social identity, (4) becoming a transgender offspring, (5) developing a transgender intimacy status, and (6) entering a transgender community.

Specifically, through Bilodeau's (2005) research, the participants were not out as trans to their family, but had positive, affirming relationships with sexual partners who accepted their

trans identity. Having peer support, participation in a trans identity student group, and support from faculty all contributed to his participants affirming their trans identities (Bilodeau, 2005). The participants felt that their college campuses systematically forced them into a gender binary and refused to acknowledge their gender outside of a sex binary (male/female) (Bilodeau, 2005). Bilodeau's (2005) work allowed for a comprehensive student development theory to include trans students. This model, however, is still formulaic and does not encompass the dynamic and fluidity of (a)gender(s).

When specifically looking at the use of poststructural theories within higher education research, there are few higher education scholars applying these theories as a framework to question (a)gender(s) in their research. Catalano (2015) and Nicolazzo (2016a; 2016c) are two scholars in higher education who are using critical and poststructuralist theories to guide their work on trans students. For example, Catalano's (2015) research focuses on transmen's experiences and ability to negotiate higher education environments. Through his work, he explored the relationship his participants had with the embodiment of their gender. The transmen in his study struggled with, "what to do with or to their bodies" (Catalano, 2015, p. 424). This relationship with their bodies was an integral part to their gender identity. Although, she does not specifically study identity development, Nicolazzo (2016a; 2016c) used poststructuralist and critical theories to explore the resiliency of trans college students' experiences. She found the gender binary discourse trans students experienced on campus resulted in trans exclusion and contributed to trans students feeling out of place because of their gender identity (Nicolazzo, 2016a; 2016c). Reviewing the work of Catalano and Nicolazzo demonstrated the possibilities for higher education research to move towards post theories.

A Foucauldian Turn

Traditional student development theories do not highlight the multifaceted nature of identity or consider the minority or marginalized (Patton et al., 2016; Smithers & Eaton, 2017). Poststructural theories, however, emphasize the discontinuity of subjectivities, and thus allow for a more complex theoretical lens when considering the governmentality of (a)gender(s) through the student record. When researching identities, I work from the perspective that they are fluid and not static, and that they are in constant negotiation with practices and relationships. Therefore, the theories and methodologies used to research and explore implications related to identities need to account for this fluidity.

I move away from traditional student identity development theories and towards my theoretical framework by beginning with a quote from Foucault (1991c).

I am still working and don't yet know whether I am going to get anywhere...my books aren't treatises in philosophy or studies of history: at most, they are philosophical fragments put to work in a historical field of problems. (p. 74)

In this quote, Foucault (1991c) offered an opening, a pause. In this opening he invited researchers, thinkers, and practitioners to join him and struggle with him in his philosophical fragmentations. This struggle is where possibilities can be different through stuttering and questioning our practices. Poststructural theorist and philosopher, Foucault (1991a; 1991b; 1991c; 1997), provided opening(s) where I situate the theoretical framework of my study. These theory allows for deconstruction and critical examination of structures and multiplicities of thought and practice (Kim, 2016).

The self and subjectivities. Foucault's philosophies of the self shift beyond the phenomenological and structured subject. The phenomenological subject is conscious of, "its decisions, actions, and values, and therefore expresses meaning that is coherent, intentional, and

transparent” (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p. 52). Foucault focused his study of the subject through its discontinuity and not its transcendental, self-consciousness (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012; Kelly, 2013). For Foucault (1997), subjectivity is something that must be historically, self-constituted in relation to various practices and relationships. Subjectivity does not reach an end point of construction, but continues to be reconstructed in specific ways depending on the practices and relationships of the subject (Kelly, 2013). Therefore, subjectivity is not static, but dynamic and fluid through the subjects’ negotiation of the world. Further, there is no end point, finality, or final stage of subjectivity, it is an ongoing, continual process (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012).

Foucault (1997) explained that the subject is not a substance, but a form that shifts as it negotiates practices or relationships. During this negotiation the subject shifts away from itself and becomes different. Foucault (1997) explained that the subject does not have the same relationship to itself when it is constituted through different actions, such as exercising a political act or fulfilling a romantic relationship. Foucault (1997) continued, “undoubtedly there are relationships and interferences between these different forms of the subject; but we are not dealing with the same type of subject. In each case, one plays, one establishes a different type of relationship to oneself” (p. 290). Therefore, subjectivity does not instantly change its form, but the subject has to construct itself in a different way to negotiate practices and structures (Kelly, 2013).

Foucault’s (1997) notion of the self and subjectivity can be related to the way in which trans students experience their (a)gender(s) in relation to their student record. Their subjectivities are constantly shifting as they negotiate their (a)gender(s) in relation to their environment, relationships with individuals (i.e. family, campus administrators, faculty, etc.), and higher education practices. Because of the interactions with federal and higher education institutional

practices, trans students subjectivities shift and change depending on their negotiation with these practices. For example, as trans students negotiate their (a)gender(s) in a higher education environment they might experience their (a)gender(s) differently depending on the interactions they have with their faculty. One might be out in their (a)gender(s) differently with their peers, faculty, or families. Therefore, shifting their subjectivities depending on the boundaries of their relationships.

Governmentality. Governmentality is a Foucauldian theory which allows for the effects of practices to be made visible through normalizing discourses. Foucault (1991b) referred to governmentality as the way in which institutions (federal, state, local, etc.), “seek to direct the conduct of individuals” and govern people’s behaviors (Baez, 2014, p. 3). Though governmentality, people’s behaviors are governed by various forms of logic systems, rationalities, and technical practices (Baez, 2014). Foucault (1991b) noted, “to govern, then means to govern things” (p. 94). In order to govern objects or bodies, they must be found, identified, and created. This occurred through the population, made visible through family units, workplace, and educational systems, which became instruments for governmentality to be found (Doherty, 2007; Foucault, 1991b). While subjectivities are constantly shifting forms and moving towards discontinuity, institutions are identifying their population through categorical practices to create a population that is observable and measurable (Baez, 2014). Below, I first discuss the notion of the categorical self and relate it to university registrar practices. Next, I discuss the surveillance, normalization, and examination aspects of Foucault’s (1991a; 1991b) governmentality. I conclude this section with a discussion of governmentality within college student records.

The categorical self. Through using government-issued identification documents, individuals can be organized, tracked, and standardized. Beauchamp (2019) explained that, “this new combination of printed forms and physical descriptions marked a distinct shift in power of identity construction” (p. 24). These identity documents produce categorical identities rather than just record them. The dominant groups within society use identity documentation to control and regulate gender (Beauchamp, 2019; Spade, 2015). Government-issued identification documents further justifies who the legitimate citizens are within society (Beauchamp, 2019). In other words, these documents identify the normal and the abnormal through the continual reconstruction of the production of categorical identities. For example, in higher education university registrar practices are based on federal reporting measures. This is due to the majority of higher education institutions being federally regulated as Title IX funded institutions (Brauer, 2017). Therefore, higher education institutions are only required to categorize their students in the federally recognized sex binary of male/female.

The university registrar influences the development of academic institutional policy, enforces those policies, and manages the student record (Young, 2006). By enforcing policies, university registrars develop and normalize practices. When considering the logic of university registrar practices and the normalization of the self, Foucault’s (1991b) concept of governmentality allowed for an analysis of the development of the subject through the complex societal, political, and material environments (Doherty, 2007; Marion & Gonzales, 2014). Doherty (2007) stated that governmentality is directed, “at the subject, the society, or some consciously categorized subdivision of the body” (p. 196). In other words, the subject is always configuring itself under the normalizing practices of society leading to the subject self-surveilling and self-governing.

Foucault's (1991b) art of governmentality is centered within the management and creation of the individual. Foucault (1991a) noted that one can create and define the individual through statistics. For example, university registrars have historically held the role of defining who was eligible to be a student and who was able to continue as a student (Young, 2006). In this way, they managed and defined individuals as students. Defining the population through statistics moves the collective effects beyond the family unit and pushes the population towards its own normalization. The population allows for the state to govern itself through the process of governmentality (Foucault, 1991b). University registrars regularly define the student population through the student record but due to the limited, binary options they are only visible to the institution in a specific way (Young, 2006).

Surveillance, Normalization, and Examination. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault (1991a) discussed the disciplining and normalizing practices enforced through Jeremy Bentham's design of the Panopticon. The panopticon was used to control prisoners through a three-pronged approach of surveillance, normalization, and examination. The concepts of the Panopticon can be used as productive effects to control and discipline a population through governmentality (Foucault, 1991a; 1991b). Moving away from sovereign power, which was yielded through being seen and exercised publicly (through public executions), and towards disciplinary power (through the panopticon) is, "exercised through its invisibility" and ensures that the power is held over the individuals who are visible (Foucault, 1991a, p. 187). The act of being constantly visible allows for individuals to be disciplined and through the examination power is exercised, "on its subjects, holds them in a mechanism of objectification" (Foucault, 1991a, p. 187). "The institutionalization of examinations and inspections – though spaces such as schools, the hospital, or the military – transformed mechanisms of power...which made itself

most visible to disciplinary power” (Beauchamp, 2019, p. 15). Through acts of surveillance, normalization, and examination, bodies are disciplined and then made into docile bodies. The act of creating a student record allows for the surveillance and normalization of the student population through monitoring statistics (e.g. grade point averages, retention and persistence rates, number of students at postsecondary institutions etc.).

Policies mandating identity information is given to the state through statistical methods and allows the State to provide representations of what it considers real and to control and surveilled over its population (Baez, 2014). Surveillance is a mechanism where gender nonconformity is produced as deviant, non-normalized (Beauchamp, 2019). Trans individuals’ (a)gender(s) are regulated and surveilled through observable, medical interventions. Through obtaining legal and medical documentation, trans individuals can be regulated and visible to the government on the gender binary. Subjects have to be visible for power to be held over them and for them to be governed (Beauchamp, 2019). Through being visible, subjects become disciplined and visible subjects allow for surveillance practices to work more effectively. For example, in higher education, students are tracked and monitored through their student record – their personal information must match up to federal reporting information for financial aid purposes. Therefore, the student is visible to the institution, but only in a specific, codified way.

Foucault (1991a) discussed the standardization of education through testing and creating the individual. Society formed “codes of disciplinary individuality that made it possible to transcribe, by means of homogenization the individual features established by the examination” (p. 189). Through policies, practices, and standardization of education, the population is defined through discipline and normalization. In the university registrar’s office, this is seen through academic grading policies or curriculum management policies. Both the faculty and the student

are managed and disciplined through the establishment of accrediting agencies and the influencing factor of accepting federal and state aid at higher education institutions, thereby creating norms/rules for institutions to operate under and allowing for institutional policy to be developed.

Foucault (1991a) discussed the creation/entry of the individual as “these small techniques of notation, of registration, of constituting files, of arranging facts in columns and tables that are so familiar to us now, were of decisive importance in the epistemological ‘thaw’ of the sciences of the individual” (p. 191). He also introduced the concept of “entry of the individual” through creating files, or records (p. 191). For Foucault (1991a), the act of creating an entry, or file on individuals, creating examinations, and procedures of writing and registration are all examples of “the formation of the mechanisms of discipline and of a new type of power over bodies” (p. 191). The filing and collecting of information on individuals develop a source of power over that individual through an invisible force that manages the individual’s identity.

Governmentality within College Student Records. In higher education settings, governmentality is evident in institutional policy and practice. By requiring students to submit an admissions application, the institution is standardizing and classifying students. Within the admissions application, students’ self-report and self-select aspects of their identity (name, date of birth, address, gender, parent/guardian information, schools attended, race, ethnicity, citizenship, etc.). Through a normalization of submitting self-reported data, the student accepts this as ordinary behavior; thus, allowing themselves to be managed and disciplined by the institution’s policies. The measuring and quantifying of the student manifests throughout college, through calculation of grade point average (GPA), the usage standardized college preparatory tests, and the management of student transcripts, among others. The governing of

the individual is made possible by the individuals submitting themselves to this management, which becomes self-management, by self-identifying in statistically compatible categories (Foucault, 1991b). Through the application process the student morphs into statistic form—an assemblage of checked boxes that quantify and show them to the institution, allowing them to be sorted, admitted, examined, and received in particular ways.

The management of the individual is seen throughout university registrar functions. When students apply for college, they contribute to the construction of their student record. Their self-selected identity is transferred from their admissions application to their student record where students are managed by the institution. Higher education institutions manage and discipline individuals through policy and normalizing practices. For example, only allowing students to report their sex assigned at birth and not their (a)gender(s) is a form of discipline that reinforces a heteronormative culture in higher education (Sedgwick, 2008). By limiting what identity boxes can be selected, the quantified assemblage of the student, as seen by the institution, is reduced. According to the application and student record, a student can only be male or female; other options are not possible. This produces an environment where trans students are invisible, unable to be seen by the institution, and made docile through the forced choice of having to check a box that does not represent them. Through the disciplining act of applying to a higher education institution, a student is made a docile body.

Summary

In higher education, poststructural theories have been slow to appear within research on trans identities and experiences. Poststructuralist frameworks are needed in higher education research and have the potential to bring a new perspective to research surrounding access, equity, leadership, and policy within postsecondary education (Renn, 2010; Smithers & Eaton, 2017).

Taking a poststructuralist perspective through intersecting Foucault's notion of governmentality and pairing this with his theories on subjectivity allows for a fluid approach to identity research. Foucault's work allows for a deeper analysis when exploring the effects of the management of (a)gender(s) in the student record. Using this theoretical perspective as a guiding framework for my exploration into university registrar practices managing (a)gender(s) provides a different perspective into the research that is not present currently in the literature. In the next chapter, I detail my methodology, methods, and research design. I also discuss the use of my methodology, narrative inquiry and counternarratives, in my higher education literature.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

This chapter details the methodology and research design for my study. The purpose of my study was to explore the effects of university registrar practices when managing or governing (a)gender(s) through the student record. The following research questions guided my inquiry:

1. How do trans college students describe their (a)gender(s)?
2. How do trans college students experience their (a)gender(s) when governed by the institutional logic(s) of student record systems?

My study was conceptualized through my experience as a practitioner working in higher education. Through my experiences examining my own practices, I began to question the logic(s) and effects of institutional practices encompassing the management of (a)gender(s) in the student record. I applied a poststructural theoretical approach, Foucault's (1991a; 1991b; 1991c) concepts of governmentality, to narrative inquiry through the use of trans college students' counternarratives. Within this chapter, I outline narrative inquiry, how I used Foucault's concepts with narrative inquiry, and my use of counternarratives given my own subjectivities. I then turned back to my research questions, before I detailed my study design and data analysis. I concluded this chapter with a discussion of ethical considerations and the limitations of this study.

Narrative Inquiry

In this section, I outline the methodology I used for my study by first defining narrative inquiry broadly. Next, I outline narrative inquiry with poststructural theories and conclude with

a discussion of counternarrative. It is important to begin by addressing that the term *narrative* carries many definitions and meanings. There is not a widely accepted definition or specific framework for doing narrative research (Kim, 2016; Riessman, 2008; Tamboukou, 2008). When exploring the intersections between narrative inquiry and poststructural theories, it is helpful to begin with the origins of humanistic narrative inquiry in educational research. This origin can be traced back to an article written by Connelly and Clandinin (1990) in which narrative inquiry is described as an avenue for studying “the ways humans experience the world” through the construction and reconstruction of social and personal stories (p. 2). Similarly, Denzin (2000) defined narrative as, “a telling, a performance event, the process of making or telling a story” (p. xi). Chase (2005) described narrative as a short, extended, or life story and continued by stating that narratives can be oral, written, elicited, or heard. For my study, narrative inquiry is situated in the experiences and subjectivities of my participants through the way they encounter genderist systems in higher education.

Narrative is ordered sequentially and represents a beginning, middle, and end of an experience (Loots, Coppens, & Sermijin, 2013). It focuses on how the participants’ narratives are constructed and allows for the creation of one’s “sense of self” through the (re)telling of their stories (Marshall & Rossman, 2016, p. 155). Narrative inquiry honors the participants’ narratives by emphasizing stories told in their voice, allowing for the focus on their lived experiences. Through narrative inquiry, participants are able to discover their many stories and engage with their whole self. Clandinin and Rosiek (2007) situated narrative inquiry as an, “ontology of experience” through shifting inquiry away from what is said towards how it is said (p. 44). Narrative becomes a way for reality to be known, a movement away from studying the individual and towards the study of the individual as part of the phenomenon through telling the

lived experience (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006; Kim, 2016). Through this view of narrative inquiry, subjectivity is conceptualized as sequential and narrative inquiry becomes the ability to represent a phenomenon. This conceptualization with narrative is compatible with the view of an essential self (Loots et al., 2013).

Narrative inquiry allows for the study between ways of knowing and being, “through imaginings with others we can feel our relationships evolving, creating a possibility to discover what is unknown, what is different, what connect us to others and others to us” (Caine & Steeves, 2009, p. 6). In other words, it is a process of collaboration as the researcher and participants engage in the storytelling process (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Kim, 2016). Through a narrative framework, the researcher and the participants become intertwined, and they develop and grow from the research experience together (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007; Riessman, 2008). The co-construction of the narrative allows for dominant discourses to be challenged and provide space for the marginalized, or other, to share their story (Cole, 2009). Connelly and Clandinin (1990) explained that by participating in the research and sharing their stories, participants are given a voice. This view implies that participants were voiceless before the researcher entered their space. A re-envisioned ethic of care for narrative inquiry understands that there is an intertwining relationship, “between teller, listener, and narrative” and does not understand the researcher as just amplifying the participants’ voice (Cole, 2009, p. 570).

Poststructuralism and Narrative Inquiry

Epistemologically, poststructuralist research practices move away from discovering/representing truth and towards a connection between culture, knowledge systems, and discursive environments that are entangled within the research (Fawcett, 2008; Sandu, 2011; St. Pierre, 2000). Poststructuralism focuses on the discursive nature of language, the relationship

between power and knowledge, and the production of meaning through social practices (Fawcett, 2008). Traditional and humanistic approaches are not compatible with poststructural approaches to narrative inquiry; this is due to humanistic assumptions of a single, core subject or the ability to represent that subject through narrative (St. Pierre, 2000). Through using poststructural approach with narrative inquiry, then, narratives can be understood as, “always multiple, socially constructed and constructing, reinterpreted and reinterpretable” (Squire, Andrews & Tamboukou, 2013, p. 5). Understanding subjectivities as productions of the social condition within material, cultural, and societal practices is a move towards a poststructural understanding of narrative inquiry (Loots et al., 2013). Denzin (2000) provided an opening where concepts from poststructuralism and narrative inquiry overlap and connect:

There is no dualism between self and society. Material social conditions, discourses, and narrative practices interweave to shape the self and its many identities. Narrative’s double duty...is complex; self and society are storied productions. (p. xi)

Traditional approaches to narrative inquiry call for representing participants through their stories to investigate a particular phenomenon. In this vein, narrative inquiry and poststructuralism will not fully align epistemologically or ontologically. Poststructuralism challenges normative discourses and moves away from binary assumptions while challenging the phenomenological subject (Kim, 2016). Foucault (1991c) allowed for the analysis of subjectivities as they interact with relationships or institutional practices – challenging the notion of the qualitative subject. Jackson (2013) argued for rethinking the subject in qualitative research away from the knowing subject and towards the (re)constituted subject; recognizing the shifts in subjectivities and moving towards a methodology of practice.

Taking a poststructural theoretical approach to narrative inquiry necessitates (re)imagining narrative beyond the traditional interpretations. Within poststructural theories, the

self is not fixed, rather it is continually reconstituted. The (re)imagination of narrative inquiry occurs when we challenge the way we traditionally consider research methodologies and methods. Through moving away from representationalism and the assumptions of being able to represent the human condition, entwining poststructuralism and narrative inquiry allows for the integration and deconstruction of logic and power/knowledge relations that comprise social, political, and cultural institutions (Foucault & Deleuze, 1977).

Folding together the concept of theory as practice and practice as theory allows for the deconstruction of narrative inquiry (Foucault & Deleuze, 1977; Kim, 2016). (Re)thinking the practices that govern traditional notions of the subject and moving towards an entwined understanding of theory and practice allows for the challenging of dominant discourses through narrative inquiry. Tamboukou (2013) is an example of a scholar who challenges the notions of traditional narrative inquiry through flipping, disrupting, and manipulating the traditional approach to narrative inquiry. She draws upon Foucault's concepts of technologies of power/self and situates women's narratives as a discursive process of manipulating the self and thus, turning themselves into the subject (Tamboukou, 2013). Through this approach, narrative inquiry has no clear beginning or ending, narratives occur/exist in the middle (Squire et al., 2013). Tamboukou (2008) argued for a shift in narrative away from meaning as sequential representation and towards a methodology where narrative is decentered and the sequence is questioned. Problematizing the sequential representation moves towards a new entry point into narrative – "open to constant becoming, stories in becomings" (Tamboukou, 2008, p. 284). Becoming is a fluid and changing process that accounts for the movement between/within different events. It is the act of seeing the world from a different perspective (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; Stagoll, 2010).

Narrative inquiry can move beyond just representing a phenomenon or deriving meaning from the experience of the narrative (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007). Through this perspective, narrative inquiry becomes the difference between the events, meaning is not derived from, but always changing and being remade. Understanding narratives as ongoing continuing processes allows for subjectivity to be open, fragmented, different, and multiplicitous (Loots, et al., 2013). The narrative(s) moves away from representationalism and towards the process or practices behind the narrative. The narrative self becomes an assemblage of historical, political, societal, multiplicities that are set in a constant state of (re)shaping. Narratives then are transformed through the understanding that they exist in the middle of a fluid state, there is no static endpoint or beginning (Squire et al., 2013). Narratives are occurring before the researcher enters the space and continue after the researcher exits, we cannot force these stories to exit in a predetermined plane, therefore entering narratives in the middle.

Counternarratives

Working with a poststructural theoretical framework allows for the questioning and opening up of knowledge and subjectivities. When paired with a counternarrative methodological approach to narrative inquiry, historical and societal norms can be challenged (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Counternarratives or counterstories arose from the critical race theory movement and were used to challenge the legal discourse and expose the systemic racism in master or dominant narratives (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Counternarratives become spaces of resistance by challenging majoritarian stories, where the privileged experience seems natural or normative (Espino, 2012; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

According to Solórzano and Yosso (2002), counternarratives occur through personal (autobiographical or biographical) or composite storytelling. Though these personal narratives,

individuals' experiences with sexism, racism, or genderism is exposed. These stories are then set in conversation with the theoretical framework to resist societal norms (Espino, 2012; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). These stories complicate and challenge societal norms by decentering the privileged people in power by highlighting and telling the stories of the marginalized (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

Counternarratives can be used to expose the reality of marginalization that exists in/on/through higher education campuses (Linley, 2018). Several higher education scholars have used counternarratives as a methodological approach to integrate majoritarian or master narratives and highlight the inequities and experiences of the marginalized (e.g. Croom, 2017; Harper et al., 2011; Hubain, Allen, Harris & Linder, 2016; Linley, 2018; Means, 2017; Stapleton & Croom, 2017). For example, using counter-storytelling, Croom (2017) challenged dominant racial narratives by highlighting the experiences of Black womyn³ professors. Harper and colleagues (2011) used counternarratives to resist and combat the assumed universal telling of stories about people in power, specifically focusing on the stories of Black resident assistants and predominantly White institutions.

Higher education researchers have also used counternarratives to highlight intersectionality and extend the narratives to encompass other salient identities (see Linley, 2018; Means, 2017; Stapleton & Croom, 2017). Means (2017) used a composite approach to counternarrative to explore the spiritual stories of Black, gay, and bisexual men in higher education. Stapleton and Croom (2017) also used composite approach to underscore the experiences of Black, deaf college students. Further, Linley (2018) used counternarratives to

³ Womyn is the spelling for women Croom (2017) used when discussing the results of her study.

highlight the stories of minoritized (e.g. race, gender, and sexuality) of peer socialization agents in higher education.

Given the abundance of counternarratives within higher education research, and the overall lack of literature on trans students' experiences with student record systems, I chose to focus on my student participants' counternarratives narratives. In the next section I detail the research design and methods I used in my study. Specifically, I discuss my use of narrative inquiry and personal counternarratives, revisit my research purpose and research questions, and detail my site selection, participants, and data analysis. I conclude with a discussion of ethical considerations, my positionality and subjectivities, and limitations of this study.

Research Design and Methods

For a narrative research design, it is critical for narrative inquirers to, “think narratively while embracing the big picture of the research standards” (Kim, 2016, p. 89). Connelly and Clandinin (2006) asserted that if researchers are doing narrative research then they must think narratively when designing their research. I would argue that researchers need to think both narratively and theoretically when designing their study. The research design should move beyond plugging in techniques or interpreting another design and towards difference (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012).

In this study, I sought to use personal counternarratives to disrupt and interrogate the genderist nature of higher education. Following, Kim's (2016) overview of theoretical and philosophical underpinnings of narrative research design offers a different opening: research begins with imagination. The narrative inquirer must imagine a lifespace where their participants and their participants' experiences exist. In this lifespace, the telling and retelling of the participants' stories take place. In narrative inquiry, there are three “commonplaces” in

which narrative research design must include, “place (acknowledging place’s impact on the narrative), temporality (understanding that a narrative is in ‘temporal transition’), and sociality (encompasses personal and social environments)” (Kim, 2016, p. 90). For my study, this lifespace includes not only where my participants’ subjectivities exist, but also where the effects of the practices and structures exist.

In the use of personal counternarratives, the researcher needs to be aware of their own subjectivities through the telling of their participants stories (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Kim (2016) asserted that the narrative inquirer must recognize themselves through the process of inquiry. Therefore, investment in reflexivity and subjectivities needs to be part of the research design.

Subjectivities and Positionality

The entry into this research project is personal and entangled with my own subjectivities. I believe that research should open up possibilities, research should interrogate the status quo for social change, which begins by examining our own practices (Denzin, 2010). This brings me back to my theoretical leanings and I turn to Foucault for the critique/work must occur from within the structure to highlight the instability and allow for the (re)imagining of practices (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012). St. Pierre (2000) noted, “poststructuralism does not allow us to place the blame elsewhere, outside our own daily activities, but demands that we examine our own complicity in the maintenance of social justice” (p. 484). This value/principle motivates me to *do* my research. In turn, this manifests itself within my practice.

My Subjectivities

In regard to my subjectivities in relation to this research, I want to reflect and acknowledge that I am approaching this research as a cisgender woman. Throughout my

engagement with this topic, it is my intention to always already be aware of my (a)gender(s). I recognize that I come from a place of power and privilege because of my identity as a White – cisgender – able bodied – heterosexual – woman. I am constantly cognizant of where I am situated within society and how I navigate through a binary culture which privileges my (a)gender(s). This means I will be entering this research as an outsider. In addition, I want my research to inform my practice and provide a lens for me to critically examine my own role as a practitioner in higher education. Through my own professional practice as a higher education practitioner, I am complicit in the process of turning students into data points, a static number which “represents” who they are to the University through various ways (e.g. grade point average, retention, ethnicity, sex, degree program, resident/nonresident, domestic/international, etc.). By examining my own practices and being critical of my own biases requires me to look inward and continually question my actions and resist the temptation to move towards the center.

Continual and Repetitive Reflexivity

In the context of this study, I engaged in reflexive memoing and journaling during my data generation and analysis process. This allowed me to question my own practices both as a researcher and as a practitioner in higher education. Through the research process my participants checked me and questioned my use of language and approach to this topic. They challenged my assumptions and encouraged me to grow and engage with them through the research process. The effects of this process helped enmesh me into the data and become differently.

My practice encompasses the interpretation of policy and requires me to draw clear borders through a policy that is subjective. At times, higher education policy is a mechanism that can stifle social change because of the societal and cultural structures that are in place when

navigating the system. Recognizing this, I feel it is important to advocate for social change through my research and practice. I try to remain consistent and challenge my logic in my decisions while recognizing the power dynamics I enact. At times, this requires thinking creatively through the rationality of my practice while trying to work within the constructs of institutional policy. Working *within* the environment and questioning my practices, enables the critique of the institution of higher education and allows for reflexivity of my own practices (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012) – pieces of myself can break off at any point only to spring back up at another area on/through/with campus.

Research Questions

Overlaying theoretical and methodological approaches to research brings me back to the beginning of this dissertation and moves towards my application of a specific research topic. Continuing with the questions and experiences that led me to begin to stutter in my practice brings me back to the disconnect, or difference—the moments where I was momentarily paused. Reflecting on my own practices in addition to listening to the practitioners around me led me towards questioning the effects of the logic(s) behind university registrar practices management of (a)gender(s). The following research questions guided my inquiry in this study:

1. How do trans college students describe their (a)gender(s)?
2. How do trans college students experience their (a)gender(s) when governed by the institutional logic(s) of student record systems?

Site Selection

The site selection for my study included three flagship universities in three different regions of the United States. Each university was selected because of the size, location, and enrollment management practices (each allowed for trans inclusion in the student record but

differed in logic and student information systems). Midwest, Northeast, and Southeast University are all categorized as doctoral, four-year institutions, with high research activity by the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education. I was interested in interviewing multiple higher education administrators and trans students at different institutions about their experiences surrounding the practices of managing (a)gender(s) and the experiences of the management in the student record. Below I describe the three sites of my study: Midwest University, Northeast University, and Southeast University.

Midwest University. As displayed in Figure 1 below, participants described the culture at Midwest University as, “*in transition, far from perfect, collaborative, pretty positive, genderist.*”



Figure 1. Word cloud of participants' words describing the culture at Midwest University.

Midwest University (MU) is located in a politically conservative state in the Midwestern United States and has roughly 33,000 students enrolled. MU has an LGBTQ resource center which is housed with other social identity centers on campus and was recently staffed by a full-time staff member. The administrators at MU recently updated several policies and practices on campus related to trans and non-binary inclusion. MU uses a homegrown student information system and recently updated their collection of gender and sex information. MU decoupled sex and gender on their admissions application and in the student record. For sex, students have the

option to select female, male, or intersex. For gender, students have the option to select agender, cisgender, man, non-binary, transgender, woman, or another gender not listed above. In addition to gender marker information, students are able to indicate their pronouns on their admissions application and in their student record through the following choices: he/him/his, she/her/hers, they/them/theirs, ze/hir/hirs, ze/zir/zirs, or another set of pronouns not listed above. Students' chosen name is used in most communications and screens on campus, except for legal documentation (transcript, diploma, and verification letters). MU's registrar's office website does not include information about how a student can change their gender marker, or instructions on how to use the pronoun system. There is a resource webpage on the institutions' website, however, for trans students where this information is located.

Northeast University. Below, displayed in Figure 2 is an image comprised of participants' descriptions of the culture at Northeast University (NU). They described NU as, *“White, progressive, very forward thinking, and energized.”*



Figure 2. Word cloud of participants' words describing the culture at Northeast University.

Northeast University is located in a politically liberal, rural state in the Northeast United States and enrolled over 13,000 students at the time of the study. NU has an active LGBTQ resource center on campus which has three full time professional staff members. NU's registrar's office was a leader in trans inclusion and was an early adopter of the pronoun and chosen name system. The university uses Banner as their student information system and allows for students to choose five pronoun options: none, he/him/his, she/her/hers, they/them/theirs, ze/hir/hirs, and name only. Currently, NU collects gender marker information on the binary of male or female and does not separate gender and sex assigned at birth. At NU chosen name is shown on all front facing screens for the University, but not used for any legal documents or

communication (student account, financial aid, official transcripts, etc.). NU’s registrar’s office webpage has information that is clear and visible about the chosen name and pronoun system, but they do not have any information about how a student can change their gender marker.

Southeast University. Participants at Southeast University (SU) described the culture as, “*very Southern, traditional, conservative, big, and surprisingly pretty progressive.*” Below, Figure 3 displays a word cloud of the participants’ words describing the culture at SU.



Figure 3. Word cloud of participants’ words describing the culture at Southeast University.

Southeast University is located in a politically conservative, Southern state and has been publicly criticized over the lack of diversity efforts within the institution. Southeast University has over 38,000 students enrolled and recently added an LGBTQ resource center staffed part-

time by a graduate assistant. SU's registrar's office is one of the first offices in the country that allowed for students to designate their pronouns through three selections: they/them/theirs, he/him/his, and she/her/hers, and allows for a chosen name to display on all forward facing screens (advising screens, class rosters, etc.). SU uses Banner as their student information system and they are only collecting gender as male or female and not separating gender from sex assigned at birth. SU does not have a clear policy or practice visible on their registrar office's website for students to change their gender marker.

Participants

Through this study, I sought to explore the effects of the practices behind the management of (a)gender(s) in the student record and how trans students' experience this management. Therefore, it was important to interview both trans or non-binary students and higher education administrators from MU, NU, and SU. Students and higher education administrators were recruited to participate in this study at all three institutions. A total of eight students and thirteen higher education administrators were interviewed for this study from the three site institutions.

Student participants. I interviewed a total of eight students, who were recruited from all three institutions: two from MU and NU, and four from SU. In order to participate in this study, students had to identify not as cisgender and were currently enrolled as a student at MU, NU, or SU. Their classification (i.e. undergraduate, graduate), major, or involvement as a student was not a selection criterion, because I was specifically interested in their interaction with their student record and university registrar practices. Table 1 details the information of the students who participated in this study.

Table 1
Student Participants

Name	(A)gender(s)	Pronouns	Institution	Type of Student
Avery	Trans, non-binary	They/them/theirs	Midwest University	Graduate student
James	Agender	They/them/theirs	Midwest University	Undergraduate student
John	Trans masculine, non-binary	They/them/theirs	Northeast University	Graduate student
Matt	Trans, man	He/him/his	Northeast University	Graduate student
Blake	Question mark, gender-fluid ⁴	Ze/Hir/Hirs	Southeast University	Undergraduate student
Charlie	Non-binary	They/them/theirs	Southeast University	Undergraduate student
Logan	Non-binary	They/them/theirs	Southeast University	Undergraduate student
Max	Agender	They/them/theirs	Southeast University	Undergraduate student

Student participants were recruited through snowball sampling techniques (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). I first sent an email to the LGBTQ centers on each campus asking if they could send my recruitment email out to their listserv. At Midwest University and Northeast University, I also sent my recruitment email to the coordinator of their higher education program and asked them to distribute it to their students. In the recruitment email, I asked students to respond if they were interested in participating in a 45- to 60-minute audio recorded interview and gave the date range when I was in town. During the interview, I asked each participant to provide a pseudonym and their pronouns. Also, at the end of the interview I asked them to best identify their gender(s) at that current moment. Student participants were given a \$10 gift card for their participation in the study.

Administrator participants. Thirteen higher education administrators participated in my study, seven from Midwest University, four from Northeast University, and two from

⁴ At the time of our interview, Blake was still questioning the labeling of hir gender. Ze knew ze did not fit into the binary gender and did not identify as cis. When asked how ze identified ze shrugged hir shoulders and said, “question mark”.

Southeast University. The administrators varied in their roles at their respective universities. Ten of the participants roles were related to enrollment management. The other three participants were integral in supporting and advocating for trans-inclusive changes in the student information system at their universities. Table 2 details the information of the higher education administrators who participated in this study.

Table 2
Higher Education Administrator Participants

Name	(A)gender(s)	Pronouns	Institution	Role
Jerry	Man	He/him/his	Midwest University	University Registrar
Emily	Woman	She/her/hers	Midwest University	Associate University Registrar
Jamie	Woman	She/her/hers	Midwest University	Associate University Registrar
Henry	Man	He/him/his	Midwest University	University President
Grace	Woman	She/her/hers	Midwest University	Attorney, wife of the president
Jessica	Woman	She/her/hers	Midwest University	Associate Professor
Ethan	Man	He/him/his	Midwest University	Director of Admissions Operations
Sam	Agender	They/them/theirs	Northeast University	Previous Director of LGBTQ Center
Linda	Woman	She/her/hers	Northeast University	Associate University Registrar
Tracy	Woman	She/her/hers	Northeast University	Vice President of Enrollment Management
Chelsea	Woman	She/her/hers	Northeast University	University Registrar
Jim	Man	He/him/his	Southeast University	University Registrar
Terry	Man	He/him/his	Southeast University	Associate Registrar

Higher education administrators were recruited through purposeful and snowball sampling techniques (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). I identified key enrollment management administrators at each university through the institutions' website. I then sent a recruitment email and asked them to participate in this study through one 45- to 60-minute recorded

interview. In the email, I explained my study and why I was contacting them, and asked them to participate in the study. Also, I provided them with a list of available dates when I would be on campus. The administrators who participated in the study also suggested other individuals who were involved with the topic of the study. During the interview, I asked each participant to provide a pseudonym and their pronouns. While data from all 13 administrators, informed my study, I narrowed the scope of the administrator narratives in the findings and interpretations from six of the administrators who participated in my study: Jim, Chelsea, Jerry, Grace, Henry, and Tracy.

Data Generation

Through generating my data, I conducted semi-structured interviews with all 21 of my participants. Each interview varied between 45 to 90 minutes and each participant was interviewed once. In these interviews, I used a separate interview protocol for the students and administrators. Copies of the interview protocols are in Appendix A and Appendix B. Through a semi-structured interview approach, I used my interview protocols as a guide during each interview and followed up with questions asking my participants to elaborate on their responses (Roulston, 2010).

My theoretical framework informed my approach to my data generation. I used a Foucauldian approach to the interviews, where meaning is not gathered through knowing, but rather through discursive subjectivities (Fadyl & Nicholls, 2013; St. Pierre, 2000). The interview was a social practice and through the practice of the interview the researcher and participant become intertwined through the production of a discourse. During the interview, I understood my participants to be part of the governing discourse, where their subjectivities would shift in relation to the interview practices. Therefore, it was crucial during the interview that the student

and administrator participant(s) reflected on the logic behind their practices in addition to their subjecthood. The discourse in the interview then became another point of analysis where the effects can be studied through a Foucauldian lens (Fadyl & Nicholls, 2013). Additionally, the interview was a social, discursive practice which focused on the production of decisions and interactions between the participant and researcher. Understanding that the interview was not something where the research can unearth or reveal something about the participant, but rather engage in a discourse where the effects can be analyzed.

For both groups of participants, I began the interview by asking them to reflect on their own journey and what led them to their respective university. Then, I asked them to reflect on the culture of their institution and share specific examples. During the student interviews, I focused on questions surrounding the production of the genderism discourse through the lens of governmentality. Specifically, I asked them to share experiences when their (a)gender(s) was recognized or not both inside and outside of higher education environments. Then, I focused on questions about their experiences at their university navigating enrollment management practices which governed (a)gender(s). I wanted my participants to reflect on their own subjectivities and discuss their experiences navigating higher education and enrollment management practices and systems. I asked questions about their experiences on their campuses and about their understandings of their (a)gender(s). When interviewing the administrators, I wanted them to reflect on the logic behind their practices and walk me through their process when governing student information. I also focused on their current practices in managing gender information at their current institutions. Then I concluded the interview by asking them to reflect on how they thought trans students navigate their campus, and their impressions of their respective offices.

Data Analysis

For my data analysis, I returned to my theoretical framework which guided this study. I used Jackson and Mazzei's (2012) "Thinking with Theory" as an analytical tool. Through this study, I argue for moving away from simplistic and problematic checkbox practices in higher education. Thus, my data analysis needed to encompass the complexities of my theoretical framework. Through using "Think with Theory" my analysis moved beyond the "mechanistic coding, reducing data to themes, and writing up transparent narratives" (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012, p. vii) and toward the alignment of my theoretical and methodological frameworks.

The first step in my analysis required me to move towards a methodology of practice which shifts towards a Foucauldian understanding of narrative inquiry. In a conversation between Foucault and Deleuze (1977), they discussed the interconnectedness of theory and practice suggesting that theory is not a place to enact or apply practice, theory *is* practice. For Deleuze, theory and practice exist between lines of flight, where theoretical and practical action(s) occur. Deleuze continued this thought:

A theory is exactly like a box of tools. It has nothing to do with the signifier. It must be useful. It must function...A theory does not totalize; it is an instrument for multiplication and it also multiplies itself...As soon as a theory is enmeshed in a particular point, we realize that it will never possess the slightest practical importance unless it can erupt in a totally different area. (Foucault & Deleuze, 1977, p. 208)

Therefore, we cannot separate practice and theory – theory and methods. They are interconnected and informing each other. Kim (2016) expanded on Foucault and Deleuze's (1977) ideas through envisioning an interlocking gear where theory and practice are connected with personal experiences. Therefore, moving beyond just learning the theories are necessary – one must use and engage with the theories through practice and the practice through theories. Through this, the "theoretical intellectual" becomes and representationalism does not exist,

multiplicities occur within the set of theoretical and practical action(s) (Foucault & Deleuze, 1977, p. 207).

Using a theoretical approach to methodology allows for the interpretation and reinterpretation of the data. Similarly, by using a poststructural leaning towards narrative inquiry I viewed narratives as situated temporally existing in the middle. Through viewing narratives as existing in the middle, it is never a complete narrative with a beginning, middle, and ending, but it is continuously open and in a state of becoming (Loots et al., 2013). Using this understanding of temporality, I was able to move towards a different way of engaging with the data. By not looking for sameness, or for a narrative to fit into a set structure, it allowed me to pay attention to the difference, or diffraction in my participants narratives.

All of the interviews with my participants were audio recorded and transcribed. I used transcription software to first transcribe the interviews through dictation and then I listened and read the transcription, checking for accuracy and adding notes about the emphasis used by my participants. After the data were transcribed, I then listened back to the student interviews and noted areas of discontinuity or differences, specifically focusing on their subjectivities and Foucault's (1997) understanding of the self. Once I completed this step, I began to see the ways in which the practices of the management of their (a)gender(s) affected their interactions with their campus. I then turned back to Foucault's (1991b) concept of governmentality to frame and organize the narratives of the students.

After I completed the data transcription, I enmeshed myself both methodologically and theoretically in my data. The narratives of the trans students who participated in my study were compelling and important. I focused my analysis on their stories through using personal counternarrative as a method to help frame their counternarratives in a way that challenged the

transphobic and genderist discourse in higher education. The subjectivities of my participants were not static. They could not be easily broken down into a unifying story that includes a beginning, middle, and ending. I recognized that I entered and left their narrative in the middle. Through using personal counternarrative, I was able to work from within the narrative to complicate the majoritarian stories of cisgender privilege in higher education student record systems (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

In narrative inquiry the narrative is being constructed and reconstructed throughout the research process (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012; Kim, 2016; Loots et al., 2013). Once the trans students' counternarratives were written, I then focused on the narratives of six administrators: Jim, Chelsea, Jerry, Grace, Henry, and Tracy. I looked for moments of disruption and difference with the trans students' counternarratives. Through interpreting and reinterpreting the data, I embraced the tension of Foucault's (1991b) concept of governmentality and analyzed the administrators' narratives through my theoretical underpinnings. I found moments of tension or disruption in the narratives and intentionally put the administrators' voices in the footnotes, thus centering the counternarrative from the students. Through focusing on trans students' counternarratives, however, I did not see myself as giving voice to my participants by implying and assuming that my participants were voiceless before I entered their narrative. Instead, I viewed their narratives as a way to focus on their dynamic subjectivities and problematize the practices of managing (a)gender(s) information in higher education.

Ethical Considerations

When engaging in research, it is important to reflect on the ethical considerations of the study. I gained approval for this study through the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at my university before recruiting the participants. Before the start of the interview, I gained verbal

and written consent from the participants in this student. Additionally, participants had the option to withdraw their participation at any point during the research process. The informed consent included procedural information about the study, an overview of the procedures, and contact information if they had follow-up questions. The participants were informed that their data would be confidential, and all information would be deidentified. In the interview, they were asked to choose a pseudonym and to provide their pronouns. When I wrote the narratives for the students, I made intentional choices to further mask their identity (e.g., size of high school or home town, the types of stickers on their laptop, etc.). All participants were asked if they wanted to be contacted once I completed the findings section of my dissertation to ensure their narrative reflected their experience. All the participants declined the offer of member checking, except one administrator, Sam. I did not use Sam's narrative in my study therefore, I contacted them to let them know they were not included in the findings.

My research intersects with my practice in higher education; consequently, I interviewed my colleagues in the higher education profession. It was challenging to interview administrators in higher education, most of who held superior positions to my professional role. It was difficult to engage in an interview where I asked them to reflect on the logic(s) behind their practices and think through the effects of these practices. I tried to remain professional and not come across as disrespectful during the interview. This required me to be cognizant of the tone and structure of my questions. Additionally, there are potential consequences when critiquing institutions or professional associations within my practice. My professional relationships with my participants could potentially change and shift because of the research relationship. Through working professionally in a registrar's office and researching practices of that office provides additional challenges in the student information. I chose to email all of the participants (both student and

administrators) through my official work email. This meant that my professional position was already disclosed to the participants at the start of our relationship. I did not interview any students who I interacted with professionally in my position at the registrar's office.

I recognize that I am part of the culture and environment in higher education institutions, a culture that might be perpetuating a negative climate for these students. All of the pieces of my identities and subjectivities were at play and effect the relationship with the students who participate in my research. I asked them to recall experiences related to their (a)gender(s) including times they were misgendered. I recognized the potential unintended harm which could be caused by reflecting on painful memories. I addressed this before the informed consent was signed and reminded them that they had the opportunity to end our conversation or take a break from the interview.

In higher education practice, often change is pressed or asked to come from the students, instead of the administration. Marginalized students are usually tokenized in order to demonstrate the illusion of a picture-perfect inclusive campus in higher education. These students are often the ones who are forced to make changes on their campuses because of the inequities they face through higher education systems privileging the majority. In my interviews at Midwest University, Northeast University, and at Southeast University I was unaware of how their campus changed their student record practices (through administration or if it was student driven). Therefore, there was the potential that the students in my study were the ones that help to create the inclusive change on their campus. If this were true, then I would be asking the students to reflect on not just administration change, but their own work toward change and all of the experiences – positive and negative – that stemmed from the change process.

Limitations

When designing a qualitative research study, there are limitations during the process. Through my study, I wanted to complicate the understandings of the effects of registrar practices on the management of (a)gender(s) through the student record. I sought not to make generalizable claims or a checkbox of practices to implement. I intended to highlight the stories and experiences of students in order to question higher education practice. I do not claim that the narratives in this study speak for all trans students' experiences and I recognize the dynamic ways in which subjectivities evolve.

I was limited by many factors, including: time, monetary resources, relationships, and policies and practices at the institutions where I conducted my research. Because I was an outsider at the institutions I visited, I was limited by the students who would participate in my study. I used several strategies for sample recruitment, but was limited to what the institution would allow. For example, the LGBTQ center at Northeast University would not send research recruitment emails to their students. Therefore, I had to rely on other techniques to find student participants, which included contacting other offices on campus to send the email through their listserv. Additionally, I was limited by the higher education administrators who participated in this study. Several administrators who were contacted directly did not want to be interviewed for this study or were sick and unable to complete the interview during the time I was visiting the campuses.

In addition to participant limitations, this study was limited because of my own assumptions and bias. I believe that higher education institutions should strive towards trans-inclusion and work towards making campus inclusive of all salient identities. Additionally, I believe that higher education practitioners should be advocates for change on their campus and I believe that it is everyone's job to consider marginalized student populations within their

practice. This bias likely influenced both my interactions during interviews with administrators and the conclusions of my study.

Summary

Through this chapter I provided the methodological approach and research design of this study. Opening up subjectivities and rethinking the qualitative research subject allows for the methodological inquiry to exist fluidly, with various entry points and openings (Jackson, 2013). Folding in theory with methodology allows for a multi-layered qualitative analysis and a movement away from the mechanic, technical analysis of interpretivism (coding, themes, constructing narratives, etc.) (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012). Methodologically, research should open up possibilities and account for the complex nature of structures and institutions and the shifting subjectivities of various actors within these structures. This includes moving beyond coding for similarities and towards embracing difference and discomfort. Through taking a counternarrative methodological approach while entangling the data with Foucault's theoretical approach I sought to move towards new research possibilities to examine the effects of normalizing practices on trans students through the management of their (a)gender(s) in the student record. I detailed the research design, site selection, participants, data generation, and data analysis for my study. I also discussed the ethical considerations, positionality, and limitations of this study. In the next chapter, I provide the findings of this study through the trans students' counternarratives and the disruption of the narratives through administrators' governance of the student record.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS: TRANS STUDENTS COUNTERNARRATIVES

The purpose of my study is to explore the effects of university registrar practices when managing or governing (a)gender(s) through the student record. Below are the research questions used to guide my entry into this study.

1. How do trans college students describe their (a)gender(s)?
2. How do trans college students experience their (a)gender(s) when governed by the institutional logic(s) of student record systems?

In this chapter, I present the findings of my study. I used Foucault's (1991a) concept of governmentality to frame and situate the counternarratives with theory, through using Jackson and Mazzei's (2012) "Thinking with Theory" as a methodical approach. Solórzano and Yosso's (2002) critical work served as a methodological guide when I developed my participants' counternarratives. When organizing the data, I was conscious of my language choices when choosing my headings and subheadings. I used concepts from Foucault (1991a) and revisited my research questions to guide my analysis and organization of the counternarratives. The use of italics is intentional; they are used to highlight the voices of my participants.

The students in this study described their (a)gender(s) as *unsure – fluid – changing - question mark - hard to capture*. They did not describe their (a)gender(s) as the equivalent of a solid line or clear category. Rather, (a)gender(s) could be understood as a dotted line that is disrupted, constantly shifting, zig-zagging as they negotiated their environment and relationships with others by utilizing the spaces between the dots making up this metaphorical line to free

themselves to dynamically express, understand, and describe their (a)gender(s). I interpreted the move of contracting or expanding their gender expression, understanding, and description between those dotted lines as a move of resistance to having their (a)gender(s) governed as a solid/closed/boundary line dictated for them. Foucault (1997) focused on the discontinuity of the self as other, evolving, and shifting forms into a “discontinuous, shifting subject” (Jackson, 2013, p. 840). For Foucault (1997), the subject is never stable, but continually (re)constructed when in relation to practices or other relationships (family, peers, student record, etc.). The students in this study described the strains of shifting through their (a)gender(s) as they moved into encountering different practices and as they negotiated their relationships. They revealed openings and tensions between their subjectivity and their categorical self in relation to the management of their (a)gender(s) in the student record.

Introductions

I begin this chapter with the narratives of the trans and non-binary students who participated in my study. I spoke with students who identified on the margins, who were othered and marginalized, who felt unseen or unheard, or who felt that their university was not serving or seeing them. In order to (re)imagine higher education practices that can move toward being more inclusive of trans people it is vital to not just hear their stories, but to listen to the way in which existing practices manifest in harmful ways for trans people. I begin by introducing eight students who shared their voices with me as it pertained to their descriptions of their (a)gender(s): Logan, Blake, Charlie, John, Max, Avery, James, and Matt. The pronouns that I use for each of my participants are the pronouns that they provided at the time of our interview. The participants chose their pseudonyms used in this study. I center the voices of the students who participated in my interviews through using their counternarratives to highlight their

experiences. I then share the narratives from participating university administrators in footnotes, intentionally, to bring prominence to the voices of the students, centering the historically marginalized and decentering the normalized center.

Logan (they/them/theirs): Queer and Happy About It

“So, I liked being able to be part of the larger community,” Logan said to me, while they pulled on their long maxi dress. *“I guess that’s why I wanted to come here.”* When speaking, Logan looked down often, often avoiding eye contact with me during the interview. They seemed reserved, often pausing before speaking. Logan had short blonde hair cut right below their ears. The day that we spoke, they wore a long maxi dress with combat boots. We met towards the beginning of the semester during a hot day, the air-conditioning window unit hummed in the background. Logan paused and then said, *“I guess I’m queer and happy about it.”* We both laughed.

Logan was an undergraduate student at Southeast University (SU) and had just started their junior year. They served as an officer in a LGBTQ student organization at SU, and they were majoring in psychology. They came to SU from a larger city in the state and grew up in a Christian household. Logan identified as non-binary and bisexual. They found the label of non-binary the least restrictive, at the moment of our interview, and said it felt the most like them.

Logan described the moment they began questioning their (a)gender(s), saying:

I started to realize that what I thought were the way things were...wasn’t [what they were]...not feeling entirely like a girl, but I didn’t feel like I identified as a boy either. I thought I was just confused, until a friend helped me realize that there was a description for what I was feeling.

When Logan began to identify as non-binary, they started to play with their (a)gender(s) expression and presentation; they did this to try to determine what was comfortable for them. They talked about presenting as super feminine, or, *“accurate feminine.”* Once they started to

question their (a)gender(s) they explored the masculine side of presenting their (a)gender(s). Logan described how neither the feminine nor masculine felt quite right for them, “*I found like a happy medium of like I’m going to present in a way that’s how I feel comfortable day-to-day rather than an expectation...an expectation of what society wants for me.*” Logan continued to explain that the umbrella term of non-binary felt the least restrictive. They described the term as, “*somewhat accurate, but not entirely accurate.*” When pressed further, they described non-binary as:

It means that I don’t really fit any standards. I just kind of exist. I know it’s different for each person, but my experience specifically is...I don’t overly attach to gender as a concept. I think it does exist and it definitely exists for some people, but I think it’s like nothing more than a social concept and a way for people to make sense of their own identities... So, I guess I’m more comfortable just existing outside of that restriction.

Blake (ze/hir/hirs): Question Mark

Blake smiled and laughed before ze said, “*you know, like I was a weird kid and I’m not gonna say I’m not weird now.*” Ze looked at me with hir short brown hair and toothy smile. Blake was wearing an oversized hoodie, jeans, and Converse sneakers. Hir laptop was on the table with stickers all over the front. Blake pointed to the stickers on hir laptop, “*I mean you can see the array of stickers on here, there are like horror movies, foxes, conspiracy theories and I also have a bug collection, people think it’s weird.*” Blake always knew something was off and different with hir, but ze attributed it to being a, “*weird kid.*” During high school, Blake was homeschooled and began researching different identities, but ze was not sure it was “*okay*” to hold those identities until ze began spending time at the LGBTQ student lounge at Southeast University. Ze explained,

When I got to SU and when I actually got to the LGBTQ lounge and I saw all these people I was like, oh, this is okay. So I guess that’s like when I first accepted it and also kind of first realized that like, yeah, this is me.

Blake was an undergraduate student majoring in anthropology at Southeast University and was from the town where SU is located. Blake came from a conservative, Christian family and described hir family as, “*on the cusp of lower and middle class.*” Blake attended SU on loans, lived with hir parents while attending college, and had a work-study position on campus. The cost of college is something that came up frequently with Blake and interacted with the way ze presented hir (a)gender(s). Blake was exploring hir (a)gender(s) but lived in fear that hir would be homeless if ze came out to hir parents. Blake continued:

I mean I tried to oversimplify everything to my mom and was like, hey mom I'm bi[sexual] and she pretty much told me that she hates me and never wants to see me again, but I still live there, so now she acts like nothing happened and we are this nice happy family. Since then, she hasn't brought it back up, but it is still very anxiety inducing...I'm very surprised that I still have a house to live in right now.

Financial stability factored into Blake's experience with hir (a)gender(s). Blake admitted that ze does not have the money to move out on hir own and that weighed heavily in hir exploration and expression of hir (a)gender(s). Blake described:

I mean, like it sucks, because I'm not out to most of the people that I know. Well, I guess I have like two different me(s)...there's like the campus me and then there's the at home me. I'm out to most of my campus people, but like nobody in my personal life or anything because I don't want to be homeless.

Blake had begun to experiment with hir pronouns, while on-campus, and decided ze wanted to use gender neutral pronouns. Through actively changing hir pronouns Blake was able to begin to take the steps to actively affirm hir (a)gender(s), even though ze could not take other steps, such as changing hir gender expression. When Blake began working on campus, hir supervisor asked for hir name and pronouns. Later, Blake was able to order a name badge for work with hir chosen name, instead of hir legal name. When hir supervisor first asked of hir pronouns, ze felt reaffirmed, seen, and validated. Blake explained:

When I started my job one of my superiors was like, hey, what is your preferred name? What are your pronouns? And, I've never had somebody in a position of power like that do that before. I've never had any professor or anybody like that, you know, ask or anything and so it was like very surprising and interesting because it wasn't something, I had expected. It felt so good.

When asked about how ze was thinking through hir (a)gender(s) identification, Blake stated, in a drawn-out fashion, “question mark.” Ze expanded on this description further:

I as of right now am a gender fluid trans person. I haven't really nailed that last part. I'm trying to figure that out, like I can't really dress the way that I want or you know, go on hormones. I'm pretty sure I'm a trans dude, but like with boobs, because I can't bind in my current situation [living at home with hir parents] and I can't afford it. I can't really dress more how I feel or anything like that. So, like that's why it's harder for me to like really pinpoint the thing...um...so right now I'm just like something...I'm a thing.

As Blake described himself as a thing, ze laughed and smiled.

Charlie (they/them/theirs): It's Just Kind of an In-Between

Charlie, a first semester freshman at Southeast University, sat across the table from me.

They started to talk before I could begin to record the conversation. They were overflowing with information to share. Recently, Charlie had begun to use gender neutral pronouns.

You know, I haven't really changed my presentation. I look very female presenting, but they/them [pronouns] is what I've always been more comfortable with, but I've really only shared that with people that I'm very close to.

Charlie was from a larger city in the same state as SU. They described their family as conservative Christians, and Charlie graduated from a small Christian private K-12 school.

Charlie described their K-12 school as “*very small-minded and very secluded.*” They had chosen to attend SU because they hoped to find people like them. They continued:

I definitely wanted something bigger. I was not willing to go to smaller colleges. I thought I might find a little bit more people like me, like people who are trans, or people who are non-binary, people who are agender, or things like that. I thought I would find more LGBTQ people and stuff. I think I just wanted the bigger environment.

Charlie began to feel disassociated from their body at age 14 at the start of puberty when they began menstruating regularly. They frequently had episodes where they hated their body and felt like they did not belong in it. Charlie called these episodes dysphoric moments. Before the age of 14, Charlie had little to no awareness of their (a)gender(s). Charlie explained:

I just didn't notice that [gender], I was literally just living my life. Then I began menstruating at 14, which was something that I hate and still do hate. It just makes me want to crawl out of my skin. So many things happened at 14, I realized I wasn't comfortable with my chest like there were so many things that I'm like this isn't me and I started realizing in my mid-teens something was different.

Charlie began to see a gender counselor around age 14, and they began to write, journal, and explore their feelings about their (a)gender(s). They discussed this below:

I always like to write, I started writing when I was in second grade and that's something that I like. If I ever feel like I'm having a dysphoric moment, or I feel like kind of disassociated with my body I usually write. I started therapy and my therapist told me about the different terms that I could fit into, and so, that's when I kind of realized like how I felt was very different than what my body was...like I was different mentally. It just took until I was 14 or 15 when I was like, oh this isn't right for me. It just took a while.

Charlie looked to pop culture references and stated that having seen trans representation was important, as it helped them process their own feelings around their (a)gender(s). Charlie looked to YouTube star Jazz Jennings' experiences and compared Jennings' experiences to their own experiences. At times, Charlie was conflicted about their (a)gender(s) and felt that they were late to realize that something was different about them. They continued this thought:

Jazz is a trans girl and transitioned when she was like six, she just always knew and it was never a thing, her parents grew up with her being trans. It was never an issue. When you are older and trans, it's...it's kind of different because you know, your parents have grown up with you in the gender your friends have and they kind of have to get a new person if you decide to transition and even if you don't it's still kind of a new you because you're realizing all these things about yourself so it can be really difficult and in a way I'm almost jealous of the people who knew from when they were young, because they had more time.

Their conservative childhood environment influenced their late awareness of their (a)gender(s). At times, Charlie wished they did not have those feelings, and body dysmorphia was something they dealt with daily. It was more important for them to focus on their feelings towards their (a)gender(s), instead of changing their gender expression: *“I just want to get rid of these things that make me feel awful, just these things that my body does without permission before I just want to look the part.”* When I interviewed Charlie, they identified as, “agender,” and it required reflection for them to settle on a term⁵. They described it a challenging process:

You know, it was very confusing for a long time. I googled a lot – I googled trans – I googled non-binary – I took tests being like, am I trans? Am I non-binary? And I just talked to my friends that I was close with to try to figure out what was going on and that’s when I kind of found out that non-binary or agender people don’t really fit completely with trans and definitely aren’t cis either. It’s just kind of an in-between.

John (they/them/theirs): I Just Want to be Free

*I am born 1995 Southeast Asian, first girl in the family
I am boy because they wanted a son basketball in the street had to prove I wasn’t weak
I am girl because I was too masculine need to be feminine
I am confused being too man or too woman, there’re afraid of the uncertain
I am John, I just want to be free.*

John wrote the above poem during the last summer of their undergraduate studies. That is when they first came out as non-binary.

So back in undergrad...I came out, and I just like didn’t even know that there is a difference between sexuality, and gender, and gender expression until someone explained it to me. I wrote this [above poem] and it was like the first time I said it out loud. It was also a space for women of color and it felt like I could talk about it.

⁵ This was a common experience throughout the students’ narrative. They felt they needed to settle on a term and pick something that they could use to categorize themselves, even if it did not feel right. This highlights the temporary compromise to fit into the standards within society. It does not mean that the student has a static understanding of their (a)gender(s), but it is indictive of being governed to choose an identity that fits into the codified and accepted discourse of the state.

When I met John, they had just begun the second year of a graduate program in higher education at Northeast University (NU), and they were working as a graduate assistant on campus. John was a first-generation student who was born in a Southeast Asian country and immigrated to the Midwest when they were five-years-old. They lived in the same Midwest state until they moved to the Northeast to attend graduate school, because, *“it was the closest and most financial stable thing to do.”* When they came out at their undergraduate university, they had mentors who supported and mentored them through the process. This is something that John carried with them, *“I’m here at NU pursuing my master’s degree with the hope of helping students feel good about themselves, like my mentors did for me.”*

When John moved from the Midwest to attend NU they felt that they finally had the space to process their (a)gender(s) and could begin to use gender neutral pronouns.

You know, I’ve just never seen this many trans people or non-binary people where I lived back in the Midwest. Now I’m here and it felt like I could think about it [their gender] and I think it was always in the back of my mind, but something about this place made me feel more okay. So I started using they/them pronouns here and I like put it in my email [signature] and stuff.

After arriving at NU, John said they felt good, because they were seen for who they were. They enjoyed the culture of the institution and felt like it was progressive. While they felt affirmed and visible in their (a)gender(s), they were simultaneously marginalized in their racial identity. The duplicity of this experience was evident when John mentioned that people at the university would mistakenly identify John as being the same person as another NU student; this other student was a friend of John’s, also identified as Asian American, and John and this friend would often be around the same people and in the same physical spaces on-campus.

One of the worst things that have happened to me, even in my own department, is that people mix me and someone else up. We’re like clearly two different people and that happened during my first year here and continues. That happens at work, in the classroom, and everywhere I went with this person, who is also in my cohort and has the

same job as me, so we are always together, but people mix us up. Those are the moments where I feel the most not seen because someone saw me as someone else.

John continued this line of thought when they connected their experiences with their

(a)gender(s).

I feel uncomfortable trying to explain how I really feel about my gender because I feel like people either...they don't believe me or they don't know what I'm talking about because I feel differently inside, but I also feel differently outside and I'm still trying to get ahold of that, but I haven't really found anyone who looks like me to talk to about it. I'll be uncomfortable when I have to talk about my gender and sexual identity with a person who is White, and then I can't talk about my racial identity because I feel they don't really understand, or I just have to talk about being a person of color, but not my gender or sexual identity.

As John progressed through their graduate program and processed their experiences on campus and in their cohort, they realized a space did not exist on-campus where the intersections of their (a)gender(s) and racial identities were valued and acknowledged. John completed an internship in the LGBTQ center at NU, and in this center, they experienced marginalization because of their race. They recounted,

So, at the LGBTQ center here all the staff are White, so no one can hold a QTPOC [Queer Trans People of Color] space and then at the Center for Students of Color, there isn't a queer or trans person. There hasn't been a concrete program just for like queer and trans people of color. I just completed my internship at the LGBTQ center, and I felt not seen or understood. People were ignoring me and the other intern who was also a queer and trans person of color, so that's a weird spot.

When we met, John had just spent a year in counseling to make sense of their feelings about their race, ethnicity, (a)gender(s), and sexuality. They thought that what they were feeling was related to being, “lesbian.” When they wrote the poem about their (a)gender(s), John felt they finally had the words to express what they were feeling; however, they experienced uncertainty because of the specific relationship. John continued,

I kind of felt like I had words to describe how I felt with gender identity and expression and I started to open up and talk about my gender in this way, but then I stopped talking about it. My ex-partner said that they didn't want to go out with someone who is

trans...so, I would talk about it a little bit, and then I felt bad about that and I didn't know it at the time, but that statement was like transphobic. I didn't think about it, because it was my first queer relationship and I never thought I would be in one.

John's experiences in that relationship caused them to pause and temporarily stop exploring their (a)gender(s). Yet, with the help of a supportive person from their academic department, who was also trans, John sought out counseling. It was this point when John began the early process of transitioning.

I was feeling bad about transitioning here overall because it just felt kind of lonely, but when I would go to counseling, I would talk about that it felt different or that I wanted to try to even dress differently. My counselor let me know there was literally no right answer and however I felt was okay and...um...I never heard that about my gender.

After they learned about trans students, in their graduate program, John felt reaffirmed in their (a)gender(s) and their transition. John related,

The student population we focused on was trans students and I don't know, it just like felt good to read about other people who have felt the same as me and I think that helps a lot to just read and be affirmed. I just felt more...like I could try different things with my hair and I also started taking T [testosterone] and stuff so kind of like that progression for the past year has felt really good. I just didn't have the words for how I felt, and I think I thought that I was already something, but it was a separate thing from my sexuality.

John had recently come out as non-binary to their family. They did not want to hold back from telling their family about their (a)gender(s). John experienced the relief of coming out with their sexual identity a few years before they came out as non-binary. John explained,

I think from the first time from coming out with my sexuality it took a while and I was just like tired of waiting and I didn't want to do the same thing with my gender...just waiting for my parents to feel okay or something, just because, I don't know, they'll feel okay whenever they do. I felt like I didn't want to do it again after feeling how good it felt to come out [with their sexuality]. I feel fine about it because I feel better than like holding back.

Max (they/them/theirs): It's This, What I Am

When I met Max, they were just beginning their sophomore year at Southeast University. Max was raised in a religious environment where there were clear gender roles between men and

women. They are from a small town in the Southeast, in a different state than SU. Max knew they did not want to stay in their own state for college and wanted to experience something new: *“Yeah, I always knew I wasn’t going to go to college in my state. I kind of hate it [their home state]. It’s not fantastic.”* Max had chosen to attend SU because of the scholarship package they were awarded, as well as that SU was far away from their home state. Max had seen the decision to attend SU as an opportunity for something new: *“I’ve always been more adventurous than other people in my family. I just want to travel and experience adventure.”*

Max identified as agender, and by the end of the eighth grade knew that they did not feel like a girl.

Basically, I kind of always knew that I didn’t...well...I never comprehended gender roles as a being. I remember when I was in seventh or eighth grade, I really wanted to be a grim reaper for Halloween and my mom said no, that’s a boy’s costume and I like didn’t get it. What’s the problem? It’s just a Halloween costume!

Max had never experienced (a)gender(s) or identified with a specific (a)gender(s). They explored other possibilities, but then realized they did not like to be gendered at all. Max continued,

I’ve never really experienced gender differences for me personally, it just never made sense to me. When I realized that non-binary was a thing I thought...huh...that makes a lot of sense. So, basically it kind of started out then. It was a slow transition into how I identify now. I thought maybe I’m gender fluid, but then eventually I realized, I’m not even that. I just don’t like being gendered at all. That revelation came about halfway through my freshman year and I said, I’m dropping it, it’s not even a fluid thing. It’s this (motions to their body), what I am.

Avery (they/them/theirs): I’d be Supported

“You know, I’ve found that I think differently than other folks,” Avery stated. They proceeded to laugh and brush their short black and blue hair out of their face, before they continued, *“when I was looking at [academic] programs I wanted to be intellectually challenged, I wanted to go someplace new.”* Avery was a second-year doctoral student at Midwest University (MU) studying higher education administration. They were originally from the Southeast and

described their family and upbringing as middle-class. They did not move out of the state where they were from until they completed their undergraduate degree. Avery had come to MU after working in higher education full-time in an LGBTQ center. When they had considered doctoral programs, feeling they would be supported in their trans identity was important to them. Avery explained,

I knew that faculty and staff worked to do some more trans inclusive things for Midwest University. So, it was important to know that I would be present and I'd be very supported. I think I would have been supported no matter where I went, but to know that there was sort of this policy layer of support was really helpful.

Avery identified as genderqueer and gay. They had been out in their (a)gender(s) for five years, but they were not out to their parents as genderqueer. Avery had begun to feel different around age ten; however, they did not fully understand or have the terminology to describe what they were experiencing at such a young age.

I think I had awareness as young as like ten. I didn't have the language until probably college. I'll never forget when I was twelve or thirteen I was standing in my house and I was holding my hand in a certain way, my wrist was limp, and my mom was like, oh boys don't do that straighten out your wrist. Then she continued and said, well gay guys do that and I was like okay.

For Avery, sexuality and (a)gender(s) were conflated until they attended their undergraduate university; it was then that they began to understand the differences between (a)gender(s) and sexuality, “*what I learned later in college was like all of these are about gender more than sexuality, but they had become conflated for so long. I didn't know how to tease them apart.*”

By attending MU, Avery experienced their fourth higher education campus, and they were continuing to work toward educating higher education professionals and advocating for underrepresented students, through their practice and research. They had advised student activists and worked to try to push their campus environments to be more inclusive.

So, one of my big life philosophies is that no one should have to come to an understanding on my terms, but I'll go on their terms to make them understand. I often think about what is this person going to be mostly moved by and then how do I connect what I'm trying to accomplish to that movement.

James (they/them/theirs): It was Interesting

I met James in the fall, at the start of their first semester at Midwest University as a junior transfer student. James was wearing a MU black t-shirt, jeans, and Converse sneakers. James had a beard and wore their long, crimped hair loose which passed well below their shoulders. We sat in a study room in the middle of the library, glass windows around us, and a white board on the wall with math problems the last group did not erase. "I didn't reserve this room, are we okay to be here?" I asked James, "*yeah, don't worry about it they aren't strict here, it's available.*" We were both sweating from walking around campus on an unseasonably hot day. I felt the need to address the hotness of the room to cut through the silence, "I'm so sorry, I feel like I am sweating up a storm here." James laughed and began to pull their hair back in a ponytail. I asked James about the culture at MU and to describe their experiences on campus. James paused and we sat in a long silence before they began:

Yeah, so I get this impression that a lot of state universities, but Midwest University specifically, I get the like energy from here that it's sort of inclusive on the outside or likes to project an image of inclusivity, but the campus is still very much for like white, cis people.

James was from the same state as MU and grew up in a communal living colony close to campus. They were a creative writing major and had transferred from a private school in another Midwest state. When James was a first-year student in high school they had begun to feel that they did not identify as male or female, but they did not have the language to work through how they were feeling. They recounted,

I had the sort of feeling that I wasn't exactly like male or female, but I didn't like know how to place that because I thought that if you weren't one thing then you had to be a different thing and I didn't really have a word for it until I was like maybe sixteen.

While in high school, James had come out as agender. They mentioned that the lack of support from their cis-women friends surprised them. James explained,

You know, I was a junior in high school when I came out as agender, which was interesting. I didn't get a lot of support from cis women, which was interesting because I got a lot of support from like cis male classmates, but not necessarily the cis women that I'd like known my whole life. It was interesting because I would have expected like other gender minorities like women and like binary trans people to sort of relate to that. I guess I think most people kind of like perceive me as like, oh a trans boy, I suppose because they didn't quite understand the nature of what it means to be non-binary, so...it was interesting.

James mentioned that at times it is exhausting to be continually misgendered. They mentioned that it has happened frequently because of the way they present their (a)gender(s), and they were uncertain how to address it. James discussed their gender presentation below.

I keep my hair growing out, like I used to shave it and it would make me feel like I was more masculine. So then I was less likely to be called a she and I didn't mind being called a he, so I was like I'd rather be called a he than a she even though I'm a they, just because it was like what I was most comfortable with...it's usually just a chore...like it's expected and usually makes me feel kind of vaguely nauseous, but I don't know what to say...it's not easy to get over.

Matt (he/him/his): I Want to be a Boy

Matt looked up at me and sighed, “*ugh...my high school is next to a tobacco farm...very Southern...a lot of Trump flags, a lot of confederate flags...ah...that's why I came here. I had to get out.*” Matt was a graduate student in the higher education administration program at Northeast University (NU). When we met, he was working full-time for NU and he had previously attended NU as an undergraduate student. He transitioned during his sophomore year and had come out as a trans man. He had a passion for advocating for trans inclusion in higher

education institutions and helping other trans students to navigate the system and campus at NU.

Matt continued,

I do a lot of community work and workshops on trans issues, navigating systems and creating safe spaces and classrooms particularly in higher ed on trans issues. I usually work closely with the LGBTQ center on campus and collaborate on ways to get systems to work better and push for administrative change.

Matt could not recall a specific moment where he knew that he was trans, but he always knew he felt like a boy. In kindergarten, Matt realized that he was not a boy, according to others' definitions and perceptions, and in that moment, he was devastated and confused.

I kind of had the opposite story of a lot of people that I hear of like well this is when I knew I was a boy. In preschool or kindergarten, I had a moment when I realized I always just thought that I was a boy...and then like realizing with this rude awakening that I wasn't. As I got older I continued to ask questions and try to process it like...I'm not a boy but I like girls and...um...I want to be a boy...what does that mean?

As Matt grew older, he explored his feelings surrounding his sexuality and (a)gender(s). His parents' divorce affected his eagerness and ability to come out to them. Matt's mother married a woman, and at that time, he felt he could not come out to his parents. When his mother remarried, he became involved in the LGBTQ community and carried around guilt about his sexual identity.

When my parents divorced my mom ended up marrying a woman, so then I had two moms and was really involved in the queer community um...and was like okay I must be gay - but I don't want to tell anybody - but I don't want them to think it's their fault. So, I didn't come out until the end of high school.

When Matt met his first trans person in high school, he said he instantly knew that he also was trans. However, he still struggled with his feelings surrounding his (a)gender(s). Even though Matt was out in his sexual identity, he still felt like he was hiding.

Even though I'd been dating girls in school...um...it still felt so wrong. I didn't know a trans person until my sophomore year of high school, and then I was like oh my god that's a thing...that's me - but I can't do that.

Matt was a first-generation student and attending college was a big milestone for him and his family. Not disappointing his parents was something that was always on his mind: “*you know I’m a first-generation college student so going away was like a really big deal.*” However, attending an institution that was so far from his hometown allowed for the space for him to explore his (a)gender(s).

It’s a solid 12-hour drive so it wasn’t like I could go home on the weekend, which also meant my family wasn’t visiting me on the weekends. It gave me a lot of space to explore gender.

In addition to the space away from his family, Matt also attributed his relationships with other trans people at NU as influential to his coming out process.

During my first year of college at NU, I met a lot of trans people. So through meeting trans people and asking myself what could that mean and like asking what those [being trans] possibilities look like help me through that transition.

At the start of his sophomore year, Matt had come back to NU and began his transition by using a different name and pronouns. He spent the previous semester using a different name and pronouns online to explore his and others’ reaction and feelings to his (a)gender(s).

I started coming out online during the second semester of my first year, using a different name and different pronouns with people I didn’t know in real life, it was like a safe way to try it, and it just felt good. Right before I came back to school before my sophomore year, I told my parents. Then I made them tell everybody else because I didn’t want to deal with it.

When Matt returned to campus, he had begun the social and medical process of transitioning.

As soon as I got back to campus, I started my social transition. This is when I first used the name and pronoun system, which made it easier, but not perfect...then I started hormones soon into the semester and navigated student health and those systems as well...and ah...that’s kind of how I ended up here.

A Pause

Before continuing with the findings of this study, I wanted to pause and discuss the organization of the rest of this chapter. When I approached the organization of this chapter, I

intentionally centered the counternarratives of the students who shared their experiences and voices with me. I found their stories compelling, complex, moving, and haunting. Their words stayed with me as I interviewed, transcribed, and enmeshed myself in the data from this study. As I turned back and forth from the administrators' and students' transcripts, a complex web of connections and tensions began to materialize in my understandings of the data.

Within my data analyses, I move beyond traditionally accepted normalized qualitative presentation of my data, where the voice is, "heard, recorded, coded, and categorized as normal and containable data" (Jackson & Mazzei, 2009, p. 4). Through that process, I would be enacting my own governing practices on my participants of my study—putting measurable codes and themes on their own experiences. Through using Foucault's theories, I wanted to focus on the difference, or tensions, and think through how we, "produce different knowledge and produce knowledge differently" (St. Pierre, 2000, p. 27).

With this in mind, I chose to intentionally center and share the voices of the students. While working with the data, I was aware of tensions between the students' counternarratives and the higher education administrators' narratives. I recognized connections and tensions that complicated my understanding and demonstrated the complex relationship of institutional practices on the governing of (a)gender(s) in the student record. I have organized the rest of this chapter to frame the counternarratives and narratives in alignment with the concepts of Foucault's (1991a; 1991b; 1997) governmentality, the self, and subjectivities. I have also intentionally challenged the traditional structure of narrative inquiry by including the administrators' voices as footnotes. The students' voices are centered, which simultaneously pushes the administrators' voices to the margins; this is an intentional move of centering the marginalized.

The Administrators

In this section, I begin with a brief introduction to the administrators' voices, which challenge and complicate the understandings and experiences of the students. Next, I move into a discussion on navigating systems and subjectivities, specifically the themes of creating the (in)dividual, visibility, and transparency, and administration apathy and student information systems. I conclude with a summary of the findings.

Jim (he/him/his). Jim was the University Registrar at Southeast University for four years when I first interviewed him. Before becoming the University Registrar at Southeast University, he managed the technology and systems area in the Registrar's Office at SU. Jim had experience at two other higher education institutions, and he worked as a consultant for a student information system (SIS) vendor for ten years. Jim believed that the Registrar's Office was the, "*interpreter of academic policy and the enforcer of academic policy.*" Jim further believed that people working in the registrar's role had to have a "*servant's heart to do a good job in the registrar's business,*" because of the large population the office serves (alumni, students, faculty, staff, etc.).

Chelsea (she/her/hers). When I met Chelsea at Northeast University, she was beginning her second year as the University Registrar. She had spent her entire career at Northeast University. Chelsea valued implementing necessary change and incorporating input from others into any change process. Chelsea discussed her value of implementing change: "*change is hard, but I feel that trying to overcome some of the obstacles and ensuring that we can make things easier for people to either adapt a new process or policy.*" Chelsea regularly met with faculty, staff, and students at NU to, "*get a perspective from someone else's view point.*"

Jerry (he/him/his). When I first interviewed Jerry, he had been the University Registrar at Midwest University for several years. Prior to this role, he worked at another higher education institution in the Midwest to help guide, them through a SIS conversion, and with certifying Veteran's student financial aid. He discussed his experiences working in higher education during the Vietnam era when he recalled the student protest that occurred at his institution. Jerry believed that the Registrar's Office should be, "*here for the students,*" and to serve the colleges and schools within the University.

Tracy (she/her/hers). Tracy was the Vice President of Enrollment Management at Northeast University, when I first interviewed her. She came from a large flagship, Midwest institution before moving to Northeast University. Tracy saw her role within the institution, "*to educate and inform leadership and the rest of campus about today's student.*"

Henry (he/him/his). When I interviewed Henry, he was beginning his third year as University President at Midwest University. He came to MU from the Northeast, where he had experience working for private corporate organizations before working in higher education. He brought his business mindset to his role as President of MU. He described his role as first needing to help the campus of MU, "*first and foremost we're here to help this campus. We've got a lot of issues, but also a lot of opportunities.*" Henry mentioned one of his biggest values he brought to his practice is diversity and inclusion, "*I believe in humanity...there are a lot of differences, but in the end we all have to be brought together.*"

Grace (she/her/hers). When I interviewed Grace, she was married to Henry and actively involved on the campus of Midwest University. She participated in social justice events on the campus and was a local attorney. She frequently assisted trans students regarding legal questions about changing their federal and state documentation. For Grace, social justice and human rights

causes were points of passion. She said, “*its human rights. They are all the same and we have not perfected that yet, so we better keep working at it.*”

Navigating Systems and Subjectivities

In interviews with the participants, the students described their difficulty navigating systems, or processes both inside and outside of higher education, specifically in relation to their (a)gender(s). In this section, I use the word *systems* to describe the institutional practices and systems the students navigated through as they negotiated their higher education campuses. Similar to the literature in higher education (Catalano, 2015; Pitcher et al., 2017; Rankin et al., 2010; Woodford et al., 2012) the participants in my study experienced harassment and were continually misgendered. They felt that they had to justify their (a)gender(s) to faculty, staff, and peers, and they experienced confusion with the student information system’s collection of their (a)gender(s), pronouns, and chosen name. They described the confusion of the steps they needed to take to change their information in their student records (similar to the findings in Beemyn & Brauer, 2015; Marine & Catalano, 2014; Seelman, 2014) and that their universities made them jump through unnecessary hoops. However, they also shared positive experiences with university faculty and staff; in some cases, they felt affirmed in their (a)gender(s) because of positive interactions where their pronouns were used correctly (similar to the findings in Linley et al., 2017) or because the institution separated sex and (a)gender(s) on their admissions application.

In this section, I use Foucault’s (1991b) concept of governmentality to frame the students’ narratives beginning with creating the (in)dividual and then move into the narratives of transparency. Finally, I move towards narratives involving administration apathy and conclude with a discussion of the pronoun and chosen name systems. In the next section, I use the

language that the institutions use in their student information system when referring to gender marker information. I recognize that the student information systems and institutions are further conflating sex and (a)gender(s) through using male/female as the data points for collecting gender marker information. However, in the interest in representing the current state of student information systems I intentionally use the language presently utilized in these student information systems.

Creating the (In)Dividual – Data Points

Matt described the process of changing his gender marker in the student record system from female to male when he returned back to Northeast University, after he transitioned the summer before. He described how he would carry around a packet of papers that consisted of documentation he collected from counselors, doctors, judges, lawyers, and federal and state personnel. That packet was his justification to administrators at NU for his categorical self—the discontinuity of his (a)gender(s) shifting from the F (female) checkbox to the M (male) checkbox in his student record.

Once I legally changed my name and gender with my home state, coming back [to Northeast University] was a little bit more complicated and I kind of blacked out of the whole process because I was so angry that I had to do it. I was like ‘I’ve already spent hundreds of dollars to do this. I’ve gone to court, I’ve gone to social security, and to the DMV and like every goddamn place you can go’ ...I went and spent money for it and came back [to NU] and I was like ‘you can’t just take this paper and just do it?!’ But I had to make a packet of all the things that I did and say like when I did it [changed documentation] and where I did it and give them copies of all the information that they needed...just having to do that process over and over again was exhausting and I was like ‘dude just believe me like here...here.’

The process of changing his gender marker required Matt to allow himself to be governed and categorized. The practices of NU required Matt to standardize his (a)gender(s) to fit the logic of (a)gender(s) being a binary (e.g. male/female). Matt viewed himself as a man, and having male on his student record was an acceptable way for him to identify. This concept becomes more

complex as some trans students do not see themselves on a binary, yet they are being governed by binary and genderist systems in higher education (Beauchamp, 2019). Through governing practices, the student, the administrator, and the institutional practices are governed and surveilled through federal regulations and guidelines (Foucault, 1991b). The harmful effects of Matt's experiences relate to the governing of student data and the roll of the university registrar. This is highlighted in Jim's narrative; he discussed the role of governance in his responsibilities of his practice.⁶

The administrator must follow federal guidelines to be in compliance with federal practices, which means reporting sex on a binary (female or male). In turn, the student is governed through institutional practices, which are in part informed by federal practices. Students are turned into a static data point through their academic record. They are able to be visible to the institution that governs the behaviors and identities that are within the accepted norm of the institution. Students' data is thus a legal practice for the university and is therefore part of the dominant legal discourse (Beauchamp, 2019). The effect of this discourse on practices is that the legal concerns of the university are prioritized ahead of the concerns of individual students, such is the case when Jim prioritizes legal concerns through the practices he implements. These are systems that are developed through a logic that is not cognizant of a complex understanding of (a)gender(s) (e.g. the solid line definition of [a]gender[s]) or is at least designed with the priority goal being to develop categories that are closed and not open (e.g.

⁶ *When it comes to academic records a lot of time people don't understand how serious they are, but you know I've been signing subpoenas or responding to them for twenty-five plus years...federal subpoenas, state subpoenas every week at SU. There's a lot of legal issues involved in housing academic records. Also, large sections of our data is considered permanent. So we have to be concerned about how we're storing it, how we reproduce it, how we can track it.*

either/or versus open-ended), and that is where the point of tension manifests into real-life consequences for these students who understand and experience (a)gender(s) as a dotted line (Deleuze, 1992).

The standardizing and normalizing processes required of trans students to gather a packet of documentation to justify their (a)gender(s) is something multiple students discussed. For instance, Charlie stated:

So...when you apply to college you have to choose male or female...and if I transition during [college] would I have to go back and change my application? Like...there are just a lot of hoops I feel like trans people do have to jump through in the academic world, this state, and just kind of like in general. It can be especially humiliating for trans people. I've considered transitioning for myself and that I think would be difficult to go through. You know it can just be really humiliating and really embarrassing and it can just like make more hoops for you to jump through as a student and as a trans student or non-binary student because it just kind of separates you a little bit...makes you feel other...which is never a good thing to experience. If I transition in the future, so much goes into that...whether it's like gender therapy and getting your letters [from your doctor and counselor to transition] or whether it's your insurance plan. There's so much that goes into that, that I didn't know, like policies and money and health insurance plans and letters that you have to get.

Charlie discussed the normalizing practices and steps – or hoops, that trans people have to negotiate in order to become visible. These hoops, or institutional practices, are steps the dominant group uses to control (a)gender(s) and determine that trans people go through the normalizing processes of standardizing their (a)gender(s) to fit within the codified binary of male/female (Foucault, 1991b; 1991c).

Collecting identity information through student information systems is challenging when they do not encompass the dynamic or fluidity of shifting subjectivities. Jim's narrative highlights the control and governing of normalizing identity in the student record. Part of Jim's practice includes determining how a student is perceived by another institutional actor (advisor,

faculty, etc.); he discussed this further.⁷ The nature of recording identity information, like (a)gender(s), through a coded student information system, will always be limited and closed. By the nature of the system, it is closed and does not allow for an ongoing conversation or explanation of the value through the inclusion of qualifiers. The value, chosen by the student, requires a false presentation of reality as being concrete or final in their subjectivity (Foucault, 1997). Therefore, without a more detailed conversation, the student would choose from a set of predefined codes built in the system, to make them visible in a predetermined way.

Similar to Charlie, Avery discussed filling out the admissions application for Midwest University and the complex feelings they had when choosing what optional information to complete. Avery recounted,

It was interesting and both weird and really nice to be asked the information. So when I filled out the application, I filled out gender information and pronoun information. I think they asked me about my sexuality, but I just don't know. I don't remember if that part happened, but it was meaningful and to know that I can go in at any time and change it in the systems works in such a way that things would be updated automatically was really cool.

For Avery, being able to choose how to identify as an (in)dividual was meaningful and impactful for them. Charlie wanted other options on the admissions application at SU and recognized the potential impact for their (a)gender(s) to be recognized as another option, outside of the binary. Ultimately, both Avery and Charlie wanted to be visible to their universities.

Visibility

⁷ *Now, if we [the registrar's office] want to take that information and we want to convey something to the recipient of that information so they will know how to interact with that student the way the student wants to be perceived, that's different. So now, we would be collecting information that the student wants to provide. We're not really trying to collect it we would be trying to set up means for collecting data that the student wants to submit so that those on the receiving end understand that student better.*

In the disciplinary and normalizing environment of higher education, trans students viewed their student record as incongruent and not representing how they viewed themselves. Oftentimes, they questioned their visibility in these structures. As their understanding/awareness of their (a)gender(s) changed and was (re)constructed, their student record was a particular point of discontinuity for them. In alignment with the literature in higher education, the students felt unseen by their universities; so, they pondered ways their universities could change practices to make them visible. Charlie shared this thought:

In the application it is just male/female and there's no other option for people who if you were someone who is planning on transitioning in college having, you know, a third option. I mean if you did want to list as non-binary or if you want to have other options it would help students transition. Also, you know being more accessible to just be able to say like hey this might need to change now in the system.

Charlie expressed the need for (a)gender(s) to be collected in the admissions process or perhaps at a later point, asserting this would allow for the student record to serve as a truthful representation of trans students, and would therefore allow for trans students to be visible to their universities. Through utilizing statistical information (student records), a university's student population is constructed and described (Baez, 2014; Foucault, 1991b). Institutions operate under a specific logic to define what is considered real, and it is through this process that citizens are represented in the form of static data (Baez, 2014). Through defining who (in)dividuals are, institutions are able to surveil and control the population (Doherty, 2007).

For university registrars, there is a point of tension between collecting data for a purpose and collecting data just to collect the information. In his narrative, Jim reflected on his views of gathering (a)gender(s) information in the registrar's office and problematizing the decision

behind when and how that information is gathered.⁸ Further he complicates the importance of knowing the purpose for collecting identifying information. Jim is only concerned about defining the population (gender markers) through the required federal reporting mechanisms. Jim discussed his role as the university registrar and saw his practice as not only helping students define themselves through statistics (within the student record), but also how they are visible to specific people who are receiving the data. Here, Jim is both helping the students govern themselves and also governing them through producing specific forms of their subjectification. The practices of having predetermined and limited categories in the student record helps the state and higher education institutions normalize and identify the student population, but these practices simultaneously have harmful effects on students who identify outside the narrow margins dictated by such limited categories (Beauchamp, 2019; Foucault, 1991b).

Jim's narrative complicates the question of who should be defining the student population. Charlie was operating through the governing knowledge of wanting to be categorized, even if the third option did not fully align with how students understood their (a)gender(s). Charlie wanted to be normalized through the student record. Therefore, Jim becomes an actor in the government and normalizing of students' (a)gender(s) by controlling the reporting measures of (a)gender(s) (Baez, 2014).

⁸ *For sex, I have male and female for IPEDS reporting, but I'm not concerned about the collective under gender as a data point. From my standpoint I don't have any use for that data [gender information]. Now, institutional research might you know, just to get a better handle on the population to understand the overall population. I could see that occurring, but you know, if we want to have some broader understanding of our student population about the divergent gender identities and so forth my standpoint is that's not my purpose, that's not my role. My role is to help the student define their interaction or how they're perceived by the recipient of that data. That's the way I look at it*

Similar to Charlie, John also mentioned wanting trans students to be visible as a data point in higher education; John's hope was that more information could help better describe the population of students in higher education. They worked on a research project for one of their classes and tried to gather information and data on trans students at NU. John recounted,

One of my projects for a while has been to like standardize that [gender data] or like everyone use the same language or um...ask the question. You know, because we don't really collect gender or sexual identity, it's not federally mandated, like race. Right now where the institution is asking is like in admissions there is a separate form that you can do to like put your gender identity, but you don't have to fill it out, but I got the list of the number of people who did as part of my internship, but the problem was like...who is going to clean this up? Is it admissions or is it the LGBTQ center? Then I also worked with Institutional Research and they collect gender identity through the NSSE [National Survey of Student Engagement]. Then, there was this six-week survey that the first-year students take, but that's through the Office of Student Affairs or the Dean of Students or something. So like, different people are asking it and all the people are asking it in different ways...so it's like a different vocabulary. There is no one place you can like count the number of queer and trans students.

John uses the same logic that is used by the state as a rationale for collecting information, managing its data, and creating the (in)dividual as a data point (Deleuze, 1992). University registrars are charged both with collecting data and reporting data. The role of the university registrar is directly related to governmentality. In Jim's narrative⁹, he is an active participant and through his practices he directs the behavior of how the students report their data and abides by the dominant discourse of the State through reporting this data in accepted ways (Baez, 2014; Foucault, 1991b).

⁹ *In IPEDS reporting we have sex: male, female, and not reported and we still have to report to the federal government statistics and so you still have to collect that and it's self-reported by the applicant coming in, so would we verify anything? We wouldn't its nonsensical! I say that because this is a data element. We report it in summary form to the Department of Ed and we might use it for summary statistical data, but in and of itself, I've never had an application for that data and it never meant anything other than I needed it for summary statistical reporting.*

The act of being visible to institutions, through a set data points, allows for the (in)dividualization and massification effects on students. Through this massification, there are normalizing effects across the population. This statistical information can be used to generate knowledge about a particular type of student or person (Baez, 2014). By wanting their data to be normalized, John and Charlie were self-governing and therefore accepting the disciplinary practices of the State and institution. In turn, by understanding the population through federal reporting measures (as seen in Jim's narrative), normalizing power is enacted. These normalizing and disciplinary practices create effects where the needs of the (in)dividual student are surpassed in the interest/prioritization of the greater population. The effect of these practices on trans students is that they are deemed non-normalized and therefore they have to justify their existence (Beauchamp, 2019).

John continued questioning the system at NU and questioned their supervisor about the reasons for not collecting (a)gender(s) data:

So, I asked my supervisor, I was like, 'hey why can't we just add it on?' Cause I mean we use the common app or whatever. The he was like, 'because there are going to be some folks who might think that it might be used against them in some way.' So, then I was like...what if we collect it after admissions? Then, I got the same answer. I mean I get it, but I want to see it in the admissions process so we can see how many trans students are applying and who are actually coming [to NU]. I mean I think they would just have to build like a new code or something.

Through wanting to be visible to the university administration at NU, John demonstrates an unconscious acceptance of the effects of governmentality (Baez, 2014; Foucault, 1991b). John wanted to be seen by the university in their (a)gender(s); so, John allowed their self to be governed. From an admissions perspective, it is challenging to ask for specific data on the

admissions application; Tracy discussed this issue.¹⁰ In Tracy's narrative, her admissions practices demonstrate a desire to limit the collection of student data to only be collected if it has a meaningful purpose (i.e. not collecting data for the sake of collecting). This could be interpreted as a move to resist the harmful effects of a dominant discourse that would encourage collecting as much identifying information as possible on students.

Avery, James, and Blake not only wanted (a)gender(s) information to be collected at their universities, they also wanted sex and (a)gender(s) to be distinctly separate data points in their student record. Avery argued,

I think both sex and gender information should be collected because for institutions that have...like a health services component that will pull information from the system, but I think institutional researchers really just need to look at gender and I'm not sure why they would study sex.

Like John, Avery wanted information to be collected so that institutional researchers would be able to look at (a)gender(s) as a data point. Avery wanted the distinction between sex and (a)gender(s) to be collected and recognized. John and Avery wanted their information to be collected and visible; they wanted that information to be used to research and inform institutional practices for trans students, which is an acceptance of being governed (Baez, 2014; Doherty, 2007).

¹⁰ *There's a lot of ethics that come into play as far as who you recruit to your institution...um...I think really trying to take out biases and the way you review students so you're fair and those bias can be big or small, you know? When a student is applying for admission, we don't ask on the application [gender] for lots of reasons. Our philosophy is you don't ask anything on the admissions application that you are not going to use in the admissions process. We don't ask sexual orientation, religion, or anything like that because that's not going to be a factor in whether or not they are admitted.*

For James, it was validating that Midwest University separated sex and (a)gender(s) on the admissions application. Also, they felt that MU would provide resources for trans students, because the institution recognized this distinction. James described,

It's reassuring once again just to know that your university sort of supports the idea that gender and sex are separate entities and that they support that and support you...It gets you thinking that maybe they will offer other resources to you. Like, listen we know that this is what your state identification says what you are, but like you do you, you have the freedom to disclose it and not have to reduce yourself to something that doesn't work.

James brought up a connection between MU's data collection process (admissions application) and the institution's values. James' desire to be visible by MU led to his self-governing and desire to be considered within the normalized population (Baez, 2014; Beauchamp, 2019).

While separating sex and (a)gender(s) were important to Blake, ze was concerned with offering a third option on sex for intersex people:

I think it's important to make a distinction between sex and gender because they're different. I think if it's on things that people look at then they start to you know get the difference and I don't think there's a third option for intersex? But it's important to have you know, like those three sexes and you know at least umbrella terms for gender identities because if you had every single identity ever you're gonna have a long list...so I think there needs to be a line drawn, including you know, at least to begin with the main ones like...I identify as a male or female or intersex or trans man or trans woman or non-binary, you know like super basic.

In addition to Blake's concerns, Avery and James discussed the need for sex to be separate from (a)gender(s), they wanted themselves not only to be recorded just as a data point in their student record, but, for their data to be recorded and for them to be visible in a specific way. Blake brought up an interesting point about universities having intersex as an option for sex and then noted the difficulty of capturing and including the umbrella of terms used for (a)gender(s). In each narrative, students are visible to their universities through data points—data points used to create the (in)dividual. Moving towards collecting (a)gender(s) information beyond the binary normalizes, standardizes, and makes trans and non-binary students visible to various institutions

(Beauchamp, 2019; Deleuze, 1992). Both John and Charlie wanted to be visible to their institution, in turn allowing themselves to be governed and tracked by their institutions.

Matt and Avery had a more cautious and skeptical process than Charlie and John. Matt was skeptical about just becoming a data point or check box for Northeast University. Matt recalled,

I would like it to be completely confidential and only in places that are used due to financial services needing your legal sex to match up all of your federal documents, which I think is a bullshit process anyway, but they need it, student health needs it, and otherwise no one needs to see sex. I mean, I'm a person that doesn't necessary believe that reporting measures based on sex or gender means anything...like why does it matter? Why do you need to report it? Like what students receive from the FAFSA [Free Application for Federal Student Aid] based on gender...unless the federal government would look at that data and do something to shift...if like cis men were getting a lot more financially than cis women based on the M or F in a box. I mean if they are going to do something about it then here, take my data! Also, why collect more information that you need, if you are not going to do anything with it, and just serves to make a lot of people uncomfortable in the process? If nothing is going to be done with that information. Also, don't forget that trans students are already part of that group that you reported on...um...but if you're reporting data to do something about it, then sure it should be altered to be inclusive of those experiences and those student narratives. I just rarely believe that anything is going to be done about it.

Matt recognized his university's obligations and need to align his sex information with his federal documentation because of federal financial aid reporting. However, Matt thought that in regard to (a)gender(s) information, students, “*should just get to pick and be able to change at any time.*” Matt demonstrated a cautiousness to the collection of his data and a distrust of his university. Interestingly he wanted his data to be collected if it was going to be used for advocacy and change.

There is tension between both Matt's experiences and Jim's approach to his practice.

Questioning the logic of collecting pronoun, chosen name, gender, and sex information was something that Jim also struggled with at SU. Jim brought a cautiousness to both collecting and

distributing certain identity data.¹¹ Even though Jim questioned the practice of collecting student information and brought a cautious approach to his practice, most students were unaware of these complexities that Jim faces in his role. He is both being governed and an actor of governmentality through collecting the student data. He begins to pause and question his practice exposing the logic systems of governmentality while also dictating the way students can be seen to other areas of the University (Baez, 2014, Dougherty, 2007; Foucault 1991c).

Similar to Matt, Avery worried about where their (a)gender(s) information would be stored and who would have access to the data. At Midwest University, sex and (a)gender(s) are separated in the admissions application and there are several (a)gender(s) options collected, as well as sex beyond the binary of male/female. Avery discussed their experiences,

I think when I was first applying for admission I was very curious ...like who has access to this data and how do I control the access? At my previous institution we implemented a name policy and the chosen name was changed everywhere, including mail sent home and the person didn't know and essentially the person was outed to their family. So for me, there were questions about like, well who can and cannot see this information? I mean, can one of my professors see this? Then what does that mean? What do they do with that information?

Avery pointed to an experience at his previous institution where a student was outed as trans to their family. This cautiousness for freely providing their (a)gender(s) information highlights the need for institutional practices to be transparent when data is collected; students should know how this information is being used and why it is being collected. For the students in this study, their subjectivities constantly shifted forms, as their subjectivities were dependent on their

¹¹ *So, if you go back and look at all of the reports and dashboards we put out for the colleges and departments [at SU] sex is never on there and never has it been, just like you wouldn't put race and ethnicity on there. You wouldn't put age on there. There's certain data elements that if the department doesn't need when interacting with their students. Neither your age, your ethnicity, gender, nor your sex is a factor that is important to how I interact with you in an academic setting.*

relationships and interactions with institutional practices (Deleuze, 1992; Foucault, 1997). Some of the students, like Avery, were not out to their parents as non-binary or trans; therefore, their subjectivity shifted as they negotiated their off-campus environment in a different way than how they negotiated their on-campus environment.

Both, Chelsea and Jim discussed the cautiousness of collecting pronoun and chosen name data and the need to be aware of who has access to that information. They both questioned their practices and the need to collect that information; Chelsea discussed the process of implementing the pronoun and chosen name field.¹² Chelsea noted the same concerns as Avery about collecting pronoun, gender marker information, and chosen name. Through changing the logic of registrar practices at NU, Chelsea had to think through the possibilities, or effects, of collecting this information. Through allowing students to present their self in a certain way there are potential harmful effects of presenting that data (Foucault, 1991c). If the institution is governing trans bodies through the practice of collecting (a)gender(s) information, then the practices need to include ethical awareness of the potentially harmful effects of collecting and using this data.

Transparency

Matt and Avery bring a more cautious approach to collecting (a)gender(s) information in the student record. Both of them wanted more information from their universities and wanted to

¹² *We collaborated with the LGBTQ Center and with students and we came to an agreement or an understanding, we would only use the chosen name on campus but any communication that went outside, you know any external communication, we would use the legal first name. Because some students only identify with their chosen name here while they are students here, but they didn't want things fed to local newspapers or even mailings to go home with their chosen name, so we had to feed legal name in the system.*

know what their data was going to be used for and who had access to their data. In essence, they did not necessarily want to be invisible to their institution, but they wanted more transparency from their institution about how their data would be used. This was particularly important for Matt. He wanted institutions (both on the federal and university level) to use data on trans students to inform/improve the practices of the institutions collecting the data. Both students also wanted their university registrar offices to be clearer about how students could change their gender marker, chosen name, and pronouns. Matt continued,

I would be really transparent with students about this system [pronoun and chosen name], like it will talk to your advisor, and your professors, and to student health, but it won't talk to athletics...or it'll talk to this, but you need to go tell these people this and take this form. Being transparent with students about those issues and letting them know so they're not taken aback when it happens. I would like the registrar to be like a one stop shop where I come and I tell you and that's it. Like I don't need to tell anybody else...my name is updated and I go to the ID office, I get my new ID, and like everything is taken care of for me instead of needing to jump through boundless hoops, and now I have to out myself to more people. It would just go in the system. I changed my name and that was it. No questions asked.

Matt negotiated the complex web of policies, practices, and institutional logic at Northeast University to change his gender marker in his student record. Matt's practice of carrying around his packet of information to verify his identity demonstrated that Matt had to abide by the accepted medical discourse in order to logically justify his gender marker change to the college. Through navigating the system, Matt had to repeatedly out himself as trans while engaging with institutional practices, or jumping through hoops, in order to verify that he could change his gender marker. This is opposed to the option of the institution believing Matt's word about his (a)gender(s). Instead, he needed to operate within an institutionally normalized medical and legal discourse to verify his (a)gender(s) to those governing his ability to be a student (Beauchamp, 2019; Spade, 2015).

Avery discussed the need for SIS systems and registrar's offices to be transparent with how they are using his information. They recounted,

Ideally, there would be a system where I could have almost a checkbox as to where this information shows up and where it doesn't, right? I haven't changed my name and I don't plan to, but if I did I would also want to make sure I can manage who sees [the change]. I don't think systems in the next 50 years will allow us the detail of saying, 'and this faculty member can see it and this one can't.' I don't think that necessarily should be the case either, but like faculty rosters would be an option, home mail, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. Like if you're not gonna tell me where I can select it, you got to tell me where I'm going to see, who's going to see my [chosen] name and pronouns.

Avery brought up the point that SIS systems should be more dynamic (not static) and students should have the option to select who sees their (a)gender(s) data. This is an interesting tension where Avery agrees that their data should be collected, but wants to have some control over where it is seen. This view by Avery can be interpreted as a simultaneous move of both accepting that their actions will be governed as a student and also resisting the dangerous effects of specific governing practices that make their (a)gender(s) visible to unknown audiences. Through identifying and allowing (a)gender(s) information to be visible, there is the potential of statistical profiling by the State and through their visibility allows for the justification of their disenfranchisement (Baez, 2014).

Avery explained the need for transparency in practices when registrar offices' websites were discussed.

When I'm searching for inclusive policies or practices, I usually get the LGBTQ resource centers, not the registrar, or they are pointing out other people that can answer the question not just stating where you can go to indicate your pronouns, or what you need to do to change your gender marker. It would just be nice to have on the registrar's website and I think it would make this information found more easily. Overall, I'd actually change the registrar's website all together.

Avery and Matt both brought up the need for higher education institutions to be more transparent with their practices, but Avery specifically connected it to the registrar's office. For Avery,

having everything a student needs to do to change their gender marker, or indicate their pronouns was important. They thought it was vital to not just store/communicate this information on the LGBTQ resource center website.

Communication of university policies and practices is something that both Jim and Chelsea discussed. Jim shared his thoughts about his practice and the need for the Registrar's Office to communicate clearly.¹³ Like Jim, Chelsea was concerned about the policies that she managed at Northeast University; she discussed her practice for policy development.¹⁴ Jim and Chelsea were concerned about the clarity of communication regarding registrar policies/processes, specifically to the students who were affected by the policies/processes. Both valued and saw the need for clear and accessible communication regarding the policies and practices of their offices. By reviewing their policies and communicating them in a manner that makes them accessible, they demonstrated that they valued being transparent in their work that affects students. This is in contrast to the experiences of the students in this study. Through making practices visible it allows for the dominant discourse that makes governmentality necessary more visible (Foucault 1991b; 1991c). Although Jim and Chelsea were concerned about making information and policies visible and available, they are still willing participants in

¹³ *How we implement a policy is a practice. I think about you know, are we doing it in a clear and understandable way? You know, if I go to a webpage and I've got to input information or I've got to find out information. Is it clear and understandable? Or is it embedded so much with jargon and language. Nobody can really understand? So, I want to give people the proper interface where they can understand what we're trying to convey to them and then are we giving the proper tools to achieve the task they want to achieve.*

¹⁴ *I actually go through all of the policies that have been designated as overseen by the registrar's office and I do sometimes connect with the individuals that either oversee it or it impacts to make sure there weren't any changes. I work very closely with the campus units, colleges, schools, and departments to make sure our policies state up to date.*

the disciplinary institutional power of controlling the population through policies and practices that make docile bodies (Foucault, 1991a).

Max had a similar response about the university being transparent about the data collected and stored in the student record; however, they shared a concern about what the federal government would do with (a)gender(s) and sex data. They discussed a distrust of the federal government, and they were concerned the government would use that information to negatively target (in)dividuals. Max also was concerned that the university would contact the government and out students as trans. Max explained,

I prefer like probably a high level of transparency...I don't want them to just like have it and I don't know...contact the government like, 'hey, this person is trans.' I think it's important that they don't do that, but they should let us know if they need certain information and explain why that information is needed other than just like hate giving it to us.

Max brought up an interesting point of tension between wanting their data to be collected and then distrusting the institution or the State with that information. They are apprehensive of giving their information for fear of what the institution would do with that data. Max stated that they understood the institutional practices of collecting student information, but they wanted to make sure their higher education institution was not outing them as trans to the state, which could potentially have harmful effects. Max's concerns were supported by research conducted by both Baez (2014) and Beauchamp (2019), as they discussed the potential dangers of governmentality through giving identity information to the State (Baez, 2014; Beauchamp, 2019).

Administrative Apathy

The concept of transparency with students' data in the student record system connected to the idea that the university administration did not care about the students that participated in this

study or that the administration did not want to hear what they had to say. The students felt that they were marginalized or silenced. Students recalled various experiences where they felt their universities were not listening to them or did not care about their negative experiences. They communicated a need to be heard, which extended across all areas of the universities: both inside and outside of the classroom, during interactions with university staff and faculty, and even extended up to the president(s). Logan recalled a situation where someone from the administration at Southeast University spoke to the LGBTQ student group.

I mean last year the University said 'hey, we want to send someone to come and have a meeting with y'all and listen to what do y'all want from the University' and there was someone that came [to the meeting] and it was like a two-hour discussion with this person but then like nothing ever came about of anything that was discussed...even like really small requests and it kind of felt like they were just sending someone for the sake of appearing like they cared. I don't know...I just wish the administration would take us more seriously.

Matt experienced a similar apathy as Logan at Northeast University. He is an advocate and ally for trans students and has shared his experience with navigating the systems at NU when he transitioned. His frustrations and experiences with the administration at NU extended from his experiences with athletic staff, to working with the registrar's office, and also perceptions of NU's president. Matt explained his experiences with the athletic staff at the university:

I think a lot of students will have a negative experience with the system or experience one of those gaps that they don't know any better and like frankly shouldn't have to know any better and then we'll [trans students] just avoid the space. I mean like every day I'm scared that the gender neutral bathroom will be locked...so I was like 'I'll show you' and I went out and talked to people and got like dozens of stories of people who just absolutely refused to walk in the front door of the gym because they're afraid of a myriad of things and they [the administration] still frankly didn't really care.

For Matt, the systems did not work as needed to ensure that trans students would not be outed at the Student Health Center, in the classroom, at the gym, or even when meeting with advisors. Before he legally transitioned, Matt used the chosen name and pronoun field often. In this

system at NU, his chosen name would appear in parenthesis and university staff or faculty would often use his legal name in public settings—they either were not aware the chosen name field was present in the system or ignored his chosen name. This continual experience of being misgendered and misidentified led to his distrust and apathy towards his university's administration. Matt continued,

There's actually a lot of defensiveness from the University...like 'we have this...you should be thankful...you're welcome.' Kind of brushing it off as like our work here is done...you know we've done a good job and we get a lot of publicity for it here...we give our software away for free to other universities and so that's just like a constant pat on the back of like 'we did it, way to go.' But without being willing to acknowledge the issues like you did it and it's great and also it's not perfect and we have work to do. There's just a lot more defensiveness and not a lot of transparency.

Higher education institutions are comprised of a web of practices which can reveal certain institutional power structures. It is in these power structures where practices and subjects are normalized (Spade, 2015). In Jerry's narrative, he discussed his role as the university registrar.¹⁵ Matt's experiences with the administration at NU is complicated by Jerry's narrative. As the registrar at MU, Jerry debated the issue with changing his practices for an (in)dividual versus the collective. In his practice, Jerry reinforced how the practices of governmentality are normalized. If the subject does not fit into the collective then they are different or abnormal, and with that label of being abnormal they are viewed as not deserving the same rights as the 'normal' population (Baez, 2014; Spade, 2015).

The feelings of defensiveness and indifference from the NU administration continued when Matt joined a university-wide taskforce on gender inclusive restrooms. Matt narrated,

¹⁵ *We are in fact, change agents. You know we look for ways to improve the processes and we respond to people's visions. If it's an issue that one particular student has versus a collective issue, then we will explain why we can't change the process for just you. Changing the student record system has been a relatively simple process and we're not getting any more complaints. Well, I say simple because it was less than a year [to implement].*

We have a gender inclusive restroom taskforce that was set up by the president after a lot of pressure was put on him and the goal is to have gender inclusive restrooms and offer these on campus, but the process has been slower than molasses and held up a lot and given a lot of excuses...like we are building a new athletic facility and they're in the process of creating blueprints and are refusing to have the conversation with the task force until afterwards because at that point they can say, 'the blueprints are done! The blueprints are done! It will be too expensive to redo this before they've even broken ground. There's just like a lot of red tape that they [university administration] can strategically place. So yeah, we have this awesome taskforce and like not necessarily a policy from the president, he has enacted this right now...like it matters to this university, but then he doesn't push at all for the athletic facility to meet with the task force or anyone to listen to what we have to say.

There are practices in higher education administration which highlight the effects of governmentality. This was evident in Henry's experiences as president of Midwest University. Henry discussed the tension between federal governance and perceptions at his university.¹⁶ Henry and Matt's experiences bring up an interesting pull between administrators and the campus community. While the president at Northeast University established the gender inclusive restroom committee, Matt did not feel that the president was supporting the committee by not forcing athletics to meet with the committee. Henry's experience highlighted the complexities an governance of the president's role. While the campus community was confused about new buildings being build in a manner that did not adhere to ADA standards, Henry explained the compliance issues of using FEMA money to update the buildings. This example

¹⁶ *So we lost some old, historic buildings in a natural disaster and we were awarded some FEMA money to rebuild the buildings. But yet, FEMA says that you have to restore a building to exactly the way it was originally, so we weren't ADA compliant in the old buildings. In a sense build it as illegal by federal law, we had to rebuild it so that it was non-compliant, well it's weird, but it sort of makes sense, which is you shouldn't be using FEMA recovery money to improve your building, right? So I met with the campus community before these buildings were coming online and I explained the issue with FEMA and they understood the issue and calmed down. I said, 'once FEMA gets out of here, we will then do the right things in those buildings. So I think I'm putting a relatively good working relationship with the students and the community to use.*

highlights the governance of federal laws on the (in)actions of the campus administration (Beauchamp, 2019).

While Matt felt that the administration at NU did not want to listen to the recommendations of the gender inclusive bathroom committee, Avery brought up a different perspective regarding the concepts of urgency and change. Avery's experience working in administration and also studying at higher education institutions contributed to a different way of looking at university administration practices. Avery described,

I think one of the challenges would be this balance of urgency and time. I think that despite the belief that institutions are these like liberal brainwashing things...I don't think they are. I think that I am more aware than others of how slow an institution moves and so one of the things that I both wrestled with as a practitioner and wrestle with as a student is this urgency around change. I think as long as I communicate urgency people give more grace about time, but if I don't seem urgent about it [the need for change] people will be much more focused on time and turnaround time.

For Avery, the sense of the university administration communicating that they understood the necessary urgency of making change was valued more than the actual turnaround time. While Matt and Logan communicated a sense of their universities being resistant to change and moving slowly, Avery brought a more complex idea of power into the way universities change. They discussed this below.

I think it's also about who you are, right? So like us as a resource center [at their previous institution] didn't have any formal power over any of their offices to make any decisions and so we had to find people like the title nine coordinator of the vice president for student affairs, the registrar who would tell their people to move and figure it out...and so it would also depend on what role they had and what relationship slash influence and power I had to make certain systems move.

Similar to Avery's experience, Grace and Henry saw the need for change to occur through a campus taskforce for trans inclusion at Midwest University. Grace recounted the

origin of the taskforce and its goals.¹⁷ When Henry came to MU he notice that the university was behind in their inclusion efforts. He discussed his initial impressions of MU's trans inclusive efforts.¹⁸ Change at MU came from a cross campus committee with staff and faculty supporting the changes to the SIS system and admissions application. Through a collective coming together on campus for change the university committee was able to expose the institutional practices and logic systems to demonstrate the marginalization of trans and non-binary students on campus. Avery's experience highlighted the power relations within their previous institution. Within the LGBTQ resource center, Avery perceived them not having power to initiate change in the student record; so, they built relationships with various offices advocating for the change to the practices at their institution for managing (a)gender(s) information. Avery's perspective on urgency and time suggests the tensions between intent of practices and the effects of those practices. Through relationships, Avery was able to disrupt the power networks at their institution and collaborate towards necessary changes in practices.

Chosen Name and Pronoun Systems

Northeast University, Southeast University, and Midwest University all had a system which allowed for students to designate their chosen name and pronouns, which would then

¹⁷ *So there's actually a trans inclusivity taskforce and that has members of cross campus representation and they sat down and created a very specific goal sheet. They became the driving force of saying who do we go to and how do we make this happen?*

¹⁸ *Yeah, they were very instrumental in driving this change forward. When I got to Midwest University and I looked at where we were on some issues and the students were way ahead of the administration. When we ran into issues I said, 'are you kidding me? We are behind the discussion from Ivy League and comparable institutions in our athletic conference. What are we doing here? The Board of Regents really supported or picked up that we are behind corporate America, we are behind all of our comparable institutions and so we had to make a change.*

automatically populate on the class rosters and theoretically feed into the other information systems on campus. The students experienced varying levels of interactions with the systems on their campus. Matt was the most vocal about the practices surrounding the student information system not working as they were advertised by the university. Matt recounted,

So, as an undergrad who didn't know any better, it was awesome, it was perfect, it was accessible. It was easy, you go and you type in your pronoun and that's it and it should update everywhere, but then as a student who experienced a lot of holes in the system, because I was really involved in a lot of different departments and organizations that didn't get updated with that system, I had to update it myself every single time and out myself every single time. I learned the system was pretty flawed pretty quick and so as a concept, it's beautiful, I'm glad we have it. It makes life a lot easier for a lot of people if you don't really engage on campus a lot.

In contrast to Matt's experience, the system at NU was built to work seamlessly. Chelsea discussed the pronoun and chosen name systems at NU.¹⁹ The narratives of Matt and Chelsea demonstrate a discontinuity to how students experienced the chosen name and pronoun system and how the system was built. While the intention was for there to be a seamless connection, students were still confused with how the system works and where their information will show up differently. Through creating and coding student information systems to encompass trans identities, this assists with the self-governing capabilities of the student population in higher education campuses (Baez, 2014). Therefore, they are 'choosing' to provide information about themselves in order to be governed in a particular way. The students are giving their institution information and in turn trusting that it will be used in an appropriate way.

¹⁹ *What we try to do is make the system intuitive and seamless for students so they don't have to contact anyone here. What we are trying to do is that we don't want there to be a mystery with who sees their information. We don't want to them to feel uncomfortable with any of their information being shared...um...inappropriately. So that's why we rely so much on our systems to be seamless.*

Logan experienced similar issues with the Student Health Center at Southeast University. They shared with me their frustrations about the Student Health Center not having a chosen name and pronoun option in their student medical records, even though Southeast University had implemented a chosen name and pronoun option in their student record system. They recognized and discussed the potential harmful effects for trans students at the Student Health Center because of the logic of their database system. Logan described,

At the Student Health Center regardless of what your preferred name is listed as they're going to use your legal name and they're going to call it out to the whole room and so like if you're a trans man, but your legal name is very obviously a female name people might...well, you're going to be outed to an entire room of people.

While Logan was concerned about the systems not working and students being outed, Blake mentioned the issue of students not knowing about the pronoun and chosen name options within the student information system. Blake was unaware of the pronoun options at Southeast University and felt the university did not advertise it enough to students. Blake explained,

I think that there really aren't many steps that SU has actually taken to move towards the point of more inclusiveness. You know, even just changing the pronoun system to include more gender neutral options than they/them and then sending out a campus wide email that says, 'hey, by the way now we have this.' I think they think students will just find it themselves because we are adults, but that's not always the case.

Some of the challenges university registrars face, are the tension between collecting data and then explaining what the data means to the interpreters of the data. Jim discussed the challenges

of the role of the registrar in moving beyond just collecting data.²⁰ Adding more pronoun options outside of the gender binary, complicates the practice of the university registrar in Jim's narrative. He can manipulate the student information system to collect data on students' (a)gender(s) and provide pronoun and chosen name information, but he is also concerned with educating the interpreters of the data (faculty/staff). In a sense this perpetuates othering trans students, which is highlighted in Blake's narrative above. For Jim, he is operating in a binary, normalizing practice where trans students are seen as non-normal and their (a)gender(s) have to be explained to the majority (Baez, 2014; Beauchamp, 2019; Spade, 2015). When moving student information systems away from the binary, other identities are normalized and codified as a result of collecting that information.

Similar to Blake's experience, Max discussed the need to educate trans and non-binary students about the availability of the pronoun options within the student information system. The need for universities to highlight their pronoun and chosen name options was clear from Max's perspective. They were unaware that they had the ability to indicate their pronouns through SU's student information system. Max continued,

I don't know if there's a way to change pronouns or name on my records or anything. When I introduce myself to teachers on the first day of class I'll say, 'Hi, like I'm this person on your roster, but that's not what I go by here is my name...' Most of the time they use that name. My theatre teacher crossed out my dead name and wrote my chosen name on it and reprinted the sheet and everything! So now it makes me smile. Yeah, but I would really like to know how could this be changed in the system at SU, but not legally.

²⁰ *It's not enough that we collect it [gender data]. We have to make sure the faculty, the instructors, understand it and understand how to use it and I might have to say this is more from the University and not from this office. When it comes to gender, sure we could set up the means to collect it and we could do tie it [pronouns] to advising and class schedule information. But, somehow or another when the instructor sees gender, they have to understand what am I supposed to do with that data? Is there any data we provided them? So, I think you can run into a little bit of an issue there.*

Max had a positive interaction with their faculty member who validated their (a)gender(s) and subjectivity through accepting their chosen name and pronouns by adjusting the class roster. This helped Max feel positive about their (a)gender(s) and accepted by their professor. However, it does highlight the need for students to be aware of the capability to provide/edit their pronoun and chosen name within the student information system, in order to prevent students from constantly being outed as an 'other'. By adding trans identities into the SIS system, students are then normalized and not identified as other, non-normal, or at-risk (Baez, 2014). Thus, the construction of the self then becomes in relation to the larger norm in the population. Through adding trans identities into the SIS system, from a data perspective they would be normalized, however, this does not guarantee that they are normalized from a practice perspective, or from the perspective of the administrators who would govern these students.

Summary

The narratives in this study outline the complex and multifaceted nature of (a)gender(s) and the management of (a)gender(s) in the student record. When analyzing the results through the lens of governmentality, the students are governed by the university, but the university is also governed by the Department of Education. Both the administrators and the students self-govern themselves through a complex web of institutional practices. Through the normalizing discourse of collecting student record information, the students' subjectivities were governed and only allowed to be captured in a particular way (Beauchamp, 2019). University registrar practices of collecting information in the student record and categorizing identity information through predetermined data points allows for the identification of the student population and also normalizing this population (Baez, 2014). The university registrar's role both governs students'

through policies and practices, while also helping student self-govern through the production of limited codifying data, creating the student record.

The practices of collecting information in the student record could produce harmful effects to the student (e.g. being outed, misgendered, further marginalization, etc.). In anticipation of the harmful effects, the students shared their apprehension to just collecting (a)gender(s) information and wanted more transparency from their institution. The students in this study were considered ‘other’ or ‘non-normal’ because they did not identify on the sex binary of male/female in the student record. They experienced the normalizing power of governmentality through the logic of wanting to be counted and their data to be collected – moving them from the margins. They wanted to be seen by their institutions, but they wanted to be seen in a specific and particular way where they had the option of *checkboxes* as to who could see their data. The students wanted more transparency from their institutions as to how their data was being used and who was going to see their information. They wanted more control over their subjecthood in their student record.

Ultimately, the narratives highlight the complex issues surrounding the collection of data in the student record. It is difficult to capture shifting subjectivities in a static, codified system. The students in this study experienced their (a)gender(s) differently depending on their interactions with societally and institutional practices and their relationships (Foucault, 1997; Jackson, 2013). Many of them were not out in their (a)gender(s) to their families, but were out on their university campuses. This presents issues in the student record when students’ subjectivities are shifting forms in relation to their experiences, thus complicating university registrar practices. In the next chapter, I detail the interpretation of the findings from this study

through answering my research questions, discuss the implications for higher education practice, and suggest avenues for future research.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this study was to explore the complexity and tension that is present between, 1) trans students' understanding of their (a)gender(s) and, 2) the governing practices of collecting and managing trans students' (a)gender(s) in the student record. Analyzing the logic(s) of university registrar practices that govern (a)gender(s) in the student record and interviewing the students impacted by these practices, allowed for a nuanced exploration of this topic. The research questions that guided this study are:

1. How do trans college students describe their (a)gender(s)?
2. How do trans college students experience their (a)gender(s) when governed by the institutional logic(s) of student record systems?

In this chapter, I discuss the results and implications from my study. I begin by turning back to the research questions which guided this study. Then, I interpret the results and respond to my research questions. Finally, I provide the implications for research and practice.

Discussion

I'm still not really sure what I identify as...non-binary...genderqueer...transmasculine...whatever. I don't really know how that can be captured on paper either. – John

When the students who participated in this study were asked to describe when they were first aware of their (a)gender(s), their understandings of their experiences shifted as evident in the descriptions they provided. Several students, John, Avery, and Matt attributed their feelings to their sexual identity at first, until later finding the language and realizing that it is more

complicated than being gay or straight. Their experiences within their family, school, and other social environments all impacted the negotiation of their practices in relation to their (a)gender(s).

The students in this study described their (a)gender(s) as fluid, not static. Their (a)gender(s) would shift and change when they interacted with the practices at their university or negotiated their relationships (i.e., friends, family, faculty or staff at their higher education institution, etc.). They negotiated their relationships by shifting from using gender neutral pronouns to using gendered pronouns in a complex way. Avery's understanding of their (a)gender(s) shifted over time, but it was an interaction with their mother, at age thirteen, that impacted their understanding of their subjectivities. Avery's mother suggested that the way Avery was holding their wrist was similar to a stereotypical body posture for gay men. At that moment, and within that relationship, Avery was impacted in a specific way. This contributed to Avery conflating their (a)gender(s) with their sexuality. Avery mentioned that they were not out to their family as genderqueer; however, they are out in other relationships. Thus, their subjectivities shifted between interactions with practices or relationships (Foucault, 1997).

Similar to higher education literature, developing positive and affirming relationships helped the students in this study feel affirmed in their (a)gender(s) (Bilodeau, 2005; Dugan et al., 2012; Linley et al., 2016; Nicolazzo et al., 2017; Pitcher et al., 2016). Blake and John both mentioned that having a supportive supervisor helped them feel affirmed in their (a)gender(s). For Blake, hir subjectivity shifted as ze negotiated relationships at Southeast University and at home. Blake could not be out to hir parents as trans or gender-fluid, because ze could not afford hir living expenses and feared that ze would be homeless if hir parents found out. In this relationship, Blake was required to shift hir subjectivities when hir interacted with hir parents.

Blake's relationship with hir supervisor at work helped affirm hir's (a)gender(s); Blake's supervisor asked what Blake's pronouns and chosen name were, and then printed both on an official name badge for work. Blake continued,

I never had someone in a position of power do that before [ask for pronouns]. It was very surprising that he looked at me and was like 'hey what do you prefer?' It was very interesting to say the least because it wasn't something that I had expected. It was nice. Just the fact that he cared enough to you know, actually ask instead of assume and say 'this is what I'm going to call them.'

Blake's experience of having a supportive supervisor helped hir feel supported in hir work and on campus.

John described when they had begun to work through their feelings about their sexuality, gender expression, and (a)gender(s). They started to take testosterone, and after they came out to their partner, they stopped taking hormones and continued to question their (a)gender(s). Once John's relationship was over, they began the process of thinking about transitioning with the help of a supportive supervisor. John's (a)gender(s) and subjectivity shifted forms depending on who they were interacting with (e.g. counselor, partner, supervisor, or family). John's relationships with other trans students and their relationship with a supportive supervisor helped John feel affirmed in their (a)gender(s). Additionally, John's university cultivated a supporting environment for trans people through providing trans inclusive healthcare for graduate students and there were trans staff visible on campus.

In addition to having supportive relationships with faculty and staff on campus, most of the students in this study mentioned the LGBTQ resource center or LGBTQ student group on their campuses as a place where they felt they could be out in their (a)gender(s) as well as having provided a place to be around people who understood what they were going through. Similar to literature in higher education, students in this study had positive relationships with their peers;

these relationships helped them create their own community of support (Nicolazzo et al., 2017; Pitcher et al., 2017; Renn, 2007; Westbrook, 2009). Blake's description of when they first went to the LGBTQ resource center at Southeast University supports this importance of community: *"when I got to the center and I saw all these people I was like 'oh, this is okay!' So, I guess that's when I guess I first accepted it and realized that like, yeah this is a thing."* Going to the center and hanging out with hir peers allowed Blake to feel more accepted and affirmed in hir (a)gender(s). Logan, was a student leader in the LGBTQ student group at SU and frequently went to the group for support when first processing their non-binary (a)gender(s). Logan discussed the importance of the affirming LGBTQ group: *"I like that we've been able to actually really make a community on campus."* Through the LGBTQ student group, Logan was able to find a community and in turn feel affirmed as non-binary. However, John's experience at the LGBTQ center was vastly different than the other students in this study and was in contrast to the higher education literature. Through interactions at Northeast University's LGBTQ center, John felt isolated. In part, John equated their isolating experiences to their racial identity: *"Here at the LGBTQ center I felt not seen...people were ignoring me and the other intern who was also a queer and trans person of color, so it's a weird spot."* John felt that the LGBTQ center was a very White space and that there was no room for them to exist outside of their trans identity. This is important for universities to recognize the need for an intersection approach to resource center practices and programming.

Similar to Nicolazzo's (2016a; 2016c) work, Matt found kinship networks online and began to come out in his trans identity online before coming out to his friends and family: *"using a different name and different pronouns with people I didn't know in real life, it was like a safe way to try it [coming out]."* Having a positive experience of using a different name and pronouns

online helped Matt feel affirmed and also gave him a safe avenue to come out in his (a)gender(s). While Matt had a positive experience through online kinship networks, Max experienced harassment through continual misuse of their pronouns in online spaces. Max described this harassment: *“They were intentionally mocking gender-neutral singular pronouns and it made me have an anxiety attack. Luckily I had a bunch of friends [in the online chat] who saw what was going on and pulled me out of the situation.”* Max experienced both support and harassment through online kinship networks. With the support of those relationships, Max was able to negotiate their feelings around their (a)gender(s) and experience the system of support from their online kinship network (Nicolazzo, 2016a).

How the students experienced their (a)gender(s) was vastly different than the way they experienced it in relation to their student record, because their institutions only allowed their identities to be seen in a certain way through the limited options available in the student information systems. The students’ described the tensions between how they understood their (a)gender(s) and how the systems categorized or created their (a)gender(s). Additionally, most of the students in this study did not necessarily mind that their data was being collected, but they cared about the way their university used their data.

There is minimal literature regarding enrollment management, university registrar practices, or institutional policies in higher education that includes trans students being asked about their experiences with their student record or their admissions application in relation to their (a)gender(s). However, the literature that does exist recommends certain best practices for trans inclusion in enrollment management practices (Beemyn, 2003; 2005; Beemyn et al., 2005b; Beemyn & Brauer, 2015; Marine & Catalano, 2014; Sausa, 2002; Seelman, 2014). In these recommendations, researchers call for university registrars to allow trans students to update their

gender marker without medical documentation, allow students to update their pronouns and chosen name in the student information system, and for the students' chosen name and pronouns to be displayed on all front facing forms (e.g. class rosters, advising screens, etc.) (Beemyn, 2003; 2005; Beemyn et al., 2005b; Beemyn & Brauer, 2015; Seelman, 2014). However, this study demonstrates that simply having a system in place, with the suggested best practices, is not enough. Having a trans inclusive student record process is not capable of combatting transphobic and genderist environments and systems of higher education campuses.

The students' experiences in this study highlight the complicated environments that exists for trans students in higher education campuses. Simply having a pronoun or chosen name system does not mean that the campus will be more welcoming to trans students, and this reality must be accepted by higher education leaders (i.e. administrators and faculty). The students' experiences shared through this study highlight the need for education both about trans students' past experiences and for the betterment of trans students' future experiences. Additionally, having trans inclusive policies in place does not equal greater inclusion for trans students on higher education campuses. It comes down to the interpretation or practice of those policies. This was highlighted through the students' experiences with faculty, staff, and administrators' use (or lack of use) of the pronoun and chosen name system at their Universities. Matt expands on this below.

There's not always a policy that exists...or a policy that exists that does what its intended to do. I think it has to do with communication and it's campus climate and culture. I feel comfortable in the College of Education, but then I had a professor who consistently refused to use my name and I had to go ask to speak with the Dean in the College of Engineering because it was a math professor. I considered dropping the class because that was not a space that I could learn in. So I think even within a university that holds a lot of consistent beliefs and virtues depending on where you go that can shift a lot and almost feel like a different College.

Through Matt's experiences, it is apparent that even though there was a pronoun and chosen name system in place he still experienced harassment by a faculty member in the classroom; this choice by the faculty member to disregard Matt's chosen name and ignore the information provided on Matt's student record had a direct impact on Matt's ability to learn by creating an unnecessary barrier that Matt had to navigate. Matt's experiences are consistent with the literature in higher education highlighting the additional burdens for trans students inside the classroom (Garvey & Rankin, 2015a; Rankin, Weber, & Garvey, 2014; Wentling, 2015). In addition to needing to worry about the material and curriculum covered in the classroom, trans students are faced with additional burdens of coming out to professors, or like Matt, professors who refuse to use their chosen name.

Incorrect pronoun usage by faculty in an academic setting was experienced by almost every student included in this study. Even though all three universities had a pronoun and chosen name system in place. At Midwest University, James generally felt supported and welcomed, partly because of the inclusive record and admissions system. However, James still experienced harassment by a faculty member in class because of the refusal to use their pronouns correctly. James attributed their experiences to the lack of education or sensitivity training for faculty: *I had a philosophy professor in the past who tried to justify not using they/them pronouns for his own personal political reasons, which was off-putting. I think that they should have sensitivity training for professors.* James noticed the lack of training or focus on experiences outside of cis-normativity at his university. The refusal of James' professor to use their correct pronouns is problematic and highlights the systemic genderist environment within higher education.

In addition to professors not correctly using pronouns within their classroom, there is an issue surrounding the education of pronouns for faculty. Simply having the pronouns on the class roster is not enough. There needs to be intentional communication for faculty to understand (1) why they are on the roster, (2) what they are for, (3) how to use them correctly, and (4) why they need to use them correctly. Logan highlighted this below:

You have the option to put a chosen name and pronoun and the name will be recognized in class, usually, but the pronouns...they say it will show up on the roster but like not once has it ever actually been used. So that's kind of confusing for me...like why say they're going to do it if they're not actually doing it?

The confusion regarding the implementation of the pronoun and chosen name system extended to both the faculty and students' experiences. Like Logan mentioned above, the students in this study experienced confusion and complications when trying to use the pronoun and chosen name system at their universities. Max and Blake experienced confusion about the pronoun and chosen name system at Southeast University. Perhaps most alarmingly, Max was not aware that the University had a system in place where students could designate their chosen name and pronouns. Blake and Logan recognized that there were limiting options at SU for students to choose, as they recognized that not all students use he, she, or they pronouns. Matt's frustration and experience with the pronoun system at Northeast University was similar to the students at Southeast University. Through being involved on campus, Matt recognized that despite what the registrar's office was communicating, the system was not seamless and his chosen name and pronouns did not show up on all of the screens across campus. Therefore, Matt had to continually come out to the faculty, administrators, advisors, and staff he interacted with across campus.

While the literature in higher education highlights that there should be a pronoun and chosen name system in place, the narratives of the students in this study demonstrate that having

a system is not good enough. In addition to student information system improvements, there needs to be education, resources, and support for all the actors interacting with the system (e.g. students, faculty, staff, administrators, advisors, etc.); this should include how and why they should use the information that is displayed within the student information system. Additionally, the students in this study wanted more transparency on why and how their data was going to be used by their university. Something that should be noted is the resiliency of the students in this study. Similar to Nicolazzo's (2016c) work, all eight students demonstrated the drive and resiliency to persist in their education, despite the additional burdens that they encountered.

Future Research

Although this study contributed to the research in higher education literature related to how trans students experience their gender through the management of their (a)gender(s) in the student information system, there is more work to be done. There is minimal literature mentioning trans students in relation to university registrar practices or enrollment management practices. The literature that does exist focuses on suggested steps to make student information systems or registrar's office practices more trans inclusive by providing more gender designation options, allowing for chosen name instead of legal name on all front facing screens (e.g. class rosters, advising screens, etc.), allowing students to designate pronouns on their class rosters, and printing a name other than legal name on transcripts and diplomas (Beemyn, 2003; 2005; 2012; Beemyn et al., 2005b; Beemyn & Brauer, 2015; Seelman, 2014). More research is needed to include trans students' voices in the literature in order to highlight students' experiences with these practices in higher education.

In this study I spoke with trans students who were at the same time type of institution. Future research could be expanded to include trans students' experiences from other institutional

types (i.e. community colleges, liberal arts universities, private universities, etc.). In addition to including future research based on institutional type, this study could serve as a foundation to explore other data systems in higher education. This could include research on trans alumni's experiences with alumni databases or trans students' experiences with on-campus housing applications. Additionally, further research could focus on including additional student information system vendors, as other systems collect large amounts of data about students and were not present within this study. In this study, Midwest University used a homegrown student information system and Northeast University and Southeast University used Banner as their student information systems.

The purpose of this study was to explore the effects of the management of trans students' (a)gender(s) through student information systems and university registrar practices. I did not focus on students' experiences through the lens of segmented identities. Future research is needed to explore a more intersectional approach to this topic to consider students' experiences with the student record and other salient social identities (i.e. race, ethnicity, sexuality, social economic status, first generation, nationality, etc.). Additionally, the students in this study mentioned how they felt the institution was forcing them to choose a (a)gender(s), or pronouns based on the limited options available within the student information system; therefore, they often felt as though their institution was forcing them into a checkbox. More research is needed to focus on this concept and the complexities of trans students' experiences.

Lastly, this study mainly centered around the students' experiences of the management of their (a)gender(s). While I interviewed higher education administrators, they were not the focus of this study. Future research should expand on this study to focus on the logic systems and practices of higher education administrators. Further research that incorporates the concept of

governmentality to understand and problematize the ways in which higher education administrators' actions are governed and disciplined through legal discourse (federal and state laws) would be beneficial.

Implications for Practice

Moving away from future research, I detail the implications for practice below. The findings from this study highlight key implications for practice in higher education, related to trans students' experiences and their student data. First, I discuss problematizing checkboxes in higher education practice. Next, I move to a discussion about education around trans students' needs and experiences. Then, I discuss implications related to institutional transparency and student information systems. Lastly, I close with implications from the students in this study.

Problematizing Checkboxes

There is an alluring, comfortable trap to fall back into that provides a defined list of checkboxes or best practices for the implication section of this dissertation. This would involve creating a defined list of steps for higher education practitioners to move through linearly, with prescriptive steps to make student records more trans friendly. However, the consequence of creating such a defined list of steps is incongruent with the Foucauldian theoretical underpinnings of this study. When presented with a checklist, it is easy to think about our work as higher education leaders as being completed once that checklist is marked as completed. I would encourage us as a field, to move away from lists and checkboxes and toward an approach that encompasses a student centered, fluid approach to practice. Similar to Nicolazzo's (2016c) recommendations to move away from best practices, I am suggesting higher education practice should move beyond checklists, as this can positively lead to the needs of the student being

considered in a more critically caring manner that is not limited to the logic of the legal discourse of higher education.

Trans inclusive policies are an easy way for higher education institutions to check a box and demonstrate a commitment to inclusivity on their campus. However, having a policy is not indicative of the commitment to trans students or inclusivity on their campuses. Simply having trans inclusive policies (nondiscrimination, housing, gender inclusive bathrooms, etc.) does not account for the (in)actions of higher education practitioners. We need to move *beyond* a notion of just having a policy and move *towards* focusing on inclusive practices. Moving beyond a genderists understanding of higher education institutions requires faculty, staff, and administrators to be committed to challenging their assumptions and moving away from a binary understanding of practices.

In addition to easy checklists for higher education practices (e.g. best practices), there is a practice of putting students into quantitative checkboxes and thus creating them as easily definable data points – statistics that Universities can report off of to continue feeding the wheel of governmentality. The students in this study described their (a)gender(s) as fluid, unsure, changing, and dynamic. They were not in a static, binary state, like student information systems are written and built to allow for quantitative comparison and easy reporting. Therefore, higher education practice should move towards a fluid understanding of gender. The students in this study did not fit into an easily definable checkbox; yet, they felt the university was forcing them into a checkbox through the practice of presenting them with closed-off options to choose. How the students defined themselves was in tension with how the systems categorized them. Part of the collection of student data is unavoidable because of the governance of higher education institutions through federal and state institutions. However, higher education practitioners can

critically examine the way they are collecting the data and how they are using that data. For example, the students in this study were not necessarily concerned with giving their universities information about themselves, but they were concerned with the way their data was going to be used. It is an ethical concern for practitioners to consider these same questions related to why information is being collected, how that information will be used, and what the potential consequences are for students impacted by such information usage.

Problematizing checkboxes allows for higher education practitioners to continue the work that needs to be done to help combat genderism and sexism that is ingrained in higher education policies and practices. Questioning our practices as higher education practitioners allows for us to combat our own assumptions and move towards creating more trans inclusive environments and systems. This requires combating our own biases in addition to the biases ingrained in the policies and practices throughout higher education institutions. Moving beyond checkboxes requires acceptance and understanding of opening up subjectivities and practices. It allows for us to move beyond a finality to practice and towards an understanding that there is always work to be (re)constructed (Nicolazzo, 2016c; St. Pierre, 2000).

Who Are Our Educators?

In higher education, there is a problematic practice of cisgender people discussing trans inclusion without including trans people in their discussion. For example, AACRAO and Ellucian created workgroups that only included cisgender people and did not reach out to trans students to talk to them about their experiences. Additionally, there is a growing discourse in higher education literature which speaks to the need of educating higher education administrators about trans experiences (Beemyn, 2003; 2005a; McKinney, 2005; Sausa, 2002; Seelman, 2014; Singh et al., 2013; Squire & Norris, 2014). However, there is potential for further

marginalization when higher education institutions provide workshops and trainings about trans students instead of among them (Marine & Nicolazzo 2014; Nicolazzo, 2016c).

The students in this study described their challenges interacting with systems within higher education and the continued othering and marginalization they experienced both inside and outside of the classroom, through interacting with student health centers, or student services staff. It is clear that higher education administrators still need to be educated about trans students experiences and needs. By not educating practitioners, trans students are carrying the burden of educating faculty, staff, administrators, and other students about their experiences and their identities. Trans students taking the burden of education leads to continued marginalization through the need for them to continually explain their pronouns or gender and justify their identities. This creates tension because faculty and staff need to be educated about pronouns and how to support trans students. The administrators in this study recognized the need for faculty to be educated, but they did not know *who* should be educating. This leads me to the question, who are our educators?

By having the student information system and student data fall within their purview, university registrars are forced into a situation where they are expected to provide information to the university community and educate constituents about that data. Therefore, they are expected to be both the provider and the educator of that data. They must ensure that that the information is understood by the receiver. This was highlighted by Jim in his logic of his practices:

We have to make sure the faculty, the instructors, understand it and understand how to use it and I might have to say this is more from the University and not from this office. When it comes to gender, sure we could set up the means to collect it and we could do tie it [pronouns] to advising and class schedule information. But, somehow or another when the instructor sees gender, they have to understand what am I supposed to do with that data? Is there any data we provided them? So, I think you can run into a little bit of an issue there.

Educating faculty and staff is something that Jim sees outside of his role as University Registrar, because he is not the expert in that area. In his practice, he sees the role of educating campus about pronouns and trans students experiences something that is the University's responsibility. However, I would argue that it is problematic if higher education administrators see the need for change in their practices but do not act, based on the belief that the responsibility to act falls outside their purview. This narrative complicates the role of the university registrar as both interpreter and educator of student data. Which causes me to turn towards this question, whose job is it to translate pronouns?

I would argue that it is everyone's job within the institution to educate themselves about trans students' needs. University registrars should work across departments to assist with the education and support of trans students. The university registrar is in a unique position as the data steward of the university to assist with institutional changes, as they are often bridge the gap between faculty, administration, and the students (Schipporeit, 2006). Therefore, they are in a perfect position to advocate for education and trans inclusion across institutional university registrar practices. Even though the university registrar is in the position to implement and advocate for changes, there is the potential for them to not be the expert on the topic. In anticipation of this, when implementing trans inclusive records practices, they should seek out information regarding how students on their campus want their data to be managed. In addition, university registrars should seek to be involved in trans inclusive taskforces or other committees working on trans issues on campus.

Support for trans students should not be regulated to just one department through diversity and inclusion offices, gender centers, or LGBTQ centers. Support should come from all offices at the institution. Therefore, education about creating an inclusive climate for trans

students should be supported by the university registrar, enrollment management office, provost, and other key offices on campuses. Additionally, once pronouns and chosen name systems are implemented, faculty will need to be educated on why pronouns are on the class roster and how to use pronouns. A simple document explaining the use of gender neutral pronouns and a few key tips to help trans students in the classroom could be attached to the class rosters. So, when a faculty downloads their class roster the document will download too; or, it is available for them to click on the document. The document should have information on where to go for further resources. Additionally, educating campus about the pronoun options is important. Higher education practitioners should be advertising this during student orientation, new faculty/staff orientation, through campus emails, and on social media.

Systems of Support

The students in this study expressed certain resources and systems of support that they needed. Similar to recent trans literature (Marine & Nicolazzo, 2014; Nicolazzo, 2016c), Matt, John, and Charlie discussed the need for workshops for trans students instead of about them. All of them expressed the need for their LGBTQ center to provide workshops for trans students, rather than educational workshops about them. Charlie continued this thought below:

I was looking at a workshop about how to be a better trans ally and I was like fantastic, I want to learn how to be a better trans ally, I do. But, I wish there were more things like, 'here's what you will experience when you transition, here's the insurance plans that are good for this that might not be good for that.' You know? Or, how to come out to unaccepting parents, things like that...I've found there are so many resources here for LGBQ people, but they are not necessary for trans people, just LGBQ people in general.

Charlie brings up an issue within LGBTQ resource centers – the need to provide more trans specific workshops. If an LGBTQ resource center is going to exist on campus, then they cannot ignore trans issues or the trans students present on their campuses.

Higher education practitioners should be researching the systems of support available for trans students both inside and outside of their campus and provide this information where it is easy to find on their institutions' website. Also, practitioners should be aware of the workshops and programming they are providing on their campuses and make sure the content is not only trans inclusive, but that they are providing resources for trans students, similar to Charlie's recommendations. Additionally, the students described the difficulty of finding trans friendly health care. Higher education administrators should be working with trans friendly medical insurance and health care providers to ensure that they are providing and covering trans health care. Accessing trans friendly medical practitioners and affording trans medical care was mentioned as one of the things the students suggested that they would change about their universities.

In relation to the student record and university registrar practices, the students discussed changes to the student information system and the visibility and transparency of their student record. A central experience of the students in this study was not only that they wanted their identity to be visible to the institution, but they only wanted it to be visible in specific ways. Additionally, students wanted institutional transparency from their University about how their data was going to be used. Some of the students in this study were worried about how and why the University would use their data. Below, I continue the implications of systems of support first by discussing the need for institutional transparency and then by discussing implications for student information systems.

Institutional Transparency and Responsiveness. The students in this study discussed a cautious approach to collecting gender information in the student record. They wanted more information from their universities on (1) who had access to view that data, (2) how their data

was going to be used, and (3) and what/to whom they were going to report their information (i.e. federal and state government). Most of the students wanted their information to be used, both on the federal and university level, to inform and improve the institutions' practices for the collection and management of data. Additionally, the students in this study wanted their data to be used to not only be seen and visible by their institution, but they wanted their data to be used to improve trans inclusion and practices on their campuses.

Higher education institutions should be responsive to their students' concerns. This is an implication that extends beyond just trans students and encompasses all students across higher education institutions. There is not enough information or clear messaging provided to students, as it pertains to how the information from their student record is used, how long universities retain the information they collect, or with whom the information is shared (both while students are in college and after they graduate). Overall, the students in this study were not necessarily concerned that their gender marker existed on a binary in the student record, they were more concerned about how that information would be used and who would have access to it. Most of the students wanted to be visible to the institution by being able to self-identify their gender in their record.

Higher education literature suggests providing more gender inclusive options, adding sexual orientation, and pronouns on the admissions application and student record (Beemyn, 2003; 2005; Beemyn et al., 2005b; Beemyn & Brauer, 2015; Seelman, 2014). In fact, many schools have already implemented and added this to their admissions application (Beemyn & Brauer, 2015; Kilgo & Linley, 2018). Enrollment management and university registrar offices should be more transparent with their students on how and why their information is being collected. Dynamic dialog boxes should be embedded within the self-service component of

student information systems. In these boxes, institutions should provide students' information about how their data is going to be used and reported. For example, if a university has decoupled sex and gender, then there needs to be a dialog box explaining why they are collecting both markers and then let students know how that data will be used. If higher education institutions are using sex (or in some cases, gender) to report data to the federal government, then they should let students know that data marker is being reported. The students in this study were anxious about how their data was going to be used and they also were unsure on what forms their chosen name would replace their legal name. Every institution should provide this information to students, with the intention of transparently informing students of how and when their information will be displayed, shared, and used.

Student Information Systems. While AACRAO, Ellucian, and Oracle all have recognized the importance of reviewing and modifying student information systems to be more trans inclusive, there are still issues with “correcting” the system by adding more fields, or checkboxes without moving beyond a set of predetermined options. Student information system vendors should be critically examining the way in which their system is collecting personal identity information. Sex and gender should be decoupled, similar to the way race and ethnicity is now understood. However, SIS vendors should be aware of the importance and power of language. Through misusing (e.g. conflating) the terms sex and gender in their system, trans people are further marginalized. Vendors should be working with university registrars, professional organizations, and the group of people who will be affected by the changes in their systems, in this case trans individuals; all of these groups of people need to be included in this conversation.

When working to change student information systems, as a whole, they need to be (re)imagined to encompass the fluidity, complexity, and intersectionality of identities. Vendors should move away from the binary and coded systems and towards more open-ended systems. Additionally, the functionality of decoupling sex and gender, providing chosen name, and pronouns should be built as a baseline functionality of the system. Therefore, this change would be available to all higher education institutions who use the system, and costly and time-consuming after-market modifications would not be needed. Through creating a more open-ended system and providing students with a dialog box where they could fill in their gender or pronouns allows for more fluidity in the system. Adding more pronoun and gender options, outside of the binary, normalizes trans identities; this allows trans students to be counted, collected, and governed (Beauchamp, 2019). Identifying the population of trans students at higher education institutions, through normalizing identity classifications in the student record, allows for visibility of trans students. Being visible to their higher education institutions allows for trans students to be governed and disciplined through policies and practices at their institutions (Beauchamp, 2019). It also allows for higher education institutions to identify trans students as a data point. However, building SIS systems as more open and fluid, allows for a move to resist the traps of governmentality; even a seemingly small move of this nature could have quite a positive impact on the experiences of trans students.

Implications from the Students

In this study, I wanted to speak directly with the students and hear how they experienced university registrar practices surrounding the management of their (a)gender(s) through the student record. I thought it was important to revisit their words. The last question that I asked the students who participated in the study was, “how would you change the practices of the

management of gender to better serve trans students?” Below I’ve compiled their recommendations for higher education practitioners:

Matt

I would make the preferred name and pronoun system as easy to find as possible and then I would require every student to fill out the pronoun and give them the information on the tools to know where they can go to change that at any time and then I would dedicate one of the IT folks to that system to make sure that it talks and connects with all the other systems on campus and if that can't be done I would be really transparent with students about this system. I would like the registrar to be a one stop shop where I come and I tell you and that's it. I don't need to tell anybody else. Everything is taken care of for me instead of needing to jump through boundless hoops and out myself to more people. I changed my name to this and that's it. No questions asked.

John

This past year in grad school I've learned how much policies actually control us, like they control everything we do. I hope we can really change policies so that we can collect data on specific queer and trans individuals, so that we can be counted and seen. Because we can tell these stories all day, but how many of us are there?

Logan

I think if students had more control over how they are identified on campus it would be better. I know a lot of times when you go in the offices and different departments you have to use your legal name. I'd like to see more action taken [by the administration].

Blake

More bathrooms! Also, I'd like the ability to go through Blackboard or somewhere else to identify as trans. So you don't have to go out of your way to email your professors and say 'hey! I don't identify this way...I don't use she/hers pronouns.' It would be great if things were more neutral and allowing students to pick and change, you know, if they go by Mr. and he/him or even adding Mx. As an option! Oh...also faculty, staff, professors, people that work or are associated with the University need to go through training. They don't have to agree to it, or accept all of it, but just don't like be an indecent human to other people just because that's not how you feel.

James

I would definitely want to make sure that like when new building plans or refurbishing buildings comes into play just making sure that gender neutral facilities are always available and also accessible. I think also having gender neutral housing is important and having everyone be able to opt-in to live with someone of a different gender. It would be a way for trans and non-binary students to feel more accepted so that you don't

have to be in a room with someone based on sex, which would be pretty invalidating, like the fact that trans men don't get validated as a real man or trans women don't get validated as real women because of organs that they have. Also, I guess like making that somehow applicable to scheduling like do you want to have classes in buildings that have gender neutral facilities or does it not matter?

Charlie

I would definitely change the way that you come into this campus as male or female, because that is just such a narrow way to define gender. I do also wish that there were more specific workshops that would help people grow into adults, you know, like the financial side of transitioning, or resources for transitioning, places that offer mental health or screenings that are essential. I do wish the LGBTQ resource center were more helpful with specifically giving trans people resources like actually go here do this, or this will help you with that, because it can be a difficult thing.

Max

Um...I would like a high level of transparency [about how their data is used]. They should let us know if they need certain information then like explain why it is needed, other than like 'here give it to us.' Also, gender neutral bathrooms would be great...I guess just even family style bathrooms, that'd be nice.

Avery

I think that no matter what the system is the process needs to involve the people at all facets and I don't just mean trans students. I mean students who are international or if we're talking about bathrooms then students with disabilities, thinking about how do all these official issues affect multiple people at once. If I was to pick and choose? Ideally, there would be a system where I could have almost a checkbox as to where this information shows up and where it doesn't. I would want to make sure I can manage who sees my name change, like faculty rosters, mail home, excreta, excreta. If you are not gonna tell me where I can select it, then you gotta tell me where I'm going to see it and who's going to see it. For gender stuff, I think that's something people don't honestly need to know that information as long as they have the pronouns so to me it should have a stricter level of access, like only institutional researchers or student health should see it. I would like the registrar's website to actually include policies and practices about this and not just the LGBTQ center.

Conclusion

Through this study, I sought to speak with trans students and ask about their experiences with their student record. I wanted to speak to the students who were impacted by policies and practices which govern (a)gender(s) in higher education. I wanted to highlight their experiences

moving and working within systems which did not recognize their (a)gender(s), and I sought to explore the tensions and logic(s) of the practices of administrators in higher education. While it is easy to emphasize the negative climates and challenges that trans students face in higher education, the students in this study demonstrated paths of resiliency to persist in genderist and transphobic systems in higher education (Nicolazzo, 2016c).

One of the main findings of this study demonstrated the importance of accurate language and clear/transparent/accessible communication. Using the correct pronouns or name is important. It demonstrates the value of not only recognizing that trans people exist, but also challenges the genderist systems and environments in higher education. The students in this study experienced being misgendered and reduced to a data point which did not encompass the complexities of their identities throughout higher education institutions. James articulated the importance of language:

It's just like human dignity to just use the appropriate pronouns. Just making sure that you're being respectful to another person. Well, it's not just another person but also like a systematically oppressed group of people that want acceptance and tolerance and like care on more than a social level, but on a federal level and on a world level...just wanting legal personhood to be sort of observed.

Simply having trans inclusive student information systems or trans inclusive policies in place is not enough. The inclusive student information system must be part of a larger, holistic approach to policy development and consistent practices; these policies and practices must not stagnate, as it is necessary for them to evolve through a growing, complicating, and critical awareness that leads to a more caring approach. An inclusive system does nothing without intentional practices which challenge and disrupt the normative and genderist biases which exist throughout higher education institutions. Having a system does nothing unless the people who *use* the system are educated on how and why this is important. Language, discourses,

subjectivities are constantly in flux and shifting. Striving towards inclusive systems and practices in higher education should encompass this fluidity. Creating an inclusive practice and system is not a signal that our work is done as higher education educators and practitioners.

There is always more work to do.

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APPENDIX A

STUDENT INTERVIEW GUIDE

Interview Introduction

- Hello, thank you for being here today and taking the time to meet with me! As you know, I am a doctoral student at The University of Alabama and I am conducting this interview for my dissertation research. I am interested in researching the logic, or reasoning's behind enrollment management practices related to gender identity. The interview should be approximately 60 minutes in length. Throughout the interview I will be asking you questions related to your experiences here at this university and your gender identity. If you feel uncomfortable during the interview, would like to skip a question, or need a break please let me know and we can stop the interview.
- Throughout my research process, I will be using masking your identity and using a pseudonym. Start to think about the pseudonym you would like me to use, you get to choose!

Consent

- Here is the consent form for my study. It details what you should expect for your participation, the risk and benefits from being involved in this study, and why I've invited you to participate. Please read over the consent form and I'd be happy to answer any questions that you have about the study. I will be recording the interview on two devices. If you would like to continue to participate in the study, please sign the form, each of us will retain a copy for our reference. Do you have any questions?

Introduction Questions

1. To start, please state your pseudonym or fake name you would like me to use and your pronouns.
2. Please tell me in as much detail as possible a little bit about yourself. Where are you from?
 - a. Describe your major, hometown, family.
3. What brought you to the University of _____? Why did you come to school here?
4. Tell me, in your own words, how you would describe the culture at this university?
 - a. What are some of the experiences that you've had at this university that comprise your impressions? Describe a few specific incidents.

Gender Questions

5. Think about the moment that you were first aware of your gender identity. Tell me about that experience.

6. Think about a time when you've been misgendered, walk me through that experience.
 - a. How did that make you feel?
7. Now, think about a time when your gender identity has been recognized, tell me about this experience.
 - a. How did this make you feel?
8. Tell me, in general, about your experiences with the University and your gender identity.
 - a. Now think about a time the University has recognized and failed to recognize your gender identity, walk me through those interactions and experiences.

Student Record Questions

9. Shifting gears, talk to me about your interactions with the student information system here at _____.
 - a. Why does the University need to provide more gender identities beyond the binary?
 - b. Why is it important to use the appropriate pronouns?
10. Recognizing that the University is collecting student information on gender identity, think about how you would want the University to manage that information in the student record. Describe your ideal management of your gender in the student record. (pronouns, chosen name, separating sex from gender, more inclusive options, etc.)
 - a. Describe the level of transparency you would like regarding how the university is using and reporting that information.
11. Now imagine that you are no longer a student at this University, but an administrator here on campus working with these systems, practices, and policies that govern gender. What do you think it would be like to have that role?
 - a. What challenges do you think they would have? How would you approach this topic?
 - b. How would you change the practices of the management of gender identity to better serve trans or non-binary students?
12. Is there anything else that you think I should know about your experiences?

APPENDIX B

HIGHER EDUCATION ADMINISTRATOR INTERVIEW GUIDE

Interview Introduction

- Hello, thank you for being here today and taking the time to meet with me! As you know, I am a doctoral student at The University of Alabama and I am conducting this interview for my dissertation research. I am interested in researching the logic, or reasoning's behind enrollment management practices related to gender identity. The interview should be approximately 60 minutes in length. Throughout the interview I will be asking you questions related to your experiences in your profession. If you feel uncomfortable during the interview, would like to skip a question, or need a break please let me know and we can stop the interview.
- Throughout my research process, I will be using masking your identity and using a pseudonym. Start to think about the pseudonym you would like me to use, you get to choose!

Consent

- Here is the consent form for my study. It details what you should expect for your participation, the risk and benefits from being involved in this study, and why I've invited you to participate. Please read over the consent form and I'd be happy to answer any questions that you have about the study. I will be recording the interview on two devices. If you would like to continue to participate in the study, please sign the form, each of us will retain a copy for our reference. Do you have any questions?

Introductory and Profession Questions

1. To start, please state your pseudonym or fake name you would like me to use and your pronouns.
2. Please tell me in as much detail as possible a little bit about yourself. Where are you from?
 - a. What field did you earn your degree(s)?
 - b. What experiences led you to working in higher education?
 - c. What brought you to the University of _____?
3. Tell me, in your own words, how you would describe the culture at this university?
 - a. What are some of the experiences that you've had at this university that comprise your impressions? Describe a few specific incidents.
4. Describe the way that you see the _____ (president, vice president, registrar, etc.) role within higher education?
 - a. How do you see this role shifting?
5. Think about a typical day in your office, in your current role. Maybe a meeting with a student, or you are working with policies, or systems that will impact the campus as a whole. What informs or centers your practice(s)?

- a. Describe the values that center your practice.
- 6. Think about a time where you were presented with a problem in your current role. This should be a time where there was not an immediate solution and required you to think out of the box. Walk me through your thought process, experiences, the steps that you took resolve the issue.
 - a. Describe the resources that you use to seek information if you need help during this process (research journals, publications, etc.).

Gender Inclusive Records Questions

- 7. Now shifting gears, will you tell me about the first time you encountered the issue of trans inclusive practices at your university? More specifically, practices related to the student information system (pronouns, chosen name, gender beyond the binary).
 - a. Walk me through the origins of the system change at your university.
 - b. How do you advocate for these students within your role?
 - c. How are the units that you work with reaching out and serving these students?
- 8. Tell me about the resources, policies, and practices at your university that affect trans or non-binary students at this university.
 - a. Why are the policies and practices in place at your university?
 - b. Why is the university operating in this way – what is the rationale, or complexities?
- 9. Think about the management of gender identity in the student record. Why do we need to keep track of that information? Why do we need to manage it?
 - a. What is the purpose of the management?
- 10. Now imagine that you are a trans or non-binary student at this university, what do you think it would be like to be at this university?
 - a. What challenges do you think they would have?

Closing Questions

- 11. How can higher education professionals work with internal and external stakeholders in higher education to advocate for a more inclusive university for trans students?
- 12. Where do you see the role of advocacy within higher education?
 - a. Describe an example of your advocacy.
- 13. Is there anything else I should know about your university or your practices or experiences?

APPENDIX C
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD CERTIFICATION



September 4, 2018

Lauren Bennett



Re: IRB # 18-OR-232-A "(Re) Thinking and Examining the Logic of Registrar Practices and Policies Encompassing Gender Identify"

Dear Lauren Bennett:

The University of Alabama Institutional Review Board has reviewed the revision to your previously approved expedited protocol. The board has approved the change in your protocol.

Please remember that your protocol will expire on June 28, 2019.

Should you need to submit any further correspondence regarding this proposal, please include the assigned IRB application number. Changes in this study cannot be initiated without IRB approval, except when necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to participants.

Good luck with your research.

Sincerely,



Office of Research Compliance

June 29, 2018

Lauren Bennett
[REDACTED]

Re: IRB#: 18-OR-232 "(Re) Thinking and Examining the Logic of Registrar Practices and Policies Encompassing Gender Identity"

Dear Lauren Bennett:

The University of Alabama Institutional Review Board has granted approval for your proposed research.

Your application has been given expedited approval according to 45 CFR part 46. Approval has been given under expedited review category 7 as outlined below:

(7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies

Your application will expire on June 28, 2019. If your research will continue beyond this date, complete the relevant portions of the IRB Renewal Application. If you wish to modify the application, complete the Modification of an Approved Protocol Form. Changes in this study cannot be initiated without IRB approval, except when necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to participants. When the study closes, complete the appropriate portions of the IRB Request for Study Closure Form.

Please use reproductions of the IRB approved stamped consent form to provide to your participants.

Should you need to submit any further correspondence regarding this proposal, please include the above application number.

Good luck with your research.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Director & Research Compliance Officer