



“Don’t just be ordinary”: Understanding the Resilience of College Students of Color at a Predominantly White Institution

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Abstract

Despite the prevalence of student multicultural centers providing support to students of Color across higher education institutions in the United States, experiences related to marginalization and discrimination remain present on college campuses. Using an ecological systems framework, researchers interviewed seven undergraduates active with their university’s student multicultural center to explore their experiences of resilience more deeply at a Predominantly White Institution (PWI). Findings indicate a need for expanding support for students who experience frequent microaggressions and stereotyping related to their marginalized identities. Systemic recommendations for working with college students of Color are presented.

Keywords: *IPA; College Students of Color; Resilience*

Introduction

Students of Color at Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs) have unique college experiences due to known systemic racism on college campuses (Lang & Yandell, 2019) and historical marginalization related to their race or ethnicity. For students of Latin and Black/African American descent, prejudice and discrimination have contributed to academic challenges and distress (Cheng et al., 2020) and impacted levels of campus engagement (Patterson, 2020). Issues of access and equity also emerge as Black/African American and Latino/a/x/e college students trail behind White students by almost 20% when examining the traditional six-year completion rate at four-year institutions (Shapiro et al., 2017). While conferment of a degree from a postsecondary institution has become a necessary commodity in our global society (Authors, 2016), many students of Color enrolled in PWIs experience salient academic and social challenges that impact college success (Guiffrida & Douthit, 2010; Authors, 2016). Despite these barriers, resilient voices of college students from Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color (BIPOC) communities have been highlighted in the scholarly literature (Burt et al., 2022; Cerezo et al., 2013) providing context to the slowly increasing rates of racially minoritized college graduates (Shapiro et al., 2017). These resilient voices of Color have often had strong associations with

campus student multicultural centers (SMCs), which further support student academic success and sense of belonging (Patton, 2010; Museus, 2008), an element of particular importance at a PWI.

It is critically important to understand the challenges and barriers experienced by college students of Color, and we offer an alternative lens in our approach to this study. Education research has often utilized a *deficit* perspective, centering on approaches in which participants/students have “failed to meet a predetermined standard for an isolated skill or characteristic” (Anzul et al., 2001, p. 236). To better understand college students of Color from a *strengths-based* perspective (Soria & Stubblefield, 2015), we wanted to know more about the ways in which they persevered, persisted, and experienced resilience while attending a PWI. Resilience has held a variety of definitions but is regularly described as a personal characteristic in which an individual can adapt when facing adversity and mitigate the negative effects of stress to rise above difficult situations (Edward, 2005; Robbins et al., 2018). The purpose of this study was to explore how college students of Color experience resilience at a PWI.

Review of Literature

Students of Color in Higher Education

Following passage of the Higher Education Act of 1965, college enrollment at PWIS has steadily increased among students of Color (Reid & Ebede, 2018). According to the American Council on Education (ACE, 2019) undergraduate students of Color included 29.6% of the total undergraduate population but rose to 45.2% by 2016. These increases establish a need for higher education to integrate culturally responsive practices that include and support students from historically and presently marginalized populations, particularly as faculty, staff, and administration remain predominantly White (ACE, 2019). Low persistence rates continue to fuel gaps in academic achievement among these college students of Color (ACE, 2019) compounding the experiences of systemic racism in higher education (Barber et al., 2020).

Systemic racism has been present since the inception of higher education, considering the original intent was to solely serve White students, particularly White men (Museus et al., 2015). Students of Color in U.S. colleges and universities face racism ranging from microlevels (e.g., microaggressions in the classroom, silencing and isolation) to macrolevels (e.g., bias in standardized testing, higher education policy, affirmative action debates) (Museus et al., 2015). College students of Color enrolled in PWIs may combat significant challenges in navigating their career path related to cultural discrepancies (Authors, 2016) in which continued systemic inequalities characterize these colleges/universities as “White Spaces” (Lang & Yandell, 2019). Yet, in daunting economic times, obtaining a college education has considerable advantages in earnings and employment for individuals from all backgrounds (Authors, 2016). To navigate these historically and predominantly White spaces, minoritized populations have used counterspaces as social and academic spaces to build community, foster connection, and support academic and professional development (Choi, 2023).

Resilience

There is a general understanding in the scholarly literature that resilience includes features such as adaptability, self-esteem, having positive outlook, sense of humor, affirming and encouraging relationships, and role models (Kearns & McArdle, 2012; Knight, 2007; Kuiper, 2012). Resilience has commonly referenced optimism and suggests that individuals and groups can embrace adversity and difficulty, while still finding hope. Although no single combination of actions or characteristics constitutes resilience for college students, it is associated with positive outcomes, greater life satisfaction and the ability to cope with academic, employment and overall life pressures (Robbins et al., 2018).

While personality characteristics (e.g., being optimistic, empathic, humorous) also support resilient behaviors and reduced feelings of victimization in adverse or challenging situations (Knight, 2007), college students of Color may consistently experience race-related challenging situations when at a PWI and could benefit from social support. Strong interpersonal relationships have also been predictors of one's resilience (Ong et al., 2009). Strong interpersonal relationships can result in more effective adjustments and the ability to handle negative emotions, as well as reduced incidence of physical issues related to stress, compared to those with few or weak interpersonal relationships (Ong et al., 2009; Ryff & Singer, 2008). Support from family, friends, coworkers, community, and groups can also act as protective factors in fostering resilience (Edward, 2005).

The Current Study

To study resilience with students of Color, the researchers focused on SMCs, as an influential environment for students of Color at PWIs. SMCs build on the foundation of the Black Culture Centers of the late 1960s, which later expanded to multicultural offices that also served Latino/a/x/e and Native American/American Indian students in the 1980s and 1990s (Harris & Patton, 2017; Reid & Ebede, 2018). Student multicultural centers have long been described as safe spaces for students of Color at PWIs (McShay, 2017; Patton, 2010). These centers serve to enhance racial and/or ethnic identity development of BIPOC students, provide leadership opportunities and a sense of belonging, and offer resources to best navigate the higher education system (McShay, 2017). The research question guiding the current study is: How do college students of Color experience resilience at a PWI?

Methodology

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

We chose to use Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA; Smith et al., 2022) to gain a deeper understanding of how college students of Color experience resiliency at a PWI located in the Midwest. Qualitative research methods with participants with BIPOC identities has been shown to transcend cultural barriers in various disciplines and assists researchers in giving voice to participants from minoritized backgrounds (Dein, 2006). Exploring complex, ambiguous and emotionally laden topics through IPA is particularly useful (Smith et al., 2022). Given the limited research on the resilient experiences of college students of Color at PWIs, an IPA design provided a means for a deeper understanding of this phenomenon.

Procedures

Recruitment and Data Collection

After obtaining approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB), the first author recruited college students of Color that were affiliated with the university's SMC. We intentionally recruited participants from the university SMC because support from groups has been identified as a factor supporting resilience (Sanchez & Morgan, 2020). Seven students of Color chose to participate after being provided informed consent documents for their review, approval, and signatures. Sample sizes between three and 10 participants is considered appropriate for phenomenological research (Haskins et al., 2021), and we determined that our sample was sufficient, given our research design.

We collected data from semi-structured interviews conducted in-person and face-to-face. Interview questions were open-ended and explored participants' future career paths, life roles, and sources of support in college, along with how they overcame barriers, and an opportunity to share their experiences of resiliency while enrolled at a PWI. Interviews lasted between 45-90 minutes with an

average of 60 minutes, and follow-up questions were related to their experiences of resilience as a college student of Color attending a PWI. Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim by a professional transcriptionist.

Participants

Participants included seven undergraduate college students of Color enrolled full-time at a PWI in the Midwest who actively attended programming within their university's SMC. Four participants identified as cisgender women and three participants identified as cisgender men. Four participants were juniors, two were seniors, and one was a sophomore ($M_{age} = 20.85$ years, $SD_{age} = 1.34$). Five identified as first-generation college students, and all were full-time students living on or near campus. Two identified as African American men, two identified as African American women, one identified as Afro-Latina, one identified as Latino, and one identified as Native American. Participants were provided a pseudonym to protect their confidentiality.

Researcher Statement

Within qualitative methodologies, researchers engage in reflexive exercises to acknowledge their relationship with the research topic (Patton, 2015). Specifically, within the IPA framework, pre-understandings of the studied phenomenon are part of the research design (Haskins et al., 2021; Smith et al., 2022). To better expand on our positionality as researchers, the first author identifies as a Latina associate professor who was a first-generation college graduate and attended a PWI for her undergraduate and doctoral degrees. The second author, an associate professor, identifies as a White cisgender female who attended a PWI for her graduate degrees. The third author is a Black woman assistant professor who attended a PWI for her undergraduate and graduate education. All authors have a shared identity in working at a PWI with a strong interest in social justice and advocacy for BIPOC groups. Additionally, we have shared research interests in the psychosocial aspects of resilience and perseverance among college students of Color. As a research team, we bracketed our shared beliefs about our research topic: (a) college students of Color have unique experiences in PWIs and provide support to one another in formal and informal spaces; (b) perspectives of college students of Color can provide rich information for improving recruitment and retention services at higher education institutions; (c) higher education professionals (staff, faculty and administration) at PWIs do not receive enough training in working with historically and presently marginalized groups.

Data Analysis

The aim of IPA is to achieve deep understandings of experiences within participants' own socio-cultural contexts and realities (Smith et al., 2022). Smith and Osborn (2007) suggest researchers centralize meaning making to better understand the content and complexity of meanings. The first two authors served as the primary data analysts and followed the analysis guidance outlined by Smith and Osborn (2007). First, we immersed ourselves in the data by reading and re-reading the transcription of each participant interview. Next, the first two authors listed exploratory notes and comments based on the transcripts, while also being attentive to language, similarities, and contradictions. This resulted in the reorganization of preliminary themes into more complex themes to best capture and reflect an understanding of the phenomenon (Smith & Osborn, 2007). Then, the primary analysts met to discuss their interpretation and to reach consensus on preliminary themes within the first transcript. This process was used for each transcript individually and then researchers identified connections across emergent themes (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012; Smith & Osborn, 2007). The next stage of analysis required researchers to identify similar patterns across cases. Finally, researchers met to reach consensus through discussion on representative quotations that illustrated the emergent themes across cases, also known as

superordinate themes (Patton, 2015; Smith et al., 2022). We solicited an external auditor to review both process and content in our data analysis (Patton, 2015).

Trustworthiness is a core standard of quality for qualitative research. It necessitates careful close monitoring of the research process to substantiate an investigation's findings and establish credibility, transferability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Findings were verified in multiple ways including investigator triangulation, for which multiple researchers work to achieve consensus and accountability for analyses conducted (Patton, 2015). An external auditor provided checks on the analytic process of theme identification, improving the likelihood of confirmability (Patton, 2015). We also employed member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) with our participants after each interview by providing them a transcript to assess accuracy. Lastly, we achieved thick descriptions through use of representative participant quotations allowing readers to evaluate for themselves the transferability of the findings.

Findings

After analyzing seven semi-structured interviews through IPA, we present participants' experiences with resiliency in a PWI. Four superordinate themes emerged: (a) *connection with family and close friends*, (b) *engagement in organized groups and counterspaces*, (c) *representation and paying it forward*, and (d) *overcoming structural barriers*.

Connection with Family and Close Friends

As participants reflected on how they made meaning of their experiences of resiliency, many centered on the influence of their family and close friends. Charlotte was the first person in her family to pursue a bachelor's degree and reflected that her own parents "fell short in what they really wanted to do [as a profession]." Holly's mother was a role model to her, reporting, "My mom has always been in school. She got her master's and then most recently her doctorate." Michael reflected his gratitude for his parents in fostering resiliency in that "they made me question everything."

As Mandy explored her experiences of resiliency at a PWI, she reflected on her parents' deaths and the support gathered and generated by her siblings. Mandy reported having to "do things on my own and being independent" and yet recognizing that while at college, her siblings "really do miss me just being around." Mandy also discussed support from her siblings when reporting, "we weren't sure how to fill out the FAFSA... so I had to be really resourceful so I didn't incriminate myself or do anything I could get in trouble for." Jeff experienced the absence of a parent upon entering college in which he attributed to generating resilience. Jeff mentioned, "When I was getting ready to come to school, my dad actually had gotten out of prison. Which was a lot." Despite the absence of some salient individuals in the participants lives, Michael, Jeff, and Alex all expressed their how their experiences, connections and mentorship from cousins and other extended family members fostered resilience in college. Michael expressed the significance of "keeping it real with them [cousins]." Alex shared how his family connections provided meaning in which he was "forced to be a role model but at the same time openly accepted it." Connection with family and close friends were critical to participants' resilience, as were formal and informal groups on campus and beyond.

Engagement in Organized Groups and Counterspaces

All seven participants discussed how engagement in the classroom, various college clubs, professional organizations, and counterspaces served as a form of resiliency in persevering through college at a PWI. Within the classroom setting, participants shared a variety of experiences in which resiliency surfaced. Jasmine shared that "taking the Black Experience I & II [courses] was a good one for understanding myself." Jeff shared that at this PWI, it was his first experience in ever having a Black

professor “which molded me.” Michael stated that there were a few “Latinos so it helped me open up more.”

All participants discussed the support provided to them by the university’s SMC. Michael, Jeff, and Jasmine reported the SMC’s staff being instrumental in developing resilience during challenging situations while attending a PWI. Jasmine stated that the staff “do a really good of supporting and uplifting us whenever we have issues.” Michael emphasized when he lacked motivation or dedication to schoolwork, the staff would join him and say, “let’s do homework together, let’s go to the library and study, let’s bust out this assignment real quick.” Michael shared that college clubs “helped me build a leadership role...I feel like we can always learn from each other.” Yet, this wasn’t the case for all participants.

Charlotte expressed her overcoming adversity when she felt club members were “practicing powder puff feminism” where the “white savior complex runs very deep.” Charlotte reported having to be resilient when she had expectations for this campus club stating, “When I tried to get them to walk the walk—they just decided to sit down.” Jasmine experienced tests to her resiliency when she was in the classroom. She perceived some students were not comfortable with her presence as a student of Color in class. Additionally, Jasmine reported “sometimes a professor may not be aware of certain things that they should and shouldn’t say and end up saying microaggressions.” Holly expressed that she isn’t as open in the classroom anymore because of the “underlying racism that comes from everyone and people don’t necessarily recognize there’s passive aggressive statements and...they don’t realize how they affect people...they don’t understand.”

As a result of these adverse experiences, participants developed and created counterspaces, which included intentional anti-racist areas in which participants could feel safe in their surroundings to be themselves as a student of Color. Mandy reported, “I started to find people who have common interests...I don’t really focus on what separates us but unites us.” She went on to discuss and reflect that her peers were good resources and helped her be resilient: “I am working out with girls and that is a good stress reliever and a good way to strip away the stresses of academics.” Charlotte reported using her platform to make connections. “I am the president and founder of the speech and debate team...so I got a lot of predominantly White organizations to come to a lot of predominantly Black organizations to foster collaboration and learn about different things.” Counterspaces were also described as certain people and areas across campus that consisted of university faculty and staff not associated with the SMC. Jeff reflected on his relationship with a staff person who “is always on me and keeping me responsible for my work... Knowing that I have someone back behind me saying ‘I have expectations’.” Alex reported, “I would reach out to my English teachers.” For faculty and staff to keep current on the needs of students of Color, Jasmine suggested, “I think teachers and faculty members should go through a required diversity training taught by people that actually know what they’re talking about.”

Representation and Paying it Forward

The third superordinate theme that emerged from participants and their experiences of resiliency related to representation and paying it forward to future generations of college students of Color. Participants identified institutional and organizational practices and procedures, which included the world of work, their neighborhoods and respective communities being sources they could draw upon to continue to be resilient. Michael stated that, “Every time I go back home [to his community], it’s nothing but love.” Mandy expressed her experiences of representation between her community of African Americans and her chosen profession. Mandy stated,

There are a lot of White women in speech pathology so not having people who look like me around can be challenging sometimes. I know I want to do this [be a speech pathologist] so I just have to stick my head in my book and focus on that instead of looking around and thinking ‘who am I going to talk to?’”

Through these experiences, Mandy developed her resilience in sharing:

“I accept people for who they are, on a personal level as opposed to their race or their vernacular. Being accepting and open to not just Black but if it’s someone who is Indian, or something else—accepting to learn more about them.”

Giving back to one’s community was also common among participants in which they hoped would foster resilience to the next generation of college students of Color. Holly stated, “I want to give back to them and make them proud just like my community of Black people. I want to succeed, and I want to inspire other people to do the same thing.” Jeff expressed, “How do I give back in the way that others have given to me?” Likewise, in Charlotte’s hopes of being a lawyer in her future career, she stated: “I want a ¼ to ½ of the work that we do to be pro bono, to be free for under privileged, underdeveloped areas...” In addition to paying it forward, participants recognized how overcoming structural barriers fostered resiliency within themselves.

Overcoming Structural Barriers

The fourth superordinate theme included participants being resilient by overcoming structural barriers inherent in cultural norms, broader public resources, and institutional policies. Before discussing resilience, participants reflected on larger cultural issues and financial systems. Charlotte shared, “Being who we are, as a minority or underrepresented group, that the world isn’t necessarily always as fair as it should be. People are very ignorant when it comes to minorities and underrepresented groups.” For Alex, as a Native American student, he reported the struggle of how to choose just one race on formal applications and his desire to become a teacher so he can teach Native American history with accuracy. Alex stated, “I feel like Native Americans are one of the most underrepresented minorities across the country. I mean we’re the smallest minority...our history isn’t even taught properly in the history books.” Alex described that the Native American population “isn’t just a bunch of history figures.” Despite his experiences, Alex’s tribe supported his resilience to persevere in college. Alex shared: “I get a lot of financial aid from my tribe...most tribes do not have resources to help out their members...I actually would not be in college if it weren’t for that.”

Jeff shared his experience of overcoming stereotypes of being African American. “I didn’t want to be a statistic. I didn’t want to be somebody’s stereotype like ‘you’re that typical African American.’” He went on to disclose, “There are some Black people and Mexicans who feel like all White people are against them and I get it.” Michael echoed that experience when sharing, “I know there is ignorance everywhere and it still lingers, but just get educated and try as much to understand someone else’s life.” Mandy shared in her major, she studies accent modification and “sometimes I’ll have to assume a different way of talking than I normally would when I’m talking to someone who’s Black as opposed to someone who’s White. I have learned to use different words for different people.” Yet, the hope for change in structural barriers as it related to White communication norms was evident when Holly shared, “The ignorance is always going to be there... but we could still try to move toward it.”

Finances and financial policies were also significant structural barriers. Each participant shared the importance of funding and how that supported his or her success in a PWI. Jasmine shared she chose her current university based on how much scholarship funding she received. Michael disclosed, “Grants and scholarships definitely helped where in today’s world—it’s pretty messed up for all the debt for people just to get educated. Our people should be educated.” Most importantly, Michael had advice for other students of Color who may be entering into a PWI. He shared, “Don’t just be ordinary. Don’t be doing average things, especially when you are paying so much in the end—get your money’s worth.”

Discussion

The findings of this study contribute to the growing body of strengths-based resiliency research of BIPOC students in higher education. The experiences shared by participants reflect the daily realities of systemic racism in U.S. society generally, and higher education specifically. The current study highlights the ways in which students of Color experience resilience at a PWI, addressing the ways in which they resisted deficit narratives, utilized resources, created community, and engaged with the institution. Our superordinate themes emphasize the processes and supports participants used to obtain and maintain both group-level (i.e., cultural and collective) and individual (i.e., personal) resilience.

At a group level, participants recognized challenges, including the pervasiveness of racial assumptions, inaccuracies, and stereotypes (e.g., Native Americans as bygone peoples, an African American “statistic” in the White imagination) that were outside of their control. It seemed that their cultural consciousness, ability to resist dominant narratives, and collectivist orientation served as a catalyst for resilience and agency. Beyond simply recognizing the barriers (e.g., “ignorance is always going to be there”), participants were able to stand firm in their cultural knowledge (e.g., “our history isn’t even taught properly”) and their ability to facilitate change (e.g., connecting organizations). In facing financial and institutional challenges, participants described expectations to acquire the knowledge and tools often readily available to White, middle-class peers (e.g., assistance with FAFSA, identifying culturally similar mentors). While navigating these issues often required additional time, labor, and collaboration from others, they contributed to individual resiliency (e.g., “I had to be really resourceful”) and sense of being supported by a collective (e.g., “financial aid from my tribe”). This was also reflected in several participants’ collective responsibility to their “People” or “Community” (e.g., making them proud, teaching their histories in culturally intentional ways), to represent and model for future students of Color (e.g., accepting responsibilities for role modeling), and to positively impact their communities with their education (using education to provide services in underserved communities), consistent with recent research with students of Color (Brooms, 2023; Sanchez & Morgan, 2022)

Participants’ individual resilience seemed to be an outgrowth of their cultural resilience, including family and community connections as well as relationships fostered in the university context (e.g., staff and peers connected in the SMC, faculty of Color). Reciprocal relationships were central to participants’ descriptions of resilience. In the university context, support often included mentoring, encouragement, and accountability. Immediate and extended family had less clearly defined roles and actions, but it was clear they served as a supportive base for participants and provided a sense of purpose and meaning. Some shared that their pursuit of higher education was connected to family members’ modeling or achieving their unfulfilled academic goals.

Grounded in their cultural identities and supported by reciprocal relationships, individual factors in resilience often included openness to others and new experiences, prioritizing their goals and sense of self, challenging peers’ cultural awareness, and taking initiative to connect with others to build community. Participants expressed openness in their eagerness to learn as well as a commitment to authenticity and advocacy in challenging the status quo. Statements like “when I tried to get them to ‘walk the walk’” reflected the individual resilience and agency of students of Color to overcome institutional and interpersonal barriers. While less frequently reported, but clearly relevant, one strategy that supported resiliency was in protecting their energy and choosing when and how they engaged in predominantly White spaces (e.g., limiting expression in the classroom due to microaggressions, accent modification, and code-switching). While these modifications were viewed as frustrating at times, there was also an acceptance that these challenges may similarly occur throughout their professional careers. Lastly, some participants described activities in interest groups or student organizations that did not have an explicit race-related focus or component, although it is not clear how, or even if, participants experienced culturally inclusive environments these spaces.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

The current study provides valuable information on the resilience of students of Color who accessed their university's SMC. While this sample provides insight into the experiences of those that described connections to peers, staff, and/or faculty, the absence of students who are not similarly connected presents an opportunity for future research. Given the prominence of connection to peers and institutional supports in recent research (Cisneros et al., 2021; McCallen & Johnson, 2020) and across participant interviews, it is important to understand how students who are less connected to campus resources experience resilience in addition to identifying factors that may contribute to disconnection from institutional supports. Additionally, the cross-sectional nature of data collection limits understanding of developmental factors experienced throughout participants' undergraduate careers. Longitudinal research that continues with students over time can more comprehensively support at different stages of their education. Considering the persistent challenges facing college students of Color, it is important to examine how SMCs support the development of strong interpersonal relationships, which may enhance resilience for this population of students.

Implications

While higher education encompasses opportunities and challenges for all students, the U.S. educational system has a history of restricting or denying equitable access and participation for students of Color (Barber et al., 2020; Museus et al., 2008). The onus for responding to these inequities often falls to students' individual and cultural resilience; however, as described by participants in the current study, intentional efforts through university programming (e.g., culturally responsive training for faculty), development of academic programs (e.g., Black Studies), recruitment and retention of faculty of Color (e.g., a first experiencing having a Black professor "which molded me") and support of counterspaces (e.g., SMCs) can structure environments and experiences that support students of Color. Collectively, these interventions can enhance students' established supports of family and extended kinship networks, promote engagement, facilitate access to information and resources, and foster mentoring relationships (Cisneros et al., 2022; Museus & Shiroma, 2022).

In the current study, the people, processes, and supports for students of Color were often, though not exclusively, embedded in the SMC. Participants described how their experiences with the SMC and strong connections to their families and community supported their resilience, persistence, sense of belonging, and leadership, consistent with previous research (McCallen & Johnson, 2019; Museus & Shiroma, 2022). Although individual resilience is highly valued in an individualistic society, our findings suggest cultural resilience and community are similarly important. Student perceptions and experiences with SMCs have remained positive and are consistent with their original purposes (Patton, 2006; Reid & Ebede, 2018), and SMCs may be even more essential for BIPOC students as diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts face public scrutiny and legal challenges. As BIPOC students continue to face structural and institutional barriers in higher education, cultural intentionality and responsiveness in university planning, decision-making, and services can facilitate resilient personal, cultural, and academic development and support equitable access in higher education.

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