Opening the Activism and Postsecondary Education Black Box: Relating High-Impact Practices and Student Identity with Activist Behaviors
Setting the Context
Literature Review
Methods
Results
Implications for Practice
Future Research
Setting the Context
Calls to Reframe Student Activism

Nuisance → Learning Opportunity
Characteristics of Recent Research on Activism

- Examples:
  - (Linder & Rodriguez, 2012): Student activism in response to sexual violence,
  - (Muñoz, 2015): Student activists navigating Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act policies.
  - (Baker & Blissett, 2017): Institutional characteristics that correspond with the emergence of the #ITooAm campaign,
  - (Davis, 2018): Examines the Dream Defenders, college students whose activism around “Stand Your Ground Laws” in Florida manifested in spaces beyond their campuses, such as on social media and in surrounding communities.
The connection between activism and educational experiences that institutions intentionally offer and promote (e.g., HIPs) is pivotal in helping institutions understand how they might shift to seeing student activism as an asset and an important learning outcome.
Relevant Literature
Operationalizing Activism and High-Impact Practices

Dimensions of Activism

- **Target of Activism Behavior** (Hoffman & Mitchell, 2016)
- **Tactics Employed** (Barnhardt, 2015)
- **Collective or Individualized Benefit** (Coleman, 2009)
Operationalizing Activism and High-Impact Practices

High-Impact Practices (HIPS)

• **HIPS help students experience proven educational practices in a structured and prolonged manner**
  - Learning communities, service-learning courses, research with faculty members, internships (e.g., co-op, field experience, student teaching, or clinical placement), study abroad programs, and (culminating) senior (capstone) experiences, among other practices (Kuh 2009; Kuh et al. 2010)

• Linked to **desirable educational outcomes** (e.g., improved retention, persistence, graduation, and openness to diversity among undergraduate students (Kilgo et al. 2015; Kuh et al. 2010; Mayhew et al. 2016))
Student Activism

- Student Background Characteristics
- Student Involvement
- HIP Participation
- Institutional Characteristics
Deliberative Dialogue
Civic & Political Action
Engagement Theory
Data & Methods
Data Sources

• 2017 Administration of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)
• Supplemental item set on social and political activism and perceptions of institutional support for political engagement was electively administered at 25 participating institutions
Participants

- Administered to 7,000 first-year and senior students attending 25 4-year institutions
- n=3,257 seniors who completed the supplemental item set
  - Response rate of 78.1%.

Sample Demographics

- ~66% identified as women, identified as white, and attended master’s degree-granting institutions.
- ~41% identified as a first-generation student
- ~39% attended university elsewhere before arriving at their current institution
- ~25% lived on campus or in a fraternity or sorority house
- ~11% identified as Queer
Measures

- **Student Level**
  - Gender^*
  - Sexual Orientation^*
  - Race/Ethnicity^*
- **Participation in Various HIPs**
  - (^denotes measures that were recoded using effect coding (Mayhew and Simonoff 2015))
Measures

• Institutional Level
• Carnegie Classification Degree Type
• Enrollment Size
• Selectivity
Measures

- **Student Activism Factors**
  - How often they had participated during the current academic year in 10 forms of political activism:
    - Response Options:
      - Never
      - Sometimes
      - Often
      - Very Often
  - Participation in various forms of activism on their campuses or in their communities
    - Response options:
      - Have not decided
      - Do not plan to do
      - Plan to do
      - Done or in progress
    - Ordered by ease of participation or frequency.
Appendix A
Items Comprising the Student Activism Factors

Deliberative Dialogue (Cronbach's \( \alpha = 0.66 \))

*During the current school year, about how often have you done the following?*
- Discussed a social or political issue with friends, family, or coworkers *in person* [ACT1701a]
- Discussed a social or political issue with friends, family, or coworkers *on social media* [ACT1701b]
- Addressed a social or political issue in course discussions or as part of an assignment [ACT1701c]

Consciousness Raising (Cronbach's \( \alpha = 0.87 \))

*During the current school year, about how often have you done the following?*
- Distributed pamphlets, stickers, or other informational material to promote a social or political cause [ACT1701d]
- Wore something (shirt, wristband, button, etc.) to promote a social or political cause [ACT1701e]
- Attended a public event (protest, rally, march, prayer or candlelight vigil, etc.) about a social or political cause [ACT1701f]
- Wrote a blog post, opinion piece, or letter to the editor to promote a social or political cause [ACT1701g]
- Contacted college, university, or governmental leaders to promote a social or political cause [ACT1701h]
- Reached out to people on campus or in your community (knocked on doors, distributed petitions, phone banked, etc.) to promote a social or political cause [ACT1701i]
- Asked others to donate money for a social or political cause [ACT1701j]

Civic and Political Action (Cronbach's \( \alpha = 0.69 \))

*During the current school year, which have you done/plan to do on campus or in your community?*
- Participate in a group that has submitted or will submit a list of demands to college, university, or government leaders [ACT1 702a]
- Participate in a boycott, strike, sit-in, walk-out, or the like [ACT1702b]
- Organize a public event (a protest, rally, march, prayer or candlelight vigil, etc.) about a social or political cause [ACT1702c]
Data Analysis

\[ Y_{ij} = \beta_{0j} + \beta_{1j} \text{ Woman}_{ij} + \beta_{2j} \text{ Another Gender Identity}_{ij} + \beta_{3j} \text{ Gender Prefer Not to Respond}_{ij} + \beta_{4j} \text{ Queer}_{ij} + \beta_{5j} \text{ Sexual Orientation Prefer Not to Respond}_{ij} + \beta_{6j} \text{ Asian, Native Hawaiian, Other Pacific Islander}_{ij} + \beta_{7j} \text{ Black or African American}_{ij} + \beta_{8j} \text{ Hispanic or Latino}_{ij} + \beta_{9j} \text{ Multiracial}_{ij} + \beta_{10j} \text{ Other Race or Ethnicity}_{ij} + \beta_{11j} \text{ First-generation}_{ij} + \beta_{12j} \text{ Transfer}_{ij} + \beta_{13j} \text{ Traditional Age}_{ij} + \beta_{14j} \text{ Veteran}_{ij} + \beta_{15j} \text{ Disability}_{ij} + \beta_{16j} \text{ gpcService-Learning}_{ij} + \beta_{17j} \text{ gpcLearning Community}_{ij} + \beta_{18j} \text{ gpcResearch with Faculty}_{ij} + \beta_{19j} \text{ gpcInternship}_{ij} + \beta_{20j} \text{ gpcStudy Abroad}_{ij} + \beta_{21j} \text{ gpcSenior Experience}_{ij} + \beta_{22j} \text{ gpcSTEM Major}_{ij} + \beta_{23j} \text{ gpcFraternity or Sorority}_{ij} + \beta_{24j} \text{ gpcOn Campus}_{ij} + \beta_{25j} \text{ gpcAthlete}_{ij} + R_{ij} \]

\[ \beta_{0j} = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01} \text{(Private)}_{ij} + \gamma_{02} \text{(Doc)}_{ij} + \gamma_{03} \text{(Masters)}_{ij} + \gamma_{04} \text{(Size)}_{ij} + \gamma_{05} \text{(Selectivity)}_{ij} + U_{0j} \]
Limitations

- Generalizability
- Self-Selection Bias
- Institutional Level Variables
- “Why” questions
What We Found: Study Results
Results

Outcome of Interest: Student Activism

#NOTMYLOYOLA

NotMyLoyola 2018: The Movement

CANDLELIGHT VIGIL FOR JUSTICE
A GATHERING TO SHOW UNITY IN THE FACE OF SOCIAL INJUSTICES

6:30 p.m. | Wednesday, Oct. 5
Memorial Student Center Plaza

WE WILL NOT BE SILENT SO THAT YOU CAN REMAIN COMFORTABLE
Participated in Activism
HIPs & Student Activism

Service Learning
HIPs & Student Activism

LIVING LEARNING COMMUNITIES

#NOTMYLOYOLA

NotMyLoyola 2018: The Movement
HIPs & Student Activism

Undergraduate Student-Faculty Research
HIPs & Student Activism

STUDY ABROAD

#NOTMYLOYOLA

NotMyLoyola 2018: The Movement
Discussion

Nuancing Student Activism Among Minoritized Student Populations
Discussion

Provisional Role of HIPs in Activism Behaviors
Discussion

Differences among student in STEM areas of study
Discussion

Institutional Level Variables
‘So what?’

Implications for Practice
Future Research
Thank You