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Community on Campus: Examining the Impact of Campus Climate, Belonging, and Flourishing on Bystander Behavior Among Diverse University Students

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COMMUNITY ON CAMPUS:
EXAMINING THE IMPACT OF CAMPUS CLIMATE, BELONGING, AND FLOURISHING ON BYSTANDER BEHAVIOR AMONG DIVERSE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education at Virginia Commonwealth University.

by

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Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Abstract

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Major Director: Abigail H. Conley, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Department of Counseling and Special Education, School of Education

This exploratory, nonexperimental study aimed to investigate the relationships among diverse undergraduate and graduate students' perceived campus climate, flourishing, and university belonging on bystander intentions and bystander behaviors during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study's theoretical framework combined the Theory of Planned Behavior and feminist theory, and examined intersectionality through an Identity Risk Index. Data used in the current study were originally collected as part of an institutional Healthy Minds Survey, on health behaviors of college students; responses from n = 171 of the randomly selected participants were used in the current study's analyses. The majority of participants indicated at least two marginalized social identities and intervened as a bystander at least once in the last year. The results of two MANOVAS indicated significant differences among students with marginalized social identities, and nonsignificant differences by academic level, for flourishing, university belonging, campus climate, and bystander intention. The results of a multilinear regression with a covariate indicated that flourishing, university, and campus climate predict bystander intention more

accurately when accounting for students' marginalized identities. Lastly, a Poisson regression confirmed that bystander intention predicted bystander intervention for university students. Overall, the findings suggest that as university leaders create initiatives and policies aimed to enhance students' well-being post-COVID-19 pandemic, they should consider systemic implications these decisions may have on students with diverse identities. Inclusive campus climates as well as intentional opportunities to foster university belonging and flourishing, can increase students' intentions to intervene in risky situations, and promote a healthier campus community.

Chapter One: Introduction

Over the last several years, higher education leaders have emphasized the need to address well-being as a part of students' university experiences (Barbera et al., 2020; Kalkbrenner & Flinn, 2020; Stowe et al., 2021). While this trend may have initially served as a secondary focus to academics, the COVID-19 pandemic brought leaders' concerns about students' well-being to the forefront (Abrams, 2022, October 12; Grubic et al., 2020; Keibler & Stewart, 2021; Mishra & Kumar, 2021; Oh et al., 2021). Researchers have found that many students struggled with their health and well-being during this time (Active Minds, 2020a; Active Minds 2020b; Grubic et al., 2020; Kiebler & Stewart, 2021; Mishra & Kumar, 2021; Oh et al., 2021; YoungMinds 2020). Common health concerns for university students included feelings of isolation (Benson & Witson, 2022; Gopalan et al., 2022; Surovell, 2023, January 18), enduring stress (Graham & Eloff, 2022; Grubic et al., 2020; Mishra & Kumar, 2021; Nyunt et al., 2022), heightened anxiety, substance use issues, and depression (Active Minds, 2020a; Kiebler & Stewart, 2021; Oh et al., 2022; YoungMinds, 2020). To cope, some students reported seeking support from campus resources. However, many campus offices had difficulty adapting to virtual environments, and the growing need for services often outweighed the number of resources available to students (Abrams, 2022, October 12; Bhagat & Kim, 2020; Kiebler & Stewart, 2021).

As universities transitioned from fully in-person, to online and hybrid modalities, students had difficulty connecting with one another as well (Benson & Whitson, 2022; Hernández et al., 2021; Stowe et al., 2021). Some researchers have found that connection and well-being were especially difficult for students with marginalized identities during the pandemic (Haliwa et al., 2021; Oh, 2022; Oh et al., 2021). This could be linked to the nationally emerging identity politics (Chou & Gaysynsky, 2021; Goldberg, 2020; Laurencin & Walker,

2020; Reyes, 2020) and publicized violence, especially toward people of color, in the United States while students were simultaneously in school (Laurencin & Walker, 2020; Reyes, 2020).

Before the pandemic, researchers identified benefits for students who engaged in university opportunities that fostered peer-to-peer connection (Anistranski & Brown, 2021). Opportunities like affinity groups, academic clubs, structured sports, or student organizations, have traditionally increased students' sense of belonging (Anistranski & Brown, 2021; Walton & Cohen, 2007), academic performance, and enhanced their well-being (Anistranski & Brown, 2021; Hausman et al., 2009; Walton & Cohen, 2007). As campus climates rapidly shifted due to lockdowns and safety concerns during the COVID-19 pandemic, it became more difficult for these types of opportunities to take place (Abrams, 2022, October 12), and as the pandemic progressed, students reported that meaningful interactions with others (Gopalan et al., 2020) and their sense of belonging at their university (Active Minds, 2020a; Benson & Witson, 2022; Hernández et al., 2021; Walsh et al., 2021) declined.

Although students' university connections became more difficult during the pandemic (Abrams, 2022, October 12; Gopalan et al., 2020; Benson & Witson, 2022), there is still little research on if, and how, students supported each other interpersonally during the difficulties associated with this period. In the past, researchers have studied the concept of bystander engagement, including students' bystander intentions and intervening behaviors, as a method to examine student-to-student support on campus (Chen et al., 2020; DeMaria et al., 2018; Exner & Cummings, 2011; Graupensperger et al., 2021; Hoxmeier et al., 2018; LaBelle, 2018). Bystander intention is a student's belief that they would intervene in a situation if a peer needed help (Casey et al., 2017; Banyard et al., 2014; Coker et al., 2015). Bystander intervention occurs when a student chooses to intervene when a challenging situation arises and a peer could use their

support (The Healthy Minds Network, 2020, September). Before the pandemic, numerous studies examined bystander intervention behaviors for situations that students could face in college (Exner & Cummings, 2011; Magid et al., 2021; O'Brien et al., 2021; Palmer & Hoxmeier, 2022). Some of these situations included intervention opportunities that could have an impact students' ability to thrive at their university, such as sexual assault (Alteristic, n.d.; Coker et al., 2015; Chen et al., 2022; Hoxemeier et al., 2018) and risky substance use (John et al., 2022; LaBelle, 2018). Some researchers have shown that when a student believes they would intervene on the behalf of another, they are more likely to do so when an opportunity is presented (Hoxmeier et al., 2018). When students do intervene on behalf of a peer, it can greatly improve the peer's health outcomes (Alteristic, n.d.; Chen et al., 2022; LaBelle, 2018). However, since the COVID-19 pandemic, there has only been one study that has examined college student bystander engagement, which studied the use of CPR for Japanese university students (Mori et al., 2022). This gap in the literature has critical implications for the field. At a time when students struggled greatly with their well-being (Active Minds, 2020a; Active Minds 2020b; Grubic et al., 2020; Kiebler & Stewart, 2021; Mishra & Kumar, 2021; Oh et al., 2021; YoungMinds 2020) and a sense of belonging at their university (Active Minds, 2020a; Benson & Witson, 2022; Hernández et al., 2021; Walsh et al., 2021), understanding more about students' bystander intentions and behavior could bring additional insight into how students supported each other in a challenging campus environment, and gives insight into how universities may foster student post-pandemic.

As the climate of higher education continues to shift, there is more to learn about the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on students' university experiences. Student well-being and belonging remain top concerns among students and university leaders (Abrams, 2022, October

12; Surovell, 2023, January 18) and there is still little known about how students helped one another during this time. Using the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991) and feminist theory as a framework (Crenshaw, 1989; Crenshaw, 1991; Evans et al., 2005) this study expands the current research and provides additional context into diverse students' experiences of campus climate, flourishing, university belonging, and bystander behavior during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Theoretical Approach

A combination of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991) and feminist theory (Crenshaw 1989, Crenshaw, 1991; Evans, 2005) served as the guiding framework for this study. The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is often used to predict and understand a person's health behaviors (Ajzen, 1991). The TPB includes a variety of elements that contribute to a person's behavioral outcomes including their attitudes toward a behavior, subjective norms, behavioral intentions, and perceptions of how easy or challenging it is to engage in a behavior (Ajzen, 1991; Asare, 2015). While the TPB is not the only model that predicts behavior, it is one of the most reliable and frequently used frameworks to study this phenomenon, and has been used in fields like public health, psychology, and higher education (Bollinger, 2019; LaBelle, 2018; Strubel, 2021). The TPB has been historically used as a framework to explain bystander intentions and behaviors in university students (John et al., 2022; Magid et al., 2021; Strubel, 2021) which made it particularly relevant for this study.

While the TPB can provide context into individuals' intentions and behaviors, the theory itself does little to address larger systemic influences (Sideridis et al., 1998). Therefore, feminist theory was layered into the framework of this study. Feminist theory was used to examine the potential impact of power dynamics, identity politics, and institutional influence (Pruitt, 202;

Rampton, 2015) within the variables. Feminist theory was inspired by the feminist movement (Rogan & Budegeon, 2018), the history of which is examined in Chapter Two. Modern feminist theory centralizes advocacy and empowerment to support social justice and advancement in equity for people of all identities (Harris & Patton, 2019; Rampton, 2015). The feminist concept of intersectionality was noted throughout the study to acknowledge the influence of interlocking marginalized identities, and structural and interpersonal forms of power and oppression that may impact students' intentions, behaviors, and health outcomes (Crenshaw, 1989). Together, the TPB and feminist theory were used to frame this study on diverse students' perceptions of campus climate, flourishing, university belonging and bystander intentions, as well as their bystander intervention behaviors.

Background

Previous researchers have shown that a sense of belonging (Anistranski & Brown, 2021; Hausman et al., 2009; Walton & Cohen, 2007), an inclusive campus climate (Le et al., 2016; Slay et al., 2019), and flourishing (Fink, 2014; Peter et al., 2011) can serve as protective factors for student well-being. However, these factors have never been examined together or as influencers for helping intentions. As universities navigate a way forward post-pandemic, research in this area presents opportunities for university leaders to promote prosocial intervention behaviors surrounding these factors through initiatives like programs, relationships, and policies. This study examined relationships between campus climate, flourishing, university belonging, bystander intention, and bystander intervention for diverse university students. Multiple academic levels (i.e. undergraduate and graduate/professional students) and intersecting marginalized social identities were examined to gain a comprehensive understanding of a

university as a community, to compare similarities and differences between students' perceptions and behaviors, and to bring new perspectives to the existing literature.

As higher education has changed over the last few years due to the COVID-19 pandemic, so have students' needs. The COVID-19 pandemic has been associated with a variety of health concerns for students. Oh and colleagues (2022) surveyed undergraduate students in 2020 and found that almost 20% (n = 3217) of the sample reported moderate to severe depression, and about 33% (n = 5440) of students reported moderate to severe anxiety in the previous two weeks. Additionally, researchers from the national mental health organization, Active Minds, surveyed students from multiple universities in the Fall of 2020 and found that almost 75% of undergraduate and graduate students reported that their mental health had worsened as the pandemic progressed (Active Minds, 2020b). Solitary substance use and suicidal ideation (Stowe et al., 2021) also found to have increased for students throughout the pandemic, which gives additional context to students' coping behaviors and acuity.

Unfortunately, the challenges to students' health did not fade with the pandemic (Surovell, 2023, January 18). University leaders have continued to struggle to meet the growing and lingering well-being concerns from students (Son et al., 2020). In 2022, the NASPA: Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education surveyed student affairs leaders from more than 100 universities. The researchers found that 77% of leaders believed that, although their campuses had increased mental health services in the last year, it was not enough to meet the level of student concerns. Additionally, 72% of leaders believed that campus mental health among students, faculty, and staff, had worsened in the past year (Surovell, 2023, January 18). As universities continue to navigate challenges, the results from this study may provide further

insight into the conditions necessary for campus communities to more effectively support one another.

Gaps in the Literature

The literature on bystander engagement, flourishing, belonging, and campus climate has primarily focused on undergraduate experiences before the COVID-19 pandemic. This is especially true for bystander engagement research, which has almost exclusively studied undergraduates (McMahon et al., 2020) and has slowed since federal funding and political climates have shifted (Htun et al., 2022). Researchers have previously found that undergraduate and graduate students have different experiences at their institutions (Dost et al., 2020; Hurato & Carter, 1997; Le et al., 2016; McMahon et al, 2021; Oh et al., 2021; Risisky et al., 2022; Rosenthal, 2016; Underwood, 2019) in particular regard to their stages in life, personal responsibilities (Merriam et al., 2007), perception of campus resources (Gallagher, 2011; McMahon et al, 2021) and the increased academic rigor of their programs (Rosenthal et al., 2016). However, as campus climates shifted during the COVID-19 pandemic, emerging literature has found that undergraduate and graduate students' experiences of their universities have changed, and experiences between academic levels were similar (Dost et al., 2020; Oh et al., 2021; Risisky et al. 2022; Wallace et al., 2021). Results from this study provides further insight into both undergraduate and graduate/professional students' experiences during the pandemic.

In addition to gaps related to academic level, there are also gaps in the literature related to students' social identities. Most higher education research (McCoy et al., 2015) on campus climate, flourishing, belonging, and bystander behaviors focuses on one identity group such as students of a specific race, gender, or sexual orientation, if they acknowledge identity at all. This

gap is particularly troubling when acknowledging trends in violence toward Black Americans (Laurencin & Walker, 2020; Reyes, 2020), record-high anti-LGBTQ legislation (Goldberg, 2020), and xenophobia toward Asian people (Chou & Gaysynsky, 2021) throughout the pandemic. This is the first study to have examined the relationships between the variables in this study with students' intersecting marginalized social identities.

Lastly, while some researchers have studied flourishing (Elemo et al., 2022; Graham & Eloff, 2022; Grier-Reed, 2022; Nyunt et al., 2022; Petruzziello et al., 2022) and belonging (Benson & Whitson, 2022; Gopalan et al., 2022; Hernández et al., 2021; Walsh et al., 2021) within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, these studies have not investigated these areas along with students' perceptions of their campus climate and bystander intentions. There is evidence to show that some students found ways to connect (Active Minds, 2020b, YoungMinds, 2020) and help one another throughout the pandemic (Active Minds, 2020b). However, this study provides further insight into specific factors that predict bystander intention, and ultimately bystander intervention.

Statement of the Problem

University environments have changed dramatically since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the expectations for student affairs leaders to address students' lingering well-being concerns remain at the forefront (Abrams, 2022, October 12; Birmingham et al., 2021; Dost et al., 2020; Kiebler & Stewart, 2021; Mishra & Kumar, 2021; Oh et al., 2021; Pagoto et al., 2021; Risisky et al., 2022; Stowe et al., 2021; Surovell, 2023, January 18; Wallace et al., 2021; Walsh et al., 2021). As higher education leaders continue to navigate how to support students post-pandemic (Abrams, 2022, October 12; Surovell, 2023, January 18), and with new information about the impact of the pandemic on students consistently emerging, a focus on

research that highlights student-to-student support is largely missing from the conversation. As conversations about student well-being and belonging have become a growing emphasis at universities (Abrams, 2022, October 12; Surovell, 2023, January 18), examining the relationship between the variables in this study can provide a greater understanding of what influences students' intentions to be there for one another on campus. Research that provides insight into the similarities or differences among student populations, including academic level and intersecting social identities are largely missing from the literature. Learning more about the nuances of students' experiences helps university personnel identify and advocate to address policies and potential barriers to students' well-being and thriving communities.

Study Significance

Leaders in higher education are increasingly searching for solutions to address students' well-being post-COVID-19 pandemic (Abrams, 2022, October 12; Surovell, 2023, January 18). This study is the first to contribute to the field by advancing researchers' and practitioners' understanding of diverse, undergraduate and graduate/professional students' perceptions of flourishing, campus climate, university belonging, bystander intentions, and bystander behaviors a year into the COVID-19 pandemic. The results from students' perceptions of campus climate, university belonging, flourishing, and intersecting identities serve as a foundation to clarify potential motivating factors for bystander intention. This study provides critical insight into how students were able to support each other despite challenges to their environments. It is hoped by adding to the literature, that the results give university leaders a starting place to focus their institutional resources for well-being initiatives that promote environments that support healthier outcomes for diverse students.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationships among diverse undergraduate and graduate students' perceived campus climate, flourishing, and belonging on bystander intentions and bystander behaviors at their university. Students' self-reported flourishing (Fink, 2014; Hirshberg et al., 2022; Keyes, 2002; Ouweneel et al., 2011; Peter et al., 2011) and belonging (Anistranski & Brown, 2021; Hausman et al., 2009; Walton & Cohen, 2007) in college have been shown to contribute to retention, overall academic success, and their overall well-being. A positive campus climate (Anistranski & Brown, 2021; Hurtado & Carter, 1997; Rankin & Reason, 2005; Slay et al., 2019) and bystander intervention behaviors (Casey et al., 2017; Chen et al., 2022; Graupensperger et al., 2021; Hoxmeier et al., 2018; LaBelle, 2018; Magid et al., 2021; Struble, 2021) are thought to be protective factors for students' health at their university. By examining campus climate, flourishing, and belonging and how they affect student bystander engagement during the COVID-19 pandemic, the results could provide universities with further context into students' experiences and clearer opportunities for student support.

Research Questions

The following research questions guide this study:

RQ1: Are there significant differences in students' perceptions of campus climate, university belonging, flourishing, and bystander intention based on:

RQ1a: academic level?

RQ1b: the Identity Risk Index?

RQ2: Does campus climate, university belonging, and flourishing predict bystander intention for students, and if so, do students' identities impact that relationship?

RQ3: Does bystander intention predict bystander intervention among university students?

Methodological Overview

This study uses a nonexperimental design with cross-sectional, secondary data (McMillan, 2016). Data from graduate and undergraduate students were collected through convenience sampling using a campus Healthy Minds Study (HMS) survey in April 2021. All data was confidential, optional, and non-identifiable. Randomly selected participants who engaged in the HMS's Module 1: Demographics, Module 2: Mental Health Status, Module 10: Upstander/Bystander Behaviors, and Module 12: Climate for Diversity and Inclusion were the foci of the study. The variables for this study include an Identity Risk Index, academic level, campus climate, flourishing, university belonging, bystander intention, and bystander intervention. Chapter Three outlines the statistical methods, variables, and measures in more depth.

Definition of Key Terms

Definitions of the variables in this study can differ across contexts, including research and environments in areas like health, psychology, and education. The terms below are outlined to provide transparency regarding how they are used in the context of this study. Information is provided at length on each of these variables in Chapter Two: Review of the Literature and Chapter Three: Methodology.

Flourishing. Flourishing is defined as one's perceived psychosocial well-being, also referred to as eudaimonic well-being (de la Fuente, 2019; Diener et al., 2009). It focuses on aspects of life that bring deep meaning and fulfillment, and includes perceived success in areas such as relationships, a sense of meaning in life, self-esteem, and optimism. Flourishing

emphasizes a person's perception of their ability to prosper and be well in their life (Diener et al., 2009).

University Belonging. A person's sense of belonging has been defined by two major elements. The first, is the experience of being valued, accepted, or needed. The second is a sense of feeling like one fits within a system or environment (Bollen & Hoyle, 1990; Strayhorn, 2018). Belonging in this study includes students' experiences of feeling valued at their university, feeling like they belong at their specific institution, and feeling like they have found communities or groups where they fit in. Factors that can influence students' sense of belonging at their university can include social relationships (Anistranski & Brown, 2021; Hardy & Bryson, 2016; Slaten et al., 2014) as well as academic ones (Brady et al., 2020; Strayhorn 2018; Walton & Cohen, 2007). The nuances of these groups are discussed more in Chapter Two.

Campus climate. The definition of campus climate varies widely in the literature depending on the researcher's area of focus (Campbell-Whatley et al., 2015; Hurtado et al., 1998; Vacarro, 2012). The HMS defines campus climate as the participant's, "view of how things generally work in [their] campus environment e.g.: common attitudes, practices, or behaviors" and highlights that ideas of campus climate came from students' perspectives and experiences (The Healthy Minds Network, 2020, September).

Bystander intention. Intentionally similar to the Theory of Planned Behavior's focus on behavioral intention (Ajzen, 1991; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975), bystander intention is discussed in this study. Bystander intervention is based on a student's perception that they would intervene in a situation when another person needs their help. This study focuses on students' bystander intention in the following situations at their university: sexual assault, hurtful language, physical altercations/fights, emotional distress or thoughts of suicide, and risky drinking behavior.

Bystander intervention. Bystander intervention has been defined as responding to problems or concerns to ensure the safety and well-being of oneself and others (Step UP, 2018). In this study, bystander intervention occurs when a student intervenes by trying to help someone in a risky situation at their university. The situations when students intervened for this study mirror those for the bystander intention variable.

Intersectionality. Intersectionality is the idea that each person has interlocking politicized social identities that can impact their experiences of marginalization and privilege (Crenshaw, 1989). Power in one's social identities is granted through structural inequities created by unjust systems. The intersecting social identities examined in this study included race, sexual orientation, gender, first-generation college student status, international student status, and registered disability status.

Chapter Summary

Chapter One provided an overview of the current study including its background, purpose, significance, research questions, methodology, and key terms. The next chapter examines the literature on this study's theoretical framework, which includes the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991) and feminist theory (Crenshaw 1989, Crenshaw, 1991; Evans, 2005), in depth. Existing research is also examined to contextualize how campus climate, flourishing, university belonging, and bystander engagement have been studied within higher education contexts. Chapter Two also layers the impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic with these topics and any historical similarities or differences in students' experiences based on their academic level and social identity. Gaps in the existing literature are discussed for the theoretical frameworks and for each variable. Chapter Two concludes how this study aimed to address those gaps.

Chapter Three outlines the measures, variables, and methodology for the study. It includes information about the institutional Healthy Minds Study (HMS) from which the data originated. Chapter Four describes the results and data analysis, including statistical tests. The final chapter, Chapter Five, discusses the results in depth including their implications for practice and the field, limitations, significance, and recommendations for future research.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Chapter two provides a review of the literature related to the topics of campus climate, sense of belonging, flourishing, and bystander engagement. I begin by discussing the theoretical frameworks on which this study is based. Then, the relevant literature is reviewed on campus climate, belonging, flourishing, and bystander engagement in relation to identity, higher education, and considerations from before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. Information about what is known and remains unknown about each of these topics is discussed. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the gaps in the research that this study aims to address.

Theoretical Frameworks

This study uses two theories in its framework. First Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) will be discussed, followed by feminist theory.

Theory of Planned Behavior

According to this theory, predicting human behavior is a multidimensional process. It involves both individual internal factors, like one's attitudes, beliefs, and intentions, as well as environmental factors, like societal norms (Ajzen, 1991). There are other frameworks that aim to predict human behaviors, including Rosenstock's (1974) Health Belief Model (HBM) in which he focused on preventing health issues and increasing individual health outcomes based on a person's beliefs about their health and perceived barriers to health services (Kim et al., 2012; Saghadi-Asl et al., 2020). This model is widely utilized, however, due to the various elements that this study aimed to address, such as the perceived norms related to campus climate, as well as students' attitudes, intentions, and behaviors, related to bystander experiences, the TPB is best suited to examine the study' complex relationships. The TPB has been frequently used to study

university students' behaviors and has served as a reliable model for this population (Bollinger, 2019; LaBelle, 2018; Strubel, 2021).

The TPB was created by psychologist and researcher, Icek Ajzen (1991). Though it has been used across contexts to predict a person's behavior in a given situation (Bollinger, 2019; Hoxmeier et al., 2018), it has a documented history of predicting health (Asare, 2015; Casey et al., 2017; John et al., 2022) and bystander behaviors among college students (Bollinger, 2019; Chen et al., 2022; LaBelle, 2018; Struble, 2021). The TPB model was inspired by Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA). TRA centralizes intention as a way to predict behavior (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) argued that intentions, along with attitudes, *subjective norms* (internalized, perceived social pressure), and willingness to perform a behavior, will ultimately predict how a person responds to a situation.

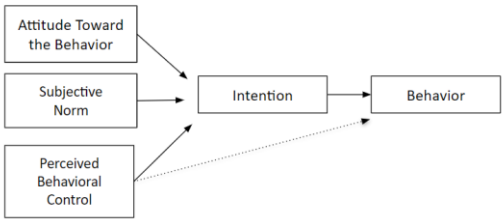
Critics of TRA have said that the model does not consider how external factors influence a person's ability to engage in a behavior (Sideridis et al., 1998). For example, someone may have a favorable attitude toward a situation, however, there may be systemic obstacles that impact how someone believes behavior is possible (Ajzen, 1991). An external factor that influences behavior could include the influence of norms from a particular group, a global event, or scarcity of resources. This critical feedback inspired Ajzen (1991) to create TPB, as a way to expand upon TRA's concepts to include the impact of external factors that influence a person's behavioral control (Sideridis et al., 1998).

Similar to TRA, Ajzen's (1991) TPB predicts that a person's attitude and subjective norms influence one's intentions to engage in a behavior. However, Ajzen (1991) adds another element called *perceived behavioral control* to the TPB model. Perceived behavioral control is a person's perception of how easy or challenging they think it is to engage in a particular behavior,

which can include the influence of external factors (Ajzen, 1991; Asare, 2015). If a person believes engaging in a behavior is challenging due to circumstances beyond their control, they may be less likely to do it. For example, Hoxmeier et al. (2018) found that students who had greater perceptions of behavioral control had a higher likelihood of intervening as a bystander when a peer had too much to drink or in instances of sexual assault.

Thus, according to this theory, a person's attitude toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control have an impact on their intention to engage in a behavior. One's intention then predicts action or inaction (Asare, 2015; Chen et al., 2022). One's perceived behavioral control may carry a lot of influence, and also bypass the intention to predict behavior. If a person believes that they have no other choice but to act in a particular way, that influences how they behave. A model of these concepts is outlined in Figure 1 (Ajzen, 1991).

Figure 1



Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behavior

Theory of Planned Behavior in Higher Education

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) has been used as a framework to guide health promotion on college campuses for years (Bollinger, 2019; LaBelle, 2018; Magid et al.; 2021; Strubel; 2021). Universities often work to influence student behaviors through educational programs and campaigns that promote healthy campus norms. These social norms are often discussed as a category of subjective norms in the TPB and are defined as socially acceptable behavior in groups or cultures (Casey et al., 2017; Struble, 2021).

University social norms often set the tone for the campus climate, as they can influence what is socially acceptable or unacceptable within the campus community (Andrews et al., 2020; Graupensperger et al., 2021; Hoxmeier et al., 2018). Social norms can serve as protective factors against harmful behaviors, increase prosocial behaviors among students, and correct misperceptions (Andrews et al., 2020; Hoxmeier et al., 2018). If students believe that the culture of their campus is critical of behaviors like campus sexual violence (Chen et al., 2022; Hoxmeier et al., 2018) or heavy alcohol use (John et al., 2022), for example, students tend to have more critical attitudes of these behaviors as well (Hoxmeier et al., 2018). Social norms that promote prosocial behaviors have included intervening on behalf of another student who needs help (Casey et al., 2017; Chen et al., 2022; Graupensperger et al., 2021; Hoxmeier et al., 2018; LaBelle, 2018; Magid et al., 2021; Struble, 2021), getting vaccinated against diseases (Andrews et al., 2020), and accessing campus well-being resources for support (Benson & Witson, 2022; Bollinger, 2019). Social norms have also been used to correct students' misperceptions about health behaviors like condom use (Asare, 2015), alcohol or other drug use (John et al., 2022; LaBelle, 2018), and sexual assault (Chen et al., 2022; Hoxemeier et al., 2018).

While social norms can also help foster a healthier sense of campus community (Andrews et al., 2020), if students feel that their beliefs or identities are incongruent with what they perceive as the norms of their university, they can feel more isolated (Walton & Cohen, 2007). Researchers have shown that this is more prevalent among students with marginalized identities such as students of color (Rankin & Reason, 2005; Walton & Cohen, 2007; Ward & Zarate, 2016) and LGBTQ+ students (Rankin, 1998; Slay et al., 2019; Vacarro, 2012).

To date, there have been few studies within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic that used TPB to study helping behaviors among university students (Mori et al., 2022). In general,

far more researchers have used the TPB to study undergraduate students rather than graduate students (Palmer & Hoxmeier, 2022), which is a glaring gap in the literature. However, the TPB has been used in university settings previously to predict students' behaviors and intentions related to their health (Bollinger, 2019; Chen et al., 2022; Magid et al., 2018; Struble, 2021), which makes it a strong starting point for this study.

Feminist Theory

Feminist theory addresses some of the theoretical gaps left by the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). While the TPB provides some context behind a person's individual intentions and behaviors, feminist theory addresses the broader environmental contexts and systems of power that people and communities navigate.

The History of Feminism in the United States

Feminist theory was inspired by the feminist movement (Rogan & Budegeon, 2018), which includes four distinct periods, or "waves," when advocacy has taken place (Pruitt, 2022; Rampton, 2015). The first wave of the feminist movement began in the mid-1800s, at the Seneca Falls Convention, where over 300 people rallied to advocate equality for women and Elizabeth Cady Stanton drafted the Seneca Falls Declaration (Pruitt, 2022; Rampton, 2015). Feminism rose to popularity with the 19th amendment and women's rights to vote in 1920. Though Black communities were involved in the first wave of feminism, its advocacy was largely focused on White women (Rampton, 2015). Within this wave also came the scrutiny of women's traditional roles in the 1950s, through consciousness-raising and empowerment, and a goal for equality between men and women (Pruit, 2022; Rampton, 2015).

By the second wave, which took place throughout the 1960s to the 1980s, the focus shifted to women's right to work, sexual harassment, reproductive rights, and the

destigmatization of women's sexuality (Pruitt, 2022; Richmond et al., 2013; Rogan & Budgeon, 2017). The second wave was increasingly theoretical using inspiration from Marxism and psychoanalytic theory as radical fuel, and pushed for more women to be represented in higher education (Rampton, 2015). It used the popular phrase "the personal is political," (Rogan & Budgeon, 2018) which was also used by the civil rights and Black power movements (Pruitt, 2022). The phrase was used as a slogan to capture how a person's experiences are the product of larger socio-political systemic constructs, or "identity politics," (Rampton, 2015). Whereas the first wave of feminism was more centered in issues related to middle class, White women, the second phase drew women of color, from a variety of socioeconomic statuses. However, many Black women still felt marginalized by the feminist movement and created a separate term for their experiences called womanism. Womanists rejected the idea of feminism, as the movement did not capture the disenfranchisement that came with Black womanhood (Harris & Patton, 2019). Thus, second wave began conversations to grow social consciousness across intersections and solidarity among all biological women (Rampton, 2015).

Beginning in the 1990s the third wave of feminism was informed by post-colonialism and postmodernism. It challenged heteronormativity and ideas of traditional definitions of gender (Ropers-Huilman & Winters, 2011). It celebrated ambiguity, noting that women do not have to reject feminity to be radical thinkers and political agents (Rampton, 2015). The focus on multicultural and diverse perspectives were enhanced, as intersectional feminism grew in popularity. Words that were traditionally used as sexist and homophobic slurs and verbal weapons, were reclaimed and used within the community to subvert patriarchy and homophobia (Rampton, 2015).

In the present day, the fourth wave of feminism is still evolving, as feminists bring

forward the lessons from the second and third waves. There is general consensus that intersectionality is critical to addressing racism, homophobia, ableism, classism, transphobia, xenophobia, and of course, sexism (Pruitt, 2022, Rampton, 2015). That is, there is finally a place in the movement for everyone (Rampton, 2015), a sentiment that Black feminist activist and writer, bell hooks (2000), noted over 20 years ago. Still, some groups reject the term feminism, as the memories of marginalization of women of color and transgender women, for example, persist and sometimes re-emerge within the movement. Today, some discuss the #MeToo movement, the emergence of internet advocacy, and its role in holding powerful people accountable for their actions as a part of the fourth wave (Pruitt, 2022). Researchers suggest that the fourth wave is still forming and predict that social justice and inclusion will likely be key pillars moving forward (Harris & Patton, 2019; Pruit, 2022).

The Feminist Movement to Feminist Theory

It is often said that there are many founders of the feminist movement and feminist theory (Evans et al., 2005). Throughout the waves of the feminist movement many writers and political activists like Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Sojourner Truth (Pruitt, 2022; Rampton, 2015), Betty Friedan, Angela Davis, Kimberlé Crenshaw, bell hooks, Gloria Anzaldúa, and Patricia Hill Collins (Harris & Patton, 2019) led the way for nuanced ideologies and approaches to feminist work.

Critics of feminist theory cite its historic, and sometimes present work, centers Whiteness (Bilge, 2013; Rampton 215) or inclusion of diversity as "ornamental" (Bilge, 2013). Bilge (2013) notes that feminist theorists that do not incorporate marginalized identities beyond gender, such as race, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, and ability, dilute the centrality of power and oppression that exist within systems, and ultimately dilute feminist advocacy. Additionally, it

negates the work of key contributors within the movement (Harris & Patton, 2019). On the other hand, "ornamental intersectionality" refers to opportunistic demographic representation to accumulate good public relations from stakeholders, without the need to address underlying structural concerns (Bilge, 2013; Colpitts, 2020). Intentional advocacy at multiple systemic levels is a key condition for modern, feminist theory (Bilge, 2013; Colpitts, 2020; Harris & Patton, 2019).

Principles of Feminist Theory. Principles of feminist theory include seeking equity, empowerment, access, and social justice across diverse populations (Crethar, 2008; Harris & Patton, 2019). Feminist theorists posit that beliefs and experiences are often the products of peoples' cultural environments, which are influenced by systems of power and oppression (Evans et al., 2005; Harris & Patton, 2019; Rampton, 2015). Critical consciousness-raising and an explanation of societal roles can help people advocate for more just systems across cultures and environments (Rampton, 2015). People are considered the experts in their experiences, and storytelling is a part of reclaiming and conveying histories for marginalized populations (Goodman et al., 2004). Feminist theorists work to eliminate discrimination and hate-based violence, through social justice and advocacy, while acknowledging nuances in experiences regarding race, socioeconomic status, gender, ability, sexuality, country of origin, religion, and age (Rampton, 2015, Pruit, 2022). There is an emphasis on the need to promote change at multiple social, political, and environmental levels (Rampton, 2015).

Intersectionality. The term *intersectionality* was introduced by legal theorist and activist, Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989 (Crenshaw, p. 139, 1989). Intersectionality acknowledges that each person has a unique set of interlocking social identities, which are politicized by unjust systems to afford some privilege and oppress others. These systems can include policies, practices and

laws created by institutions, like governments or schools (Harris & Patton, 2019). People must consistently navigate the trickle-down impact of these systemic issues, on their identities as a whole. Crenshaw created intersectionality to frame how U.S. laws, and critical theories like feminism and anti-racism, often view identities as mutually exclusive (Carbado et al., 2013; Harris & Patton, 2019). She used the example of Black women navigating anti-discrimination laws, noting the isolation they felt feeling "theoretically erased" as people who held multiple marginalized identities (Harris & Patton, 2019). Intersectionality has been said to be a "traveling theory" (Said, 1983), that has influenced almost every discipline (Lewis, 2013) including mental health (Crethar et al., 2008; Evans et al. 2005; Goodman et al. 2004; Wastel et al. 1996), and higher education (Boyle et al., 2017; Colpitts, 2020; Harris & Patton, 2019; Rogan & Budgeon, 2018; Ropers-Huilman & Winters, 2011).

Feminist Theory in Higher Education. Over the last several decades, the population of students accessing higher education has become increasingly diverse (Carey, 2023), and higher education professionals have become more thoughtful about the needs of their campus communities (Carey, 2023; Harris & Patton, 2019). In the past 15 years, higher education scholars have published over 100 peer-reviewed journal articles that have used intersectionality as a concept to examine higher education (Harris & Patton, 2019). Despite the surge in research, feminist scholars warn that higher educators do not always put recommendations into practice (Colpitts, 2020; Harris & Patton, 2019).

In 1989, Crenshaw (1989) urged the academy to connect individuals' experiences to structures of oppression. This sentiment has remained a vital part of feminist advocacy. Feminist scholars believe that acts of inequity are not everyday occurrences tied to someone's individual identity, but products of structures that allow or encourage them to occur (Colpitts, 2020;

Crenshaw; 1989, Crenshaw, 1991; Harris & Patton, 2019). Erel et al. (2010) and Harris and Patton (2019), note that intersectionality in particular, is misused when it is seen as an identity-only issue. Reducing inequity to a problem related to someone's social identities undermines the power of structural "-isms," the capacity to inform practice, the ability to create transformative knowledge, and the motivation to work toward social justice (Colpitts, 2020).

While identity representation is important in higher education, it is not enough to enhance marginalized students' experiences (Colpitts, 2020; Erel et al., 2010; Kirkner, 2022, Harris & Patton, 2019). For example, in their research, Colpitts (2020) used a feminist lens to discuss a university health campaign aimed at reducing campus violence. Colpitts (2020) notes how professionals' preoccupation with ensuring a "depoliticized version of intersectionality" with the campaign posters reflecting diverse students, distracted from the bigger anti-violence message of the campaign. Colpitts, (2020) recommends that leaders at higher education institutions accept commitments to intersectionality beyond face value. Instead, they should critically analyze what the university community can gain through their commitment, through changes to policies and interpersonal activism (Bilge, 2013).

Evans and colleagues (2005) and Ropers-Huilman and Winters (2011) recommend that higher educators search for ways to advocate for community advocacy, representation, and ethics in research. They note that it is necessary to collaborate with those in a variety of programs to widen students' and staff perspectives with diverse voices that exist within higher education (Evans et al., 2005; Ropers-Huilman & Winters, 2011). Ropers-Huilman and Winters (2011) note that theories like critical race theory, critical race feminism and Black feminism, can enhance students critical thinking from discussions in the classroom, to their research, to society at large. Other researchers have found that students who hold historically marginalized identities

often desire to have conversations about identity in the classroom (Johnson et al., 2007), and when staff and faculty discuss issues with students as they relate to identity and power, can enhance students' well-being (Johnson et al., 2007; Haskins & Singh, 2015; Kishimoto, 2018; Le et al., 2016; McCoy et al., 2015; Slay et al., 2019).

There are many ways that higher educators can meaningfully incorporate feminist theory into practice (Colpitts, 2020; Bilge, 2013). Advocacy has the biggest impact at the institutional level, and can have a trickle-down impact on how students can thrive in different areas of their lives (Harris & Patton, 2022). The next section examines the literature on flourishing, campus climate, belonging, bystander intention, and bystander intervention. Throughout the literature review, feminist theoretical concepts such as how students may experience power dynamics, intersectionality, and systemic challenges will be woven throughout the topics. The TPB will also be incorporated to acknowledge its role in predicting student health behaviors (Bollinger, 2019; LaBelle, 2018; Magid et al.; 2021; Sideridis et al., 1998; Strubel, 2021), particularly to examine if bystander intention impacts bystander intervention, and how flourishing, belonging and campus climate impact bystander intention among undergraduate and graduate students. Combined, feminist theory and TPB frameworks, along with the literature that follows, gives a clearer insight into the results of the study.

Review of the Literature

Over the last several years, the field of higher education has rapidly transformed (Kiebler & Stewart, 2021). Before the global COVID-19 pandemic, colleges and universities had begun to steadily shift their focus away from academics as a sole part of the student experience. Higher education institutions began to look toward students' holistic well-being as a vital component of student success as well (Howell & Buro, 2015). However, the challenges that arose from the

COVID-19 pandemic created an urgent need to address student well-being, and a rapid shift to address those concerns emerged (Grubic et al., 2020; Keibler & Stewart, 2021; Mishra & Kumar, 2021; Oh et al., 2021).

During the pandemic, students reported high levels of both physical and emotional isolation, and their ability to build community with others on campus had become difficult due to lockdowns and transitions to virtual spaces (Active Minds, 2020a; Birmingham et al., 2021; Grubic et al., 2020; YoungMinds, 2020). Many college students relied on university support systems to meet their needs with options like academic accommodations, financial relief, or resources for well-being (Birmingham et al., 2021; Kiebler & Stewart, 2021; Stowe et al., 2021). However, university personnel struggled to support the types and amount of student concerns (Stowe et al., 2021). Faculty and staff reported feeling unprepared to support students in an online environment, and traditional well-being offices, like counseling centers, experienced difficulty meeting the number of students wishing to access their services (Birmingham et al., 2021; Stowe et al., 2021). Some students also reported stigma in using their university's digital well-being resources, such as counseling services, while being at home due to privacy concerns (Son et al., 2020). National data on undergraduate and graduate student well-being showed great increases in students' issues related to their health like stress, anxiety, depression, substance use, financial concerns, and fear of physical safety (Active Minds, 2020a; YoungMinds, 2020). At the same time as the COVID-19 pandemic, trends related to racial bias and violence toward Black Americans (Laurencin & Walker, 2020; Reyes, 2020), anti-LGBT legislation (Goldberg, 2020), and xenophobia (Chou & Gaysynsky, 2021) were emerging in the United States. Some research has shown that students with marginalized identities felt a heightened sense of hostility during this time (Hernández et al., 2021) and that it further impacted their health (Haliwa et al., 2021;

Oh, 2022; Oh et al., 2021).

This literature review is devoted to examining the literature related to flourishing, belonging, bystander intention and bystander intervention, and campus climate, within historical research, and as each relates to the COVID-19 pandemic and students' identities. It will discuss undergraduate and graduate students' experiences, as well as historically marginalized social groups, and will conclude with what gaps in the literature this study worked to address.

Flourishing

The concept of *flourishing* was created by psychologist Ed Diener and colleagues (2009) and started in the field of positive psychology as a way to more comprehensively measure a person's lasting well-being (Ouweneel et al., 2011). The term flourishing has largely been associated with the Flourishing Scale (FS) which is an 8-item Likert measure meant to be relatively easy to administer and reliable (Diener et al., 2009; Graham & Eloff, 2022). Originally called the "Psychological Well-being Scale," its name was changed to encompass holistic well-being (Diener et al., 2009). Flourishing is measured by perceived success in areas such as optimism, self-esteem, relationships, and a sense of meaning in one's life (Diener et al., 2009).

Flourishing focuses on eudaimonic well-being, which can be defined as social-psychological well-being in a person's life that gives them meaning and deep fulfillment. It is sometimes distinguished from its counterpart, hedonic well-being, which focuses on temporary feelings of happiness due to situational circumstances (Keyes et al., 2002). Though the flourishing concept and scale originated from positive psychology (Diener et al. 2009), it has been widely used across disciplines, including contexts like public health (Rey et al., 2019) and education settings (Fink, 2014; Graham & Eloff; 2022).

Flourishing in Higher Education

Researchers have determined that a high sense of flourishing can lead to academic success (Griffin et al., 2022; Hirshberg et al., 2022; Keyes, 2002; Ouweneel et al., 2011) and improved well-being of college students (de la Fuente et al., 2022; Fink, 2014; Griffin et al., 2022; Howell & Burro, 2015; Jorgensen & Nelson, 2018; Peter et al., 2011; Rey et al., 2019). Flourishing has also been studied to predict behaviors that lead to positive health outcomes (de la Fuente et al., 2022; Fink, 2014; Griffin et al., 2022; Peter et al., 2011) and reduce risky behaviors like substance use (Jorgensen & Nelson, 2018) and suicide (Rey et al., 2019). Hirshberg and colleagues (2022) created a university course for undergraduates that focused on social-emotional and academic aspects of student flourishing. The researchers replicated this course across multiple universities and conducted a pre-post evaluation. Then, Hirshberg et al. (2022) compared well-being outcomes with students who did not take the course. The researchers found that students in the flourishing courses had decreased symptoms of depression, as well as increased skills, perspectives, and behaviors associated with flourishing. Although that same study also found that their flourishing curriculum did not significantly impact students' health and risk behavior outcomes when it came to alcohol use or sleep habits (Hirshberg et al., 2022), other studies have found that flourishing can be a buffer for risk-taking behaviors overall (Nelson & Padilla-Walker, 2013).

Flourishing and Belonging. In the past, flourishing and belonging have been linked (Grier-Reed, 2022; Griffin et al., 2022; Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2017). University activities that promote a sense of belonging among peers have been able to promote flourishing among students (Maples et al., 2020; Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2017). Maples et al. (2020) found that students who engaged in peer-group service-learning experiences in college promoted

flourishing among students, including finding meaningful and supportive relationships. Though, when it came to belonging, they found that flourishing was less predictive for those who were first-generation college students, compared to being strongly predictive among students who were not first-generation (Maples et al., 2020). Kiebler and Stewart (2021) found a similar result when testing for multi-dimensional well-being among first-generation college students during the COVID-19 pandemic. The researchers noted that first-generation college and lower-income students tended to have more severe stress and mental health concerns compared to their counterparts, which resulted in lower flourishing scores overall (Kiebler & Stewart, 2021). Flourishing and belonging may be less predictive for students with non-minoritized identities.

Flourishing and the COVID-19 Pandemic. Some researchers have studied college students' flourishing during the COVID-19 pandemic. Similar to how college student well-being worsened in 2020-2021 due to the pandemic (Active Minds, 2020a; Active Minds 2020b; Grubic et al., 2020; Kiebler & Stewart, 2021; Mishra & Kumar, 2021; Oh et al., 2021; YoungMinds 2020), flourishing scores were also reportedly lower (Graham & Eloff, 2022; Nyunt et al., 2022). Graham and Eloff's (2022) study compared undergraduates' student flourishing using FS assessment results, before and during the COVID-19 pandemic**.** The researchers found that post-test flourishing scores were significantly lower than pre-test scores. They also found that there were downward trends for every item on the Flourishing Scale (FS), concluding students' well-being across areas of the measure (Graham & Eloff, 2022). Though, dissimilar to the previous study, Nyunt and colleagues (2022) found that there was some evidence to show that specific aspects of students' well-being, such as managing their daily lives for example, had improved, showing higher levels of flourishing in those areas. This research shows that there may be

specific areas of students' lives that there may be aspects that improved during the COVID-19 pandemic, even if generally, flourishing decreased.

Elemo and colleagues (2022) found that undergraduate international students' fear of COVID-19, decreased with higher flourishing scores. According to a few national surveys on college student mental health, fear was a consistent trend impacting students during this period (Active Minds, 2020a; Kiebler & Stewart, 2021; YoungMinds, 2020). Elemo et al. (2022) found that the more students' fear increased, the less likely students were to use their strengths and take care of their eudaimonic well-being. The researchers found that fear was partially mediated by feeling a sense of control as a way to cope with the uncertainty of the pandemic, and that having coping skills associated with flourishing served as protective factors for students' fears (Elemo et al., 2022).

Similarly, Petruzziello et al. (2022) found that undergraduate students who believed that they had skills for employability during the COVID-19 pandemic, were more likely to have a higher sense of flourishing. Despite the challenges of the labor market this time, students who were more confident and had been reassured that they would find work after graduation, had less sense of worry and better indicators of mental health (Petruzziello et al., 2022). Again, students who were confident in their skills and abilities demonstrated higher levels of flourishing and well-being.

Flourishing and Racial Justice. Along with COVID-19, racial discrimination was found to be a health concern among students at this time (Haliwa et al., 2021; Oh, 2022; Oh et al., 2021). Around the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, there was also a global wave of public outcry to end racial injustice and violence toward people of color (Chou & Gaysynsky, 2021; Laurencin & Walker, 2020; Reyes, 2020). Grier-Reed and colleagues (2022) examined the

impact of flourishing on racial trauma in Black college students during this time. The researchers found that Black students who had more opportunities for posttraumatic growth, such as building compassionate connections with others and growing skills to identify their strengths, had higher flourishing after racial trauma. Oh (2022) used national student data from a 2020-2021 National Healthy Minds Study from 37 universities, and found that Asian American students had the lowest instances of flourishing of any racial group during this time, while Black/African American students had some of the highest. The inconsistency of these findings, compared to others reported, calls for further research across racial identities.

Gaps in the Literature on Flourishing

To date, no studies have studied the impact of flourishing on bystander intention, before or amidst the pandemic. There are also far fewer studies on flourishing in graduate students than undergraduate students. However, one study by Griffin et al. (2022) focused on graduate students (N = 90) before the COVID-19 pandemic. They found that faculty relationships and their university programs' encouragement for work-life balance, was related to a higher sense of overall flourishing, academic success, and mental health (Griffin et al., 2022). Overall, flourishing has been primarily studied with undergraduate students in higher education. Additionally, there are inconsistent findings on how flourishing impacts students with different racial identities, and it is rare to find research among students with marginalized identities in general. Further research calls for investigating flourishing for different academic levels and social identity status.

Belonging

A *sense of belonging* has been defined as a person's feelings of morale associated with membership in a group and their perceived cohesion among members (Bollen & Hoyle, 1990). A

sense of belonging is a critical factor for well-being, has been identified as an important part of the human experience, and has been considered a basic need (Strayhorn, 2018; Walton et al., 2012). There are many health benefits to having a sense of belonging, including self-compassion, social integration, and self-confidence (Ahn & Davis, 2020). A sense of belonging can also lead to decreased anxiety and depression and reduce risky health behaviors, such as substance use (Thompson et al., 2018). Due to its documented health benefits, belonging has become a critical topic in higher education as a way to enhance student success (Ahn & Davis, 2020).

Belonging in Higher Education

In the university context, a *sense of belonging* has been defined as "a generalized sense of membership that stems from students' perception of their involvement in a variety of settings and the support they experience from those around them" (Tinto, 2012, p. 66). University belonging as a college student has been linked to increased academic success (Ahn & Davis, 2020; Kivlighan et al., 2018) and degree completion (Johnson et al., 2007). Students who feel like they belong in their campus community also tend to have reduced stress levels (Civitci, 2015), which is a growing and prevalent issue among college students (Active Minds, 2020a; Dixon & Kurpius, 2008; Kiebler & Stewart, 2021; Young Minds, 2020). Several studies have found that a sense of belonging improves students' well-being, motivation, sense of social support (Ahn & Davis, 2020; Civiti, 2015; Suhlmann, 2018; Walton et al., 2012), and their overall life satisfaction (Civiti, 2015).

Belonging and University Connections. For some students, their university's campus is where personal experiences and stories are developed (Ahn & Davis, 2020). Students with a higher sense of university belonging tend to feel like their campus is more like their personal space (Ahn & Davis, 2020). In a study on undergraduate and graduate students, Ahn and Davis

(2020) found that a sense of belonging could be determined by students' living spaces, geographical and cultural contexts, and their connections within the context of their university. They also found that academic and social engagements were important for students' sense of belonging at their institutions (Ahn & Davis, 2020; Walton et al., 2012). Positive social actions among students were prerequisites for a sense of belonging and could lead to dynamic, lasting campus connections (Ahn & Davis, 2020).

University belonging has been measured by the amount of support students' have received through relationships with university mentors (Maples et al., 2020; Morrow & Ackermann, 2012; Strayhorn, 2018). These relationships may include graduate students, alumni (Maples et al., 2020; Strayhorn, 2018), or university faculty and staff members (Morrow & Ackermann, 2012; Strayhorn, 2018). University belonging has also been measured through informal peer support, such as through friendships or student clubs (Ahn & Davis, 2020; Anistranski & Brown, 2021, Le et al, 2016; Walton et al., 2012).

University Belonging and Peer Support. Peer support that promotes a sense of belonging for students can come in many forms (Ahn & Davis, 2020; Benson & Witson, 2022; Strayhorn 2008; Strayhorn 2018). These opportunities can be built-in university supports, such as peer-to-peer tutoring opportunities or relationships with student residence assistants (Hernández et al., 2021). Universities may provide opportunities for student involvement like Greek organizations, sports clubs, honor societies, mentoring, or peer leadership experiences, as additional ways students can engage in peer communities (Ahn & Davis, 2020). Students who join identity-based affinity groups have been found to experience high levels of support and belonging at their universities (Anistranski & Brown, 2021; Strayhorn, 2008; Walsh et al., 2021). A sense of belonging is often a key part of these opportunities because they provide a sense of student

connection, shared experiences, and draw students with similar interests (Anistranski & Brown, 2021; Kivlighan et al., 2018).

University Belonging and Faculty and Staff. University faculty and staff also play an important role when it comes to student belonging (O'Meara et al., 2017). Johnson et al. (2007) showed that faculty members who invest in getting to know the students in their class and use examples that include diverse voices, create an environment that promotes student success and well-being. Social equity conversations and diverse representation in coursework may be particularly important. Underrepresented racial minority students (URM), often experience less of a sense of belonging at their university than their White counterparts (Gopalan et al., 2021; Johnson et al., 2007; Walsh et al., 2021), which can impact persistence at their university and their degree completion (Anistranski & Brown, 2021). Researchers have found that students of color extend more effort to adapt socially than White students, especially at predominantly White institutions (PWIs) (Hurtado & Carter, 1997; Barbera et al., 2020). However, this gap in belonging can narrow as students of color when there is more diverse representation among students and faculty on campus and in the classroom (Strayhorn, 2008).

Belonging and the COVID-19 Pandemic

The focus on students' sense of belonging in higher education has become more ubiquitous since the COVID-19 pandemic, as students' mental health suffered and their sense of isolation from their campus community increased (Arenas et al., 2021; Benson & Witson, 2022). During the pandemic, there were fewer opportunities to interact with other members of the university, such as their peers, faculty, and university staff (Benson & Whitson, 2022; Walsh et al., 2021). Researchers have found that undergraduates' sense of belonging greatly suffered during this time as connections grew more difficult to create or maintain (Benson & Witson,

2022; Hernández et al., 2021). In a study using focus groups by Walsh et al. (2021), the researchers found that graduate students with marginalized identities (N = 30) felt like inequities at their university were exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and made them feel less like they belonged there. At both academic levels, students experienced challenges with feeling like they belonged at their university during the pandemic.

Some researchers have found that when social connections were made and university resources were accessed during the COVID-19 pandemic, it reduced students' mental health and isolation concerns (Gopalan et al., 2022) and academic burnout (Benson & Witson, 2022). A large national survey on college student mental health showed that undergraduates' top two coping strategies to support their well-being during the pandemic were virtual interactions with friends and in-person interactions with friends (Active Minds, 2020b), indicating that some students were still accessing their peers for support despite the difficulties of a remote environment.

Gaps in the Literature on Belonging

In general, existing research has called for universities to bring more attention to the graduate student experience of belonging on campus (McMahon et al., 2021). Additionally, little research has been conducted on factors that motivate students to help their peers who struggle to feel like they belong. Much of the current research focuses on how students find support for themselves through existing organizations or engagements, or through already existing opportunities that exist within their classrooms. With the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, those support systems were more difficult to access (Benson & Whitson, 2022; Walsh et al., 2021), and left questions about how belonging played a part in how students intended to support their peers and how they were navigating belonging at their university based on their unique

identities and academic levels.

Campus Climate

Campus climate has been defined in a variety of ways across existing literature to examine universities' institutional impact (Campbell-Whatley et al., 2015; Hurtado et al., 1998; Vacarro, 2012). Some researchers have defined campus climate as the collective attitudes, perceptions, behaviors, and policies at a university (Hurtado et al., 1998; Ward & Zarate; 2015). Others have defined it as the connections among people, processes, and institutional culture that are shaped by academics, standards, behaviors, policies, and relationships among a university's groups (Vaccaro, 2012). The Healthy Minds Network (HMN), a national organization that researches student health behaviors, calls campus climate, *perceived campus climate*. The HMN makes this distinction to highlight how students' "view of how things generally work in [their] campus environment, e.g.: common attitudes, practices, or behaviors" (The Healthy Minds Network, 2020, September). Depending on the interests of the researcher or representatives at a university, the definition of campus climate can be slightly different (Rankin & Reason, 2005; Vaccaro, 2012).

Sometimes representatives of a university administer surveys to assess their campus climate for factors that impact students' academic performance or retention (Rankin & Reason, 2005; Slay et al., 2019). Previous research has determined that a university's campus climate can influence students' academic and developmental outcomes, such as student's ability to persist in their program, feeling a sense of community, and feelings of attachment to their institution (Hurtado & Carter, 1997; Rankin & Reason, 2005; Waldo, 1998). Climate surveys can give a unique perspective on a specific campus's culture and can help highlight supportive or unsupportive features that impact students' ability to thrive (Hurtado & Carter, 1997). For

example, Boyle and colleagues (2017) found that students who attended universities that embraced a campus culture of feminism and anti-violence, felt more comfortable reporting concerns like sexual assault. Campus climate research has also been used to get a better understanding of how students with particular identities, such as race (Hurato & Carter, 1997; Rankin & Reason, 2005; Slay et al., 2019; Strayhorn, 2008; Strayhorn, 2013; Ward & Zarate, 2015), ability (Kirkner et al., 2022), sexual orientation (Campbell-Watley et al., 2015; McMahon et al., 2021; Vaccaro, 2012; Waldo et al., 1998), socioeconomic status (Kiebler & Stewart, 2021), and/or gender (Le et al., 2016; Slay et al., 2019; Strayhorn, 2008; Strayhorn, 2013; Thompson et al., 2028), experience their time at their university. In general, each institution has a unique climate based on its physical location, academic and research specialty, rigor (Pagoto et al., 2021), and demographic makeup (Hurato & Carter, 1997; Rankin & Reason, 2005; Slay et al., 2019; Strayhorn, 2013; Ward & Zarate, 2015) as each impacts the campus culture.

Previous researchers have studied how social groups influence campus climate. Some literature focuses on how student clubs (Riskisky et al., 2020), Greek organizations (Hurato & Carter, 1997), social activism groups, and affinity groups (Le et al., 2016; Vacarro, 2012) have influenced campus climates. These groups contribute to climate aspects like recruitment, rush, following family history, and traditions (Chamchoy & Burford, 2021). Peer student groups, like these, can build a sense of community, friendship, and cohesion among students (Hurtado & Carter, 1997; Le et al., 2016; McMahon et al., 2021; Vacarro, 2012). Both undergraduates and graduates also have found peer groups to be a helpful part of their university experience (Hurtado & Carter, 1997; Le et al., 2016; McMahon et al., 2021; Rankin & Reason, 2005; Vacarro, 2012).

Other factors that contribute to campus climate include a university's academic

reputation, perceived competition among students (Ward & Zarate, 2015), or a focus on a specialization such as the arts, education, or sciences (Pagoto et al., 2021). Researchers have shown that schools with rigorous academic reputations can sometimes feel stressful and isolating for students (Ahn & Davis, 2020; Le et al., 2016; Pagoto et al., 2021; Walsh et al., 2021). However, when students feel like they can connect with peers or a faculty mentor, it can increase retention and completion of their program, creating a more supportive climate (Anistranski & Brown, 2021; Hurtado & Carter, 1997; Rankin & Reason, 2005; Slay et al., 2019).

Campus Climate and Identity

Campus climate may be perceived differently depending on students' identities (Le et al., 2016; Rankin & Reason, 2005; Slay et al., 2019; Strayhorn, 2013). Slay et al. (2019) found that White students and faculty perceive their campuses' climates to be more inclusive than students and faculty of color. This finding has been consistent across other studies, with students of color, particularly at predominately White institutions (PWIs), facing stressors and tensions on campus due to their racial identities (Hurato & Carter, 1997; Rankin & Reason, 2005; Vacarro, 2012; Waldo, 1998). This discrepancy in student experiences can also impact students' feelings of integration with peers and faculty on campus (Hurato & Carter, 1997; Strayhorn, 2018). Rankin and Reason (2005) found in their survey of students across ten campuses (N = 7,347) that undergraduate students of color believed that requiring diversity education and workshops for faculty and staff could improve their campus climate. Several studies have found that diverse campus environments, including student demographic makeup, perceptions of university leadership, and policies that are inclusive of students' identities can have positive trickle down effects on students' academic and social outcomes (Rankin & Reason, 2005; Slay, 2019; Vacarro, 2012).

Researchers have also focused on perceptions of campus climate across other historically marginalized identities such as LGBTQ+ students (Slay et al., 2019; Vacarro, 2012; Waldo, 1998), international students (Le et al., 2016), students with lower socioeconomic statuses (Kiebler & Stewart, 2021) and female students (Hurtado & Carter, 1997; Le et al., 2016; McMahon, 2021; Walsh et al., 2021). Campbell-Whatley et al. (2015) determined five primary factors that create a welcoming campus climate for students and faculty with diverse backgrounds, including race, ability, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and gender. These five factors were: respect, conflict, diversity engagement, diversity interest, and diversity exposure (Campbell-Whatley et al., 2015). Discussions of diversity in the classroom, diverse faculty representation, and relationship-building opportunities at the university were consistent recommendations for students' well-being and ability to thrive (Le et al., 2016; Slay et al., 2019).

Overall, there has been less research on identity and campus climate among graduate students (Slay et al., 2019; Walsh et al., 2021; Ward & Zarate, 2015). Some researchers have found that graduate students can use their elevated academic position to model creating inclusive racial climates in ways that they work with undergraduates, in the research they pursue, and in the curriculum that they teach, to positively impact students of color (Ward & Zarate, 2015). Ward and Zarate (2015) found that when graduate students encounter diverse faculty, staff, and inclusive academic policies at their institutions, they have more favorable attitudes toward a diverse racial and ethnic climate at their university. Further, faculty with underrepresented racial minority (URM) identities can influence more positive beliefs about diverse issues among White and URM graduate students (Ward & Zarate, 2015). Similarly, Slay and colleagues (2019) found that URM graduate students who had diverse faculty mentors created a climate in their programs

that increased their sense of belonging, mental health, and academic success. More will be explored about the nuances of graduate experiences and campus climate in the coming sections.

Campus Climate and the COVID-19 Pandemic

Students' perceptions of university climates were greatly altered during the COVID-19 pandemic due to safety precautions and a major transition to remote environments (Birmingham et al., 2021; Dost et al., 2020; Kiebler & Stewart, 2021; Mishra & Kumar, 2021; Oh et al., 2021; Pagoto et al., 2021; Risisky et al., 2022; Stowe et al., 2021; Wallace et al., 2021; Walsh et al., 2021). Both undergraduate and graduate students wished for more support from their universities overall during the COVID-19 pandemic (Dost et al., 2020; Oh et al., 2021; Risisky et al. 2022) and many of the campus resources for well-being and academic support were challenging for students to access (Benson & Witson, 2022; Kiebler & Stewart, 2021; Stowe et al., 2021). Other predictors of healthy campus climates such as opportunities for engagement with faculty and peers (Oh et al., 2021; Wallace et al., 2021) and an understanding of university policies and expectations (Dost et al., 2021), were difficult to navigate due to technological, communication, physical distancing or physical distancing challenges (Wallace et al., 2021). Though some students appreciated the flexibility of more self-paced, remote learning options during the COVID-19 pandemic (Dost et al., 2021), remote learning tended to have a negative impact on peer-to-peer relationships for both undergraduate and graduate students (Oh et al., 2021; Wallace et al., 2021).

Campus Climate and Graduate Students

Overall, graduate students tend to navigate campus differently than undergraduates (Dost et al., 2020; Hurato & Carter, 1997; Le et al., 2016; McMahon et al, 2021; Oh et al., 2021; Risisky et al., 2022; Rosenthal, 2016; Underwood, 2019). Graduate students have historically

experienced more difficulty accessing campus resources, have a diminished sense of community with others at their university, and have less confidence in seeking help (McMahon et al., 2021). Compared to undergraduates, many graduate students do not know which campus resources are available to them. Graduate students also seldom recommend campus resources to support their peers if they are in need (McMahon et al., 2021). Ghallagher's (2011) national survey on help-seeking at college counseling centers found that graduate students who sought support tended to wait longer to access resources than undergraduates. Graduate students also perceived campus resources as only intended to support undergraduate students' (Gallagher, 2011).

Concerningly, McMahon et al. (2021)'s study (N = 9,546) found that 7.2% of graduate participants who identified as women experienced sexual violence since entering their university and scored significantly lower than undergraduates in their confidence to seek help at their institution. Approximately 13% of graduate participants in the study received disclosures from peers that they had experienced sexual violence, indicating the power of peers as existing and known resources (McMahon, 2021). Birmingham et al. (2021) found that many graduate students relied on existing friendships outside of their campus network for support during COVID-19, whereas many undergraduate students still struggled but had more existing student connections at their university. With the changing campus climate in the pandemic, it was even more difficult to build connections and find university resources.

Though researchers have shown that faculty can be a helpful resource for mentorship and belonging in graduate students (Le et al., 2016; O'Meara et al., 2017), there are also intensified power dynamics that take place at the graduate level (Ahmed, 2012; Tisdell, 1993). Class sizes are often smaller and there are a limited number of faculty in graduate programs. The number of professionals in the higher education and research field are often small as well, which gives

faculty more influence over students' futures (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2018). As seen with the #MeTooPhD movement, in some instances violence was even perpetrated by faculty, and disclosures were brushed aside (Anderson, 2018; Korn, 2018; Qadir, 2018; Underwood, 2019). This behavior, use of power, and tolerance for it, impacts the perceived climate on campus, as well as students' well-being.

Power dynamics have also shown up in race dynamics with graduate students and faculty. White faculty members have been found to mentor students of color less frequently and discuss students of color's lack of preparation more than White students (McCoy et al., 2015). Identity-based microaggressions, judgment, and isolation from faculty have been frequently reported by students of color. These dispositions also impact the dynamic among peers in the classroom, with students mirroring the behavior of faculty (Alexander & Hermann, 2015; Hubain et al., 2016). Despite much of the literature's focus on undergraduates, graduate students face additional barriers that stem from their campus climate. This underscores the necessity to compare the experiences of undergraduate and graduate students in future literature, and to explore the nuances between students' experiences (Underwood, 2019).

Gaps in the Literature on Campus Climate

Despite variation in its definition, what has been studied on campus climate has shown differences in experiences among undergraduates, graduate students, and students with marginalized identities for students at their universities. Graduate students and underrepresented minority students tend to experience their campus climates less favorably, than undergraduates and students who hold traditionally dominant identities. Much of the current research highlights the importance of peer support across all groups in creating an inclusive, healthy, campus

climate. However, there is more research necessary on how different identity groups experienced the dynamics within their campus during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Bystander Engagement

Bystander intervention research first became popular in the late 1970s by founders and social psychologists, John Darley and Bibb Latané (1970). Darley and Latané (1970) began to research the phenomenon following the highly publicized murder investigation of Kitty Genovese. At the time, a *New York Times* article claimed that while many witnesses saw Genovese's public attack that ultimately led to death, no bystander called for help despite many people nearby. While this story has since been debunked, and several witnesses did call the police, it prompted discussions of what needed to happen for someone to intervene as a bystander (American Psychological Association, 2012, September). Since then, there have been several concepts studied for what impacts bystander intervention including a bystander's intention to intervene, diffusion of responsibility, the necessary conditions to intervene, and common barriers to intervention.

Bystanders' Intention to Intervene

Bystander intention is a person's belief that they will intervene in a situation if another person or people need help (Casey et al., 2017; Banyard et al., 2014; Coker et al., 2015). Some research suggests that a person's intention to intervene has been difficult to study in regard to its ability to predict behavior (Banyard et al., 2014). This difficulty stems from an ability to assess multiple components including a person's capacity to help in a specific situation, how confident they are in responding, which barriers impact that specific person, and how willing they are to assist in the moment (Banyard et al., 2014). Other researchers have suggested that using a model for measuring intentions, like the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), can assist with predicting

intention and behavior, as it breaks down key predictive elements such as attitudes, social norms, and perceived behavioral control (Casey et al., 2017). In any case, there are multiple factors involved to accurately assess if a person intends to intervene.

Intervening and Bystanding

Bystander behavior can be broken down into two parts: intervening and bystanding (or not intervening) (The Healthy Minds Network, 2020, September). There are several commonly documented barriers to why a person may not intervene (Hoxmeier et al, 2018). Some documented reasons include fear of making the wrong decision, fear for one's safety, not feeling prepared, or not feeling confident enough to intervene (Exner & Cummings, 2011). Another common barrier is assuming someone else will do something, or *diffusion of responsibility* (Latané & Darley, 1970; Magid et al., 2021; O'Brien et al., 2021; Palmer & Hoxmeier, 2022). Lastly, the *bystander effect* is another barrier, which is the phenomenon when someone is less likely to help when more people become present at the scene (Latané & Darley, 1970). However, these common barriers are shown to be mitigated by reflecting on and understanding one's values and intentions to intervene (Palmer & Hoxmeier, 2022), and by taking the necessary steps to do so (Darley & Latané, 1970).

Darley and Latané (1970) outline five steps that can increase a person's likelihood to intervene as a bystander. First, the bystander must notice the event and identify it as a problem. Second, they must identify it as an event where they believe intervention is necessary. Third, a bystander must take personal responsibility to intervene. Fourth, they must decide that they will intervene. Lastly, they must take action (Latané & Darley, 1970). Darley and Latané's (1970) steps have been replicated across studies and successful predictors of intervention (Banyard et al.; 2014; Hoxmeier et al., 2018; Palmer & Hoxmeier, 2022).

Bystander Behavior in Higher Education

There are a variety of organizations that specialize in implementing bystander intervention education at universities. Some commonly recognized bystander engagement programs include: Green Dot (Alteristic, n.d.; Coker et al., 2015) and It's On US (2022) which aim to reduce campus sexual assault, It's Real from the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (2022) which aims to reduce mental health stigma and student suicide, and The Gordie Center (2022) which aims to reduce alcohol and other drug overdoses. These programs and campaigns promote a healthier campus climate by highlighting prosocial behaviors (Chen et al., 2020). They often use a social norms approach to correct student misperceptions and spotlight existing healthy student behaviors (Graupensperger et al., 2021; Labelle, 2018). These sorts of programs also aim to promote community support amongst students on campus, and a sense of shared responsibility to reduce harm (Chen et al., 2020; DeMaria et al., 2018; Exner & Cummings, 2011; Hoxmeier et al., 2018; LaBelle, 2018).

The 5 D's of Bystander Intervention. Educational programs at universities often reference "The D's" of bystander intervention, which include: direct, distract, delegate, delay, and document (Coker et al., 2015; CARE, 2022; Step UP!, 2018). "Direct" is directly stating what is observed or inserting oneself into a situation. "Distract" means to prevent a situation from escalating by interrupting the situation and distracting someone involved. "Delegate" means enlisting another person's help, such as a peer or member of authority. "Delay" means following up after a situation with a party after a situation has occurred. "Document "means recording or taking a photograph of a situation, and then checking in with a respondent of a situation to see if they would like the evidence. This is often encouraged as an option if no other D's of intervention is safe or possible (Coker et al., 2015). Some universities have included

another, “D,” which is “defend” (CARE, 2022). This would mean backing up a bystander who is intervening in a situation. The 5 D’s emphasize that there is not one right way to intervene and encourage students to reflect on a method that feels best for them in a given situation.

Bystander Behavior and the Theory of Planned Behavior. Bystander intervention in higher education has been commonly studied using the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Bollinger, 2019; Chen et al., 2022; Magid et al., 2018; Struble, 2021). Hoxmeier et al. (2018) studied undergraduate students’ (N = 815) bystander behavior in circumstances of sexual assault. They found that students who intervened when they had the opportunity to do so, reported significantly more positive attitudes toward intervening behaviors, a greater intention to intervene in the future, and significantly greater perceived behavioral control, than those who did not intervene when they had the opportunity (Hoxemier et al., 2018). Additionally, John et al. (2022) found that all three factors in TPB that predict behavioral intentions to intervene (personal attitudes, perceived behavioral control, and subjective norms) impacted students’ intervening intentions in situations of sexual assault. Students in this study (n = 395) were more motivated to intervene when good friends approved of their behaviors than others in their lives. John et al. (2022) also found significant differences based on gender when it came to intentions to intervene. They found that female undergraduate students had more positive attitudes regarding bystander intervention than male undergraduates (John et al., 2022). In each of these studies, TPB served as a framework to accurately predict student intentions or intervention behaviors.

Bystander Behavior and the COVID-19 Pandemic. Situations that may warrant bystander intervention on campus such as sexual assault and dating violence (Banyard et al., 2014; Bollinger, 2019; Chen et al., 2020; Coker, 2020; Exner & Niner, 2011; Hoxmeier et al., 2018; McMahon et al., 2020; O’Brien et al., 2021; Struble, 2012) and alcohol and other

substance use concerns (John et al., 2022; LaBelle, 2018) have been studied to a greater extent among undergraduate populations before the COVID-19 pandemic. Bystander intervention during the COVID-19 pandemic was not necessarily called such, but the helping behaviors behind it have been documented. For example, in one national study, students indicated that they had reached out to a friend who disclosed that they were struggling during this time (Active Minds, 2020b). It has been previously discussed that students were not able to interact with one another as frequently as they had in person (Benson & Whitson, 2022; Walsh et al., 2021), which may contribute to the lack of research.

Only one study has specifically explored bystander intervention among college students during the COVID-19 pandemic (Mori et al., 2022). The study took place at a Japanese university and focuses on undergraduate student willingness to administer CPR to their peers. The researchers, Mori et al. (2022) found that undergraduate students (n = 2,534) were not hesitant to administer CPR to their peers due to anxiety about contracting COVID-19, and were more likely to do so if they were interested in learning CPR, confident in using the skills necessary to do so, and were aware of how it can be administered with COVID-19 precautions (Mori et al., 2022). This article demonstrates that students' attitudes, beliefs, and perceived control impacted the use of the intervention method.

Trends in Bystander Engagement Research

There is still much more to be explored when it comes to bystander behaviors among university students. Bystander intervention research has almost exclusively focused on undergraduate populations (Palmer & Hoxmeier, 2022) and very little has been studied during the climate of the COVID-19 pandemic (Mori et al., 2022). Unfortunately, issues like the rates of intimate partner violence (Aydin et al., 202; Evans et al., 2020; Silva et al., 2020), mental health

issues (Active Minds, 2020a; Active Minds 2020b; Graham & Eloff, 2022 Grubic et al., 2020; Kiebler & Stewart, 2021; Mishra & Kumar, 2021; Nyunt et al., 2022; Oh et al., 2021; YoungMinds 2020), alcohol misuse and other drug overdose (Arnold, 2020; Palis et al., 2021) increased during the COVID-19 pandemic and have been consistent issues that college students have faced (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration [SAMHSA], 2019).

Despite these health concerns, the research on bystander behavior at universities has come in waves. In 2011, the U.S. Department of Education's Dear Colleague letter mandated universities' responsibility to offer support resources to survivors of sexual violence, intimate partner violence, and stalking. Additionally, it stated that universities must take immediate action to respond to end campus violence as a requirement of Title IX (Conley & Griffith, 2016; DeMaria et al., 2018). This letter sparked universities' research for investigating and preventing these issues through bystander intervention (DeMaria et al., 2018). Then, bystander intervention initiatives became popular again in 2014, when President Obama signed the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act (VAWA) into law. This law imposed requirements onto universities through its Campus Sexual Violence Act, in an effort to end sexual violence on campuses (American Council on Higher Education [ACE], 2014; Htun et al., 2022; McMahon et al., 2021). Under VAWA, universities were specifically required to report instances of dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, and sexual assault (ACE, 2014). They also were required to implement new university policies, prevention programs, and discipline procedures that aligned with the standards of the federal government. President Obama also created the White House Task Force to Protect Students of Sexual Assault in 2014 to enforce policies to end sexual violence on college campuses (The White House, 2014, January 22). This task force provided examples of policies and protocols for university prevention programs, crisis intervention

services, and sanctions to guide universities. It also required universities to publish grievance procedures, provide information about how students can access support, and strengthen compliance issues (ACE, 2014; The White House, 2014, January 22). Due to policies like these and grant funds allotted by the Federal government to support VAWA's prevention and research initiatives, bystander intervention research and prevention has been heavily skewed toward sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking on campuses (McMahon et al., 2020). As the political climate has shifted and new priorities have emerged (Htun et al., 2022), newer research has slowed and is not as prevalent.

Bystander intervention is an important aspect of violence prevention on campuses. Additionally, there are more issues like mental health issues and substance use issues that continue to impact students' well-being (SAMHSA, 2019). Each of these issues has had little to no research tied to bystander engagement on campuses since the COVID-19 pandemic. As students continue to navigate health issues on campus post-pandemic, more robust research is necessary to understand a complete picture of the impact of bystander engagement on campuses.

Chapter Summary

Chapter two began by discussing the theoretical frameworks for this study, the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991) and feminist theory and its concept of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989). The TPB has been used to study factors that influence health behaviors in higher education, including bystander engagement (Chen et al., 2022; Hoxmeier et al., 2018). In the past this theory has been predictive based on an individual's perceptions of norms, perceived behavioral control, and attitudes, however, it does not address how systems and power dynamics influence behaviors (Sideridis et al., 1998). Feminist theory incorporates nuances based on intersecting social identities, identity politics, and the influence of systemic structures

(Crenshaw, 1989, p. 139; Evans et al., 2005; Harris & Patton; 2019). Principles of feminist theory have been used in higher education to examine the influence of universities as an institution that has the power to impact students' well-being (Le et al., 2016; Slay et al., 2019). These theoretical frameworks provide a lens for the study, and their themes were incorporated into the examination of the literature on flourishing, university belonging, campus climate, and bystander engagement. Considerations for the COVID-19 pandemic and rising social justice issues at the time were also explored, to provide context into the impact on students' experiences and on the field of higher education.

The study outlined in the chapters that follow, aims to address gaps in the literature related to students' experiences of flourishing, belonging, campus climate, and bystander intention and intervention. These factors may provide a greater understanding of diverse students' needs as they relate to well-being, their perceptions of their campus, and their views and behaviors related to helping others during a volatile time. The next chapter outlines the methodology for the study, followed by a chapter on analysis. The study will conclude with a discussion of the results, their implications, and their meaning as they relate to the literature.

Chapter Three: Methodology

In Chapter Three, the research design, methodology, and procedures of the current study are discussed. The data used in this study were originally collected as part of an institutional Healthy Minds Study survey in April 2021. The sampling procedures, data collection, and measures are described. The choices of multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA), multiple linear regression, and Poisson regression are justified, and the specific variables involved in the study are explained. This chapter concludes with a discussion of the study's ethical considerations and methodological limitations.

Research Design

This study used a nonexperimental design and secondary data from a cross-sectional survey (McMillan, 2016). The data were collected in the Spring 2021 semester as part of an anonymous university survey called, The Healthy Minds Study (HMS) (The Healthy Minds Network [HMN], 2021, January 5). The university staff who distributed the survey collected information from undergraduate, graduate, and professional students at a large, urban, research institution. I am a team member in one of the university's offices who led the distribution. During the 2020-2021 academic year, the university approved the use of the HMS survey and the use of its data. The Healthy Minds Network, the organization that created the survey and received the university's data, maintained Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval through the University of Michigan and under Advarra, which is an IRB service provider in North America (The Healthy Minds Network [HMN], 2021, October).

All universities that use the HMS are considered "not engaged" in The Healthy Mind Network's research, under the federal definition. This is because higher education institutions do not work directly with student participants to manage their identifying data (HMN, 2021,

October). Thus, the university did not need additional IRB approval to use the HMS. Due to the de-identified nature of the data set, IRB informed me that no approval process was necessary for this study.

The Healthy Minds Study

The HMS is an online survey created by The Healthy Minds Network (The Healthy Minds Network [HMN], n. d.). The survey consists of validated measures to study service utilization, mental health, and related concerns of undergraduate and graduate students (HMN, n.d.). The HMS has been distributed across different types of post-secondary institutions, including 4-year universities, technical schools, and two-year community colleges. The HMS has also been adapted and used within high school settings. The HMS started in 2007 and has been distributed to over 450 colleges and universities (HMN, n.d.; HMN, 2021, October).

The HMS survey includes up to twenty survey section options. There are three sections called *core modules* included in every university's HMS. These core modules are Module 1: Demographics, Module 2: Mental Health Status, and Module 3: Mental Health Survey Utilization/Help Seeking. There are seventeen additional HMS *elective modules* that universities can opt into, as seen in Table 1. Universities that use the HMS can select any additional sections as they determine is necessary. There is also an option to choose an additional module, Module 19: HMS Mini-Survey. This is an amended version of the HMS with approximately as many items as a standard module. This module highlights key questions from across various standard and elective modules. Additionally, universities can add up to ten custom questions to the HMS to be used in their own module, creating a Module 20 option (HMN, n.d.).

Leaders at the university where this study is based, selected ten total modules for its Spring 2021 survey. These modules were determined as part of an institutional commitment to

the JED Foundation, a non-profit organization that partners with universities to strengthen its policies and prevention programs related to mental health, substance use, and suicide (The JED Foundation, n.d.). The HMS was conducted in both 2018 and 2021 at this university, as a requirement for the JED Campus program. The current study analyzes data from four of the university modules in which students were randomly selected within the survey to participate.

Table 1

Core and Elective HMS Module Breakdown

HMS Modules: Full Survey	University Survey Modules	Random Selection Modules Used In This Study
Module 1: Demographics	**Module 1**: Demographics	**Module 1**: Demographics
Module 2: Mental Health Status	**Module 2**: Mental Health Status	**Module 2**: Mental Health Status
Module 3: Mental Health Service Utilization and Help-Seeking	**Module 3**: Mental Health Service Utilization and Help-Seeking	Module 10: Upstander/Bystander Behaviors
Module 4: Substance Use	Module 9: Knowledge and Attitudes About Mental Health and Mental Health Services	Module 12: Climate for Diversity and Inclusion
Module 5: Sleep	Module 10: Upstander/Bystander Behaviors	
Module 6: Eating and Body Image	Module 11: Mental Health Climate	
Module 7: Sexual Assault	Module 12: Climate for Diversity & Inclusion	
Module 8: Overall Health	Module 14: Resilience & Coping	
Module 9: Knowledge and Attitudes about Mental Health and Mental Health Services	Module 18: COVID-19	
Module 10: Upstander/Bystander Behaviors	Module 20: Custom University Module - School Climate & Environment	

Module 11: Mental Health Climate
Module 12: Climate for Diversity and Inclusion
Module 13: Academic Competition, Persistence and Retention
Module 14: Resilience and Coping
Module 15: Financial Stress
Module 16: Attitudes About Mobile Resources
Module 17: Student Athletes
Module 18: COVID-19
Module 19: HMS Mini Survey
Module 20: Custom University Module

Note. Core modules have been denoted in bold.

Research Questions

The Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1985) and feminist theory (Crenshaw; 1989, Crenshaw, 1991; Evans, 2005) informed the research questions (RQ) that guide this study. The RQs are as follows:

RQ1: Are there significant differences in students' perceptions of campus climate, university belonging, flourishing, and bystander intention based on:

RQ1a: academic level?

RQ1b: the Identity Risk Index?

RQ2: Does campus climate, university belonging, and flourishing predict bystander intention for students, and if so, do students' identities impact that relationship?

RQ3: Does bystander intention predict bystander intervention among university students?

Sampling

In spring 2021, undergraduate and graduate/professional students (N = 1,106) from a large, urban, research university opted in to participate in the anonymous, web-based, HMS survey. Due to the ongoing lockdowns during the COVID-19 pandemic, promotion for the survey was conducted digitally by university personnel through social media campaigns and the university newsletter. Approximately 4,000 campus community members, including university program directors, deans, students, and student affairs personnel received e-mails from the campus-roll out team with a generic survey link to share for student participation. Approximately 300 additional students enrolled in undergraduate and graduate organizations received a recruitment email with the survey link.

Though it is impossible to determine how many campus community members forwarded the survey email to students, how many students received the email, or how many students found the link through a digital campaign, all undergraduate, graduate, and professional students at the university could have taken the HMS survey through the generic link if they received it. Despite survey distribution taking place during the COVID-19 pandemic, the sample was slightly larger than when the HMS was previously conducted at the same institution in the Winter of 2018 (N = 813). Participation was also slightly higher than in other campus climate surveys that have been conducted at the same university such as the institution's National College Health Assessment in 2020 (N = 656*)* and UCelebrate Survey distributed in 2019 (N = 554*).* According to the United

States Census Bureau, most researchers experienced lower participation in 2020 and 2021 in general, due to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic (Rothbaum & Bee, 2022; Rothbaum & Hokayum, 2021).

The Healthy Minds Network reported the average response rate for the survey across all 139 colleges and universities (N = 32,754) that participated in the HMS survey in 2020-2021, was approximately 14% (HMN, 2021, January 5). Sample sizes may have been higher for universities that sent the Healthy Mind Network team a list of all enrolled students who received the survey link from the organization. However, due to student privacy laws in the state of the university in the study, sending student information to organizations is prohibited. Data collection for this study is discussed further in the following section.

To prevent survey fatigue, all students took the first three modules of the HMS, the custom module (Module 20), and approximately half of the other elective modules chosen by the university. As a part of the institutional commitment to JED, the elective modules were split such that half of the students were randomly selected to receive Module 9: Knowledge and Attitudes, Module 10: Upstander/Bystander, Module 12: Diversity & Inclusion, and Module 14: Resilience. The other half of the participants received elective modules Module 11: Mental Health Climate and Module 18: COVID. All questions in each section were optional. For this study, the sample consisted of students randomly selected to take Module 10: Bystanding/Upstanding module of the survey and responded to the questions in this module (n = 177). These students also participated in the other modules used in this study including Module 1: Demographics, Module 2: Mental Health Status, and Module 12: Climate for Diversity and Inclusion.

Data Collection

The university's HMS roll-out committee worked with the Healthy Minds Network

(HMN) to collect the data in April 2021. The HMS committee consisted of staff members from the university's health promotion office and student affairs assessment department. The committee decided on key university leaders to send the survey to, and asked them to send the surveys to the student populations that they serve. The committee conducted targeted outreach to graduate and professional schools in an effort to gain better insight into the health behaviors of these populations.

The HMS's online survey system allowed for data collection to be completely anonymous and students were required to be at least 18 years old to participate (HMN, 2021, January 5). Student information was de-identified by the HMN before it was packaged and sent back to the university (HMN, 2021, January 5; HMN, 2021, October). Through convenience sampling, undergraduate, graduate, and professional students received an email to their student e-mail address from campus constituents or saw the link through campus social media that introduced the survey. While a random sampling method was not used for participation in the survey due to state government restrictions on student privacy, once students opted into the survey, they were randomly selected to participate in certain elective modules. Thus, the current study used a random sample.

Due to recommendations from the HMN, the survey distribution was timed in the Spring to avoid the first two weeks of the semester, the last two weeks of the semester, and major holidays. An online, promotional campaign was launched by the HMS roll-out committee to encourage students' participation. This included university social media, advertisements in the campus digital newsletter, and e-mails to various academic and student affairs departments at the university.

Students' initial survey invitation email enclosed information that described the purpose of the study, its significance, and information to access the HMS link using a generic code. Students who opened the survey were provided with informed consent statements about how the research results could be used and were informed that their answers would be de-identified and confidential.

Students were also incentivized to participate. Although participation was anonymous, students could submit their email addresses at the end of the survey for a chance to win one of twenty $100 gift cards to their campus bookstore or campus technology store. Students' email information was not connected to the results of the survey, and winners for the incentives were randomly selected using an SPSS random sample generator (IBM Corp, 2022).

Measures

The following section includes an overview of the measures that were used in the study.

Demographics

All demographic information for the HMS was located under Module 1: Demographics. This study examined academic level, race, sexual orientation, gender identity, registered disability status, international student status, and first-generation college student status. For each question, participants were able to select from a predetermined list of response options. Some questions allowed for write-in answers and all responses were voluntary. Table 3 in Chapter Four shows a breakdown of the study's final sample.

Academic Level. There were four options for students to select for their academic level. These included: *undergraduate*, *graduate*, *professional*, or *other (associate's & non-degree enrolled).*

Race/Ethnicity. Race/Ethnicity included six, select-all-that-apply options which

included: *Hispanic, Middle Eastern, Asian, Black/African American, White,* or *Two or More Races*.

Sexual Orientation. Sexual Orientation included seven options: *Heterosexual, Gay/Lesbian, Bisexual/Pansexual, Questioning, Queer, 2+ Sexualities,* and *Other*.

Gender. *Gender* included 7 options: *Male, Female, Transgender, Genderqueer/non-conforming, Non-binary, 2+ Genders, Other.*

Registered Disability Status. Registered disability status was determined by the question, *Are you registered with the office for disability services on this campus as having a documented and diagnosed disability?* This question had binary answer options *Yes* or *No*.

International Student Status. International student status was determined by the question, *Are you an international student?* This question had binary answer options *Yes* or *No*.

First-Generation College Student Status. The HMS included two questions with eight options to describe parents' or step-parents' education level. The survey questions asked: *What is the highest level of education completed by your parents or stepparents (Parent 1)* and *What is the highest level of education completed by your parents or stepparents (Parent 2)*? Students could select the following options for each question: 1 = *8th grade or lower;* 2 = *Between 9th and 12th grade (no high school degree);* 3 = *High school degree;* 4 = *Some college (but no college degree);* 5 = *Associate's degree;* 6 = *Bachelor's degree;* 7 = *Graduate degree;* 8 = *Don't know.*

The Flourishing Scale (FS)

The Flourishing Scale (FS) is a brief, 8-item scale that measures perceived social-psychological well-being, also called eudaimonic well-being (Diener et al., 2009). More specifically, the FS measures perceived success in areas such as optimism, self-esteem,

relationships, and a sense of meaning in one's life. Development of this scale was based on other psychological and social well-being scales, and universal needs, with an emphasis on aspects of human "prosperity." Originally called the "Psychological Well-being Scale," its name was changed to encompass holistic well-being (Diener et al., 2009).

Each item on the FS uses a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 1= *Strongly Disagree* to 7= *Strongly Agree*. Scores can range from 8 to 56, with a score of 8 indicating strong disagreement with all questions, and 56 indicating strong agreement with all questions. Each question on the FS is phrased positively, indicating that the higher one's score, the more likely the participant perceives themselves to be flourishing across key areas of well-being (Diener et al., 2009). Previous researchers have shown that the FS has good reliability ($\alpha = .86$) (Diener et al., 2009; Graham & Eloff, 2022), has high convergent validity with similar well-being scales such as the Mental Health Continuum Short Form (MHC-SF), and the Fragility of Happiness Scale (Graham & Eloff, 2022). Researchers have used the FS to better understand how college students' flourishing can impact their academic performance (Griffin et al., 2022; Hirshberg et al., 2022; Keyes, 2002; Ouweneel et al., 2011) and overall mental health (de la Fuente et al., 2022; Fink, 2014; Griffin et al., 2022; Jorgensen & Nelson, 2018; Peter et al., 2011; Rey et al., 2019). More recently, researchers have begun to study the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on college student flourishing (Graham & Eloff, 2022; Nyunt et al., 2022). Examples of items on the FS included: *I lead a purposeful and meaningful life*, *My social relationships are supportive and rewarding,* and *I actively contribute to the happiness and well-being of others* (Diener et al., 2009).

University Belonging

The university belonging scale was created by the HMN (HMN, 2021, January 5). Some

of the questions for the scale included: *I have considered leaving this school because I felt isolated or unwelcomed* and *At [school], I feel valued and listened to by: University Administrators.* The questions for this measure used a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = *Strongly Agree* to 5 = S*trongly Disagree*.

Campus Climate

Campus climate was measured by a scale adapted from Rankin's (1998) Perception of Campus Climate. This scale has been used to measure students' perception of the campus climate at their university (Rankin, 1998). In previous literature, Rankin and Reason (2005) used this scale to measure how students of color feel perceived and supported by those at their institution (Rankin & Reason, 2005). This scale has also been used to measure LGBT students' sense of university fit, safety, and perception of norms at their universities (Rankin, 2003). Previous researchers have shown that students of color and LGBT students generally experience a more hostile campus climate and are less likely to feel like they belong than White students (Rankin, 2003) and heterosexual students (Rankin & Reason, 2005). Though other studies have used this scale there are currently no psychometrics available for it.

Instructions for this scale stated: *Please read the following definition of climate before answering the next questions*: *Climate refers to your view of how things generally work in your campus environment e.g.: common attitudes, practices, or behaviors.* For each question, there was a 5-point Likert scale, which varied positive and negative response options. Response options varied slightly depending on the item. For example, one item states, *Using a scale of 1-5, please rate the overall climate at [school name] over the past 12 months on the following dimensions: Friendly - Hostile*. The options for this item were: 1 = *Very Friendly*, 2 = *Somewhat Friendly*, 3 = *Neither Friendly nor Hostile*, 4=*Somewhat Hostile*, 5 = *Very Hostile*. Another

question stated: *Using a scale of 1-5, please rate the overall climate at [school name] over the past 12 months on the following dimensions: Welcoming - Not Welcoming*. The possible answers to this question were: 1 = *Welcoming*, 2 = S*omewhat Welcoming*, 3 = *Neither Welcoming nor Not Welcoming*, 4 = *Somewhat Not Welcoming*, 5 = *Not Welcoming.*

Bystander Intention

Bystander intention was measured by five items created by the HMN (HMN, 2021, January 5). Each question begins with the stem: *How much do you agree with the following statement* and uses a 6-point Likert scale from 1 = *Strongly Agree* to *6=Strongly Disagree*. An example of an item that measures bystander intention is: *How much do you agree with the following statement?: I saw someone was experiencing significant emotional distress or thoughts of suicide, I would intervene (by trying to help).*

Bystander Intervention

The bystander intervention measure included one select-all-that-apply item. The stem of the question was, *In the past year, I have intervened (by trying to help in the following situations on my campus): (Select all that apply)*. Five of the options outline situations in which a participant could have intervened: 1= *When someone was drinking too much*, 2 = *Someone was at risk of being sexually assaulted*, 3 = *Someone was using hurtful language (e.g. bullying, sexist, racist, or homophobic comments)*, 4 = *Someone was experiencing significant emotional distress or thoughts of suicide*, and 5 = *There was a physical altercation/fight*. The sixth option was *Intervened*: *Other* and the seventh option is *None of the above*.

Variables

This section describes the creation and use of the variables in this study including reverse

scoring and creating total mean and sum scales. The methods for creating the variables are outlined below.

Flourishing

The FS was located under Module 2: Mental Health Status, in the HMS, which was a core module for all students who took the survey. Flourishing was measured by Diener's (2009) Flourishing Scale (FS), using a combination of eight items. The FS typically uses total scale scores which range from 8 to 56, with higher scores indicating higher perceived psycho-social well-being, also known as flourishing (Diener, 2009). However, there are currently no firm guidelines as to a cut-off for participants flourishing or not flourishing. Flourishing was also received from the HMN with categorical raw data. For this study, flourishing was measured as an ordinal variable, by coding its categorical Likert responses. Then, I computed an average scale score in SPSS to create the flourishing variable.

University Belonging

University belonging was an ordinal variable measured by a combination of five items located in Module 12: Climate for Diversity and Inclusion. An average scale score was taken across the items, with reverse scoring for one item. Originally questions on this scale seemed to have two distinct types of questions that were asked of participants. Five questions focused on students' global sense of belonging at their university, and six questions that asked about feeling valued and listened to by university stakeholders (peers, faculty, etc.). In chapter four, I ran an exploratory factor analysis to determine which items to ultimately incorporate into the study (Fabrigar et al., 1999).

Campus Climate

Campus climate was an ordinal variable, measured using a combination of five items

located in HMS's Module 12: Climate for Diversity and Inclusion. The questions were adapted from Rankin's (1998) Perception of Campus Climate scale with reverse scoring for three questions. To establish consistency with the other scales, I coded items so that lower scale scores indicated negative perceptions of campus climate, and higher scale scores indicated more positive perceptions. I computed an average scale score in SPSS to create the campus climate variable. Mean imputation was used for missing data.

Academic Level

For academic level, I combined students who indicated that they were *graduate* or *professional* students and omitted participants who selected the option for *other (associate's & non-degree enrolled).* Academic levels that were used for this categorical variable were *undergraduate* and *graduate*/*professional* students, and transformed them into numeric codes, 1 = *undergraduate*, 2 = *graduate/professional students*.

Identity Risk Index

To measure marginalized social identity status, I was inspired by the procedures outlined by Amato (2014) and Petch et al (2012), who created a risk index that measured known correlates to discrimination and systemic marginalization. The Identity Risk Index in this study was a count variable that was used to assess barriers to student success and well-being outcomes as they relate to students' identities. In other words, traditionally marginalized identities were counted to assess compounding systemic oppression and its impact on the variables within the study. The Identity Risk Index was both an independent variable and a covariate. All demographic variables were originally categorical, which I transformed into binary variables, with a zero indicating identities with historically more privilege (white, male, heterosexual, no disability, not an international student, and multigenerational college student), and one for

identities indicating marginalization in the United States. Participants' scores could range from zero to six based on their race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, international student status, first-generation college student status, and registered disability status. Chapter 4 outlines the specific breakdown of how identities were broken up into binaries for each social category (Table 6), and frequencies for Identity Risk Index scores (Table 7) in Chapter 4.

Before creating the Identity Risk Index, I also consolidated some of the demographic response options for power and to use for sample descriptives (Table 3). The procedures for those demographic variables are outlined below.

Race/Ethnicity. Any participant who selected multiple options for race/ethnicity was included in the *Two or More Races* category of this variable.

Sexual Orientation. This variable collapsed responses into: *Questioning*, *Queer*, and *2+ Sexualities*, into the *Other* category. Any participant who selected multiple sexual orientations was also placed into the Other category.

Gender. Responses for gender were collapsed into three options for power: *Male*, *Female*, and *Other* (*Transgender*, *Genderqueer/non-conforming*, *Non-binary*, *2+ Genders*, *Other*).

First-Generation College Student Status. First-generation college student status was based on the institution's definition. The university defines a first-generation college student as someone with neither of their parents or step-parents who have received a bachelor's degree or higher. Participants who selected option 8 or who did not know either parents' highest education, were excluded from this variable and treated as missing. For both questions, students who selected options 1-4 were considered *first-generation college students*. Students who selected options 6 or 7 were considered *multi-generation college students.*

Bystander Intention

Bystander intention was an ordinal variable, measured using a combination of five items located in Module 10: Bystander/Upstander Behaviors. Similar to the campus climate variable, I coded items for interpretability and consistency. Lower scale scores indicated less favorable attitudes toward bystander intention, and higher scores indicated more favorable attitudes. Then I computed an average scale score in SPSS to create the bystander intention variable and mean imputation was used for missing data.

Bystander Intervention

Bystander intervention was an ordinal variable that I transformed into a count variable. The survey question for this variable was located in Module 10: Upstander/Bystander Behaviors, with a total of seven response options. I began by running descriptives of the bystander intervention variable, found in Table 9. Then, I created an Intervention Total variable by computing the sum of the situations that students selected when they intervened (as shown in Table 10). Students' scores could range from 0 to 6. The bystander intervention variable counts situations that participants took part in, not the number of times they intervened in a situation.

Data Analysis

This section provides an overview of data cleaning, assumption testing, and data analysis for this study. To answer the research questions, analyses involved creating an Identity Risk Index and running MANOVAs (RQ1), multiple linear regression with a covariate (RQ2), and a Poisson regression. All methods were conducted using SPSS version 29 (IBM Corp., 2022) and the results of the analyses will be discussed in Chapter 4.

Data Cleaning

Data cleaning included examining for patterns of missingness and outliers, determining

the reliability of scales and internal validity, and running an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) for the university belonging variable. I analyzed the data to determine patterns of missingness among campus climate, flourishing, belonging, bystander intention, bystander intervention, and the Identity Risk Index variables (Little & Rubin, 2022; Sterner, 2011). First, I ran frequency tables while showing values. Then, I examined missing data using Little's (1988) Missing Completely at Random (MCAR) test, and determined if their case should be removed (Sterner, 2011). I created mean scale variables in SPSS (IBM Corp., 2022) to measure campus climate, belonging, flourishing, and bystander intention. Then, I used regression mean imputation used to replace the missing scores for campus climate, belonging, and bystander intention. (Cole, 2008; Lee & Carlin, 2016; Sterner, 2011). I ran descriptives before and after to make sure that missing data were not re-coded in a way that could skew the results. I analyzed Cronbach's alpha for each scale to ensure they met a threshold for good internal consistency and reliability. Lastly, I coded missing data for the bystander intervention and the risk identity index variables with -999 in SPSS (IBM Corp., 2022).

Addressing Assumptions

I assessed assumptions both before answering the research questions with the complete data set, and then by each question individually. To test for normality, outliers for the sample were determined using Z-scores by scale variables that exceeded $\pm$ 3, examining scatterplots, and visually inspecting for patterns in case responses for each variable. After removing outliers, I tested for specific assumptions for each research question (RQ).

RQ1. RQ1a and RQ1b met the assumption for MANOVA with at least two dependent variables measured at the interval level, and at least one independent variable with two or more categorical groups (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2012). For RQ1a there were four dependent variables

and an independent variable with two categorical groups for academic level that were transformed into numeric codes. For RQ1b there were four dependent variables and one independent variable with six levels for an intersecting Identity Risk Index. RQ1a and RQ1b met the assumption for the recommended sample size (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2012), with at least 20 cases for each level of the independent variable (Grande, 2015a) (N = 171).

To test for normality, I first measured kurtosis and skew in SPSS (IBM Corp., 2022) to describe the distribution. According to the Fisher-Person skewness test, skewness for a normal distribution should indicate results close to zero (National Institute of Standards and Technology, n.d., Statology, 2022, January 22). With mixed results for the dependent variables, more tests for multivariate normality were warranted. P-P plots showed bystander intention, belonging, and campus climate plotted along the diagonal line, indicating a normal distribution for the scale, meeting the assumption, showing that the sample came from a typically distributed population. However, there was a slight variation from the P-P plot line for flourishing, indicating that flourishing results show slight variation from a normal distribution. Later, the Shapiro-Wilk test indicated non-normality for both MANOVAs, so Pillai's trace was used (Grande, 2015a; Statistical Solutions, 2023).

Bivariate correlations ensured a linear relationship between the pair of dependent variables across each level of the IV and the dependent variables, which met the assumption. Levene's Test of Error Variances showed significant results for one of the variables which did not meet the assumption of homogeneity of variance. As such, data and results should then be interpreted with caution. Box's M test of Equality of Variances was interpreted for the assumption of covariances and was met for both RQ1a and RQ1b (Box, 1949).

RQ2. Assumptions for RQ2's multiple linear regressions included no multicollinearity, homoscedasticity, and normality (Achen, 1982; Laerd Statistics, 2018a; Mitchell & Jolley, 2010, p. 626; Starkweather, 2018). Again, I assessed normality using the Shapiro-Wilk test showing a non-normal distribution of residuals with significant results, so Pillai's trace was used (Hancock et al., 2019; Laerd Statistics, 2018; Starkweather, 2018). The Fisher-Pearson test was used to determine skewness, with values near zero meeting the assumption. Homoscedasticity was assessed through an examination of a scatter plot, which met the assumption with no values falling outside of $\pm$ 3. The assumption for multicollinearity was met by examining correlations with none higher than $r = 0.7$, ensuring no relationships are highly correlated (Starkweather, 2018).

RQ3. For RQ3 assumptions for Poisson regressions included using the correct types of variables, normality, the dependent variable's means and the variance must be identical, and there should be equidispersion (Grande, 2015b). The bystander intervention variable met the assumption for a dependent count variable. The independent variable, bystander intention, met the assumption for an ordinal independent variable. The assumption for normality was met in an examination of box plots and histograms for the bystander intention and intervention scales. I checked the assumption for equidispersion by searching for a value of 1 under deviance in the Goodness of Fit output table. The most common assumption violation for Poisson regression. With extremely close results, there was a minor assumption violation. A Pearson Chi-Square Parameter method was implemented based on the results (Laerd Statistics, 2018b).

Statistical Analyses

To answer the research questions (RQs), I used MANOVA, multiple linear regression with a covariate, and Poisson regression.

RQ1. For RQ1, I conducted two MANOVAs in SPSS. The MANOVA analyzed multiple dependent variables (DV) with different levels of an independent variable (IV) and assessed the effect of a combination of the DVs on each level of the IV (Grande, 2015a; Keselman et al., 1998; Statistical Solutions, 2023).

RQ1a. RQ1a examined if there were significant differences in students' perceptions of campus climate, flourishing, belonging, and bystander intention based on their identity as undergraduate or graduate/professional students. I began by running descriptive statistics to scan for mean differences and standard deviations based on academic level and scores for flourishing, sense of belonging, campus climate, and bystander intention (Table 5). For the MANOVA, the independent variable was "Academic Level," which consisted of two levels: graduate/professional and undergraduate students. The dependent variables were flourishing, sense of belonging, campus climate, and bystander intention. Results from the MANOVA analysis, tests of between-subjects effects, and assumption results were discussed.

RQ1b. For RQ1b, I ran frequencies to view a demographic breakdown of the sample by the binary identity variables (Table 6) and the breakdown by the number of intersecting marginalized identities for the sample (Table 7). I also ran descriptive statistics to scan for patterns in the Identity Risk Index across each variable. For the MANOVA, the IV was the Identity Risk Index, which included six levels. The DVs were flourishing, sense of belonging, campus climate, and bystander intention. Results from the MANOVA analysis, assumption results, and tests of between-subjects effects were discussed.

RQ2. To answer RQ2, I ran a multiple linear regression in SPSS (IBM Corp., 2022), with a co-covariate. Regressions help to determine the strength of the effect that IVs have on DVs (Laerd Statistics, 2018a; Starkweather, 2018). Multiple linear regressions can be used to explain

the relationship between a DV and multiple IVs (Mitchell & Jolley, 2010, p. 626). To answer RQ2, I first ran a multiple linear regression with flourishing, belonging, and campus climate as the IVs and bystander intention as the DV. Then I conducted the multiple linear regression again using blocks and included the Identity Risk Index as a covariate. Covariates can increase precision by reducing potential error in the model (Grande, 2015; Laerd Statistics, 2018b; Starkweather, 2018). The results, including variance and contributions to the overall model, were compared to determine the influence of intersecting, marginalized identities on any of the underlying relationships.

RQ3. To answer RQ3, I used a Poisson regression to determine if bystander intention predicted bystander intervention. A Poisson regression can account for potential skewness in count variables (Grande, 2015b; Laerd Statistics, 2018). After conducting descriptives for intervention behaviors (Table 9), creating the sum variable and frequencies for the number of experiences in which students intervened (Table 10), and accounting for assumptions, the IV was bystander intention and the DV was set to be bystander intervention. Results indicated the effect of bystander intention on bystander intervention and how a single unit increase or decrease in intention is associated with intervention.

Ethical Considerations

There were several ethical considerations for this study. Some considerations included social desirability, privacy (Mitchell & Jolley, 2010), and an acknowledgment of the sensitive nature and stigma related to the topics in this study. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many students who were living at their university residences returned home to their families and noted privacy as more of a challenge (Son et al., 2020). The HMS survey launched in April 2021, which was when many lockdowns were still in place during the pandemic, and thus on-campus

living was less likely (Birmingham et al., 2021; Grubic et al., 2020). While social desirability and privacy could have been less of a threat due to the confidential nature of the HMS, it is possible that someone, like a family member or partner, could have influenced a student's responses while they were taking the survey due to proximity. Social desirability bias occurs when participants respond in ways that understate or exaggerate their true thoughts or experiences due to a fear of being judged. Due to the sensitive nature of the topics in this study, social desirability may have influenced participants to answer in ways that they feel are more socially accepted (Mitchell & Jolley, 2010, p. 138).

As previously discussed, the university's HMS roll-out committee and the Healthy Minds Network took steps to address these concerns. Students were informed about the confidentiality of their answers when they received the initial survey email (Appendix A). Informed consent was also broached at the beginning of the survey. Additionally, at the beginning of each HMS survey module, there were instructions with a reminder to participants that stated, "Remember that your responses are confidential and you may choose to skip questions or stop responding at any point." Students who elected to enter a drawing for prizes for their participation were ensured that their school e-mail address would not be connected to their survey answers. The option to participate in the incentive was available once the survey was already completed. The Healthy Minds Network de-identified all information tied to individual students, so there was no way for the university to trace answers back to participants (HMN, 2021, January 5; HMN, 2021, October).

Chapter Summary

Chapter Three outlined the methods for the study. It began by discussing the research design, including a description of the HMS, sampling procedures, and data collection. Next

measures were outlined and variables were described for flourishing, university belonging, campus climate, bystander intention, bystander intervention, and the Identity Risk Index. The final portion of the chapter provided an overview of data cleaning, assumption testing, and statistical analyses. The results of the study are outlined in Chapter Four and discussed and interpreted in Chapter Five.

Chapter Four: Data Analysis

In Chapter Four, I present the statistical results of secondary data collected from a university Healthy Minds Study survey in the Spring of 2021. Researchers collected data from a majority-minority, urban research institution with a sample consisting of undergraduate, graduate, and professional students. The purpose of the current study was to examine the relationships between campus climate, flourishing, belonging, bystander intention, and bystander intervention during the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. Given the lack of previous research related to these topics for both undergraduate and graduate students, and for students with minoritized identities, the research questions and subsequent analyses were exploratory in nature. The research questions are as follows:

RQ1: Are there significant differences in students' perceptions of campus climate, university belonging, flourishing, and bystander intention based on:

RQ1a: academic level?

RQ1b: the Identity Risk Index?

RQ2: Does campus climate, university belonging, and flourishing predict bystander intention for students, and if so, do students' identities impact that relationship?

RQ3: Does bystander intention predict bystander intervention among university students?

This chapter begins with preliminary analysis results, including how missing data, scale validity, and outliers were addressed. Then, assumption testing and demographic characteristics of the remaining sample are described. The final portion of this chapter presents the results of the statistical analyses. Chapter Five will present interpretations of the findings.

Preliminary Analysis

This section will describe measures taken before addressing the research questions. It outlines the assessment of missing data, outliers, reliability of scale scores, participant demographics, and correlations. The assumptions for each analysis are reported with each research question.

Missing Data

The original institutional Healthy Minds Survey (HMS) included 1,106 participants in the spring semester of 2021. Approximately 16% (n = 177) were randomly assigned and completed Module 10: Upstander/Bystander Module of the survey. Data from this subset of participants were examined for this study. Before analyzing for missingness, incomplete cases were deleted from the data set. Cases were deleted listwise if they did not include at least 80% completeness for the flourishing scale (FS), university belonging, campus climate, bystander intention, and answers to the demographic questions (Sterner, 2011). Bystander intervention items were excluded from this analysis because of the select-all-that-apply, count structure of the variable. As a count variable, students may have selected between one and five options on this scale, based on the number of intervention situations presented (see Table 5). Three cases were identified as incomplete and were excluded listwise from the sample. The remaining cases (n = 174) were inspected for patterns of missingness.

A missing values analysis (MVA) using Little's (1988) Missing Completely at Random (MCAR) test was not significant for campus climate (N = 174, χ^2 = 3.816, p = .702), and bystander intention (N = 174, χ^2 = 7.246, p = .702) items. There was no missing data for the flourishing scale. The sense of belonging scale showed one of the five items was missing one participant's data, resulting in significance (N = 174, χ^2 = 32.798, p = 0.000). Therefore, the case was visually examined for patterns of missingness. It was difficult to determine if this

participant's data was Missing at Random (MAR) or Missing Not at Random (MNAR). The participant indicated highly favorable attitudes toward answers to the other questions in the belonging section. This participant indicated marginalized demographic identities, a lower flourishing score, and filled every other HMS survey question. In later analysis, their case consistently violated assumptions and skewed results. Ultimately, I decided to remove their case (*N = 173)* (Sterner, 2011).

The demographic variables had less than 4% missing data, which were replaced by -999 and labeled in SPSS. Each scale had less than 3% missing data (the belonging variable had 0.6%, campus climate had 2.9%, and bystander intention had 1.2%). The Flourishing Scale (FS) had no missing data. Due to the small amount of missingness and the MCAR results, missing data for the scale variables were replaced using regression mean imputation (Cole, 2008; Sterner, 2011). Missing values for bystander intervention and the Identity Risk Index, count variables, were replaced with -999 and labeled in SPSS.

Outliers

Next, data were examined for multivariate outliers to test the assumption of normality. Z-scores were calculated for the campus climate, flourishing, belonging, and bystander intention. They were also examined univariately. Three cases with *Z*-scores $\pm$ 3 were examined to see if they were due to data error or natural variations that would add value to the study and were ultimately deleted due to patterns of inconsistent responses (Osborne, 2017). One case from the university belonging scale (Z = -3.03) and two from the flourishing scale (both Z = -3.61). The final dataset was *N* = 171. Additionally, a Shapiro-Wilk test, along with other assumptions specific to each statistical test were conducted for each research question, results are reported in the sections below.

Reliability of Scale Scores

The next step of the preliminary data analysis was to run descriptive statistics and reliability tests to determine scale means, standard deviations, and Cronbach's coefficients alpha. As shown in Table 2, all scales' Cronbach's alphas were above 0.7. Values above 0.7 are considered acceptable reliability in the social sciences (Field, 2013).

Table 2

Reliability of Scale Scores

Scale	Cronbach's coefficients alpha	*M* (Scale)	*SD (Scale)*	*Min.* Statistic	*Max.* Statistic	*N* (Scale Items)
Campus Climate	.92	2.94	0.35	2	4	5
Flourishing Scale (FS)	.93	5.43	1.11	2	7	8
University Belonging	.79	3.43	0.77	1	5	5
Bystander Intention	.75	4.89	0.71	1	6	5

Note. Campus Climate and FS have what is considered to be excellent reliability. University Belonging and Bystander Intention scales have acceptable reliability.

Exploratory Factor Analysis

Though grouped together in the survey, because the HMS's sense of belonging scale combined different types of questions on belonging, I ran an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to determine if the items held the same underlying theoretical structure (Fabrigar et al., 1999). In reading the questions, there was a clear delineation in the question types on the HMS sense of belonging scale. Five of the questions on the HMS scale used instructions "Considering your experiences over the past 12 months, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:" followed by general feelings about university belonging. Then, six additional questions included instructions "At [school], I feel valued and listened to by: [Specific campus relationship]."

Results indicated a two-factor structure (Factor 1: Eigenvalue = 4.18, Factor 2: Eigenvalue 1.59, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy = .82, $p < .001$). All other factors' Eigenvalues were lower than 1. The component correlation was weak $r = .21$, indicating no strong correlation between factors. Five items with questions about students' global sense of belonging on campus were retained. Six questions that asked about students' specific relationships (such as with faculty, peers, or staff) were eliminated as they were distinctly different and focused on students' feeling valued in their campus relationships rather than their sense of belonging at their university.

Participant Demographics

Table 3 shows the demographic breakdown of the participants ($N = 171$), alongside demographic information for the Fall 2020 - Spring 2021 university population where this study takes place (Virginia Commonwealth University, 2021). Overall, the sample was predominantly White (41.5%), heterosexual (74.3%), and female (68.4%). Compared to the institution, the sample had a higher percentage of Asian (25.1%) and Multiracial (15.2%) participants and a lower percentage of Black/African American (8.8%) participants. There were nearly even numbers of undergraduate (54.1%), and graduate/professional (45.6%) participants, with an overrepresentation of graduate/professional students compared to the institutional data. The majority of the sample were not international students (95.9%), not registered with the campus disability office (91.8%), and not first-generation college students (68.4%).

Table 3

Sample Demographics (N = 171)

Grouping Variable	*n*	% of Sample	% of Institution
Academic Level			
Undergraduate	93	54.1%	75.7%

Graduate/Professional	78	45.6%	24.3%
Gender			
Male	44	25.6%	37.1%
Female	117	68.4%	62.3%
Other (Non-binary, Queer/non-conforming, Nonbinary+Queer, Questioning, 2+ Genders/Multiple Genders, Transmale and Transfemale)	8	4.7%	-
Not Reported	2	1.2%	0.6%
Sexual Orientation			
Heterosexual	127	74.3%	-
Gay/Lesbian	10	5.8%	-
Bisexual/Pansexual	14	8.2%	-
Other (Questioning, Queer, 2+ Sexualities/Multiple identities)	21	11.7%	-
Race/Ethnicity			
Asian	43	25.1%	13.5%
Black/African American	15	8.8%	17.9%
Hispanic	7	4.1%	9.4%
Middle Eastern	8	4.7%	-
White	71	41.5%	44.6%
2+ Races	26	15.2%	6.5%
Not Reported	1	0.6%	-
First Generation Status			
First Generation College Student	47	27.5%	-
Not First Generation College Student	117	68.4%	-
Not Reported	7	4.1%	-
International Student Status			
International Student	7	4.1%	-
Domestic Student	164	95.9%	-
Registered Disability Status			
Registered Disability	14	8.2%	-
No Registered Disability	157	91.8%	-

Note. Information marked with a dash represents an identity in which the institution did not report official data or the data was not readily available for this study.

Correlations

Bivariate Pearson correlations were conducted to gain a preliminary understanding of the relationships between the variables. The results are displayed in Table 4. There were several significant correlations. There was a moderate, positive correlation between flourishing and

belonging ($r = .51$, $p < 0.01$). Next, there was a weak, positive relationship between bystander intention and belonging ($r = .18$, $p < 0.05$). There was a weak, negative correlation between campus climate and bystander intention ($r = -.18$, $p < .01$). Campus climate and flourishing had a weak negative correlation ($r = -.28$, $p < .05$). Lastly, there was a moderate negative correlation between campus climate and belonging ($r = -.48$, $p < . 01$).

There was only one relationship that was not significant. There was a weak, positive, correlation between bystander intention and flourishing ($r = .12$, $p > 0.05$). The correlational results indicate that for most all variables, there were significant relationships. Though the assumption for multicollinearity would be examined in each research question, the lower *r*-values indicate that it is less likely.

Table 4

Pearson Correlation Matrix Between Flourishing, Belonging, Campus Climate and Bystander Intention Scores (N = 171)

Measure	Belonging Score	FS Score	Bystander Intention Score	Campus Climate Score
University Belonging	-			
Flourishing	.505**	-		
Bystander Intention	.181*	.115	-	
Campus Climate	-.446**	-.275*	-.184**	-

** $p < .01$, *$p < 0.05$

This section dedicated to preliminary analysis addressed missing data, reliability of scales, an exploratory factor analysis, and a breakdown of participant demographic information. Additionally, bivariate Pearson Correlations indicated significant relationships among the variables, with the exception of bystander intention and flourishing ($r = .12$, $p > .05$). These results serve as a foundation for assumption testing in the next section. The results section will address the research questions using statistical analyses and will include assumption testing and results for each question.

Results

The following section outlines the results of the study's research questions. Assumptions were also examined for each statistical test.

Research Question 1

Research question 1 (RQ1) examined if there were significant differences in students' perceptions of campus climate, university belonging, flourishing, and bystander intention based on (a) academic level and (b) Identity Risk Index. Assumption testing and analysis for MANOVA were conducted.

Assumptions for MANOVA in RQ1a and RQ1b

Assumptions were met for MANOVAs in RQ1a and RQ1b. Each test had at least two dependent variables measured at the interval or ratio level and at least one independent variable with two or more categorical groups. For RQ1a there were four dependent variables and an independent variable with two categorical groups for academic level that were transformed into numeric codes. For RQ1b there were four dependent variables and one independent variable with six categorical groups for an intersecting Identity Risk Index. Assumptions for sample size (n = 171), a linear relationship between the dependent variables for each level of the independent variable, and Mahalanobis Distance = 14.82 met the assumption for outliers.

For RQ1a and RQ1b, the Shapiro-Wilk test determined nonsignificant results and univariate normality for each of the dependent variables (Hancock et al., 2019). Kurtosis and skew were measured in SPSS using descriptive statistics to describe the posterior distribution. According to Fisher-Pearson coefficient of skewness test (National Institute of Standards and Technology, n.d., Statology, 2022, January 22), skewness for a normal distribution should stay near zero. The distribution for the variables were as follows: flourishing (skew = -.90, kurtosis =

- .27), campus climate (skew = .73, kurtosis = . 97), university belonging (skew = -.34, kurtosis = .21), and bystander intention (skew = -.71, kurtosis = -.63). Though not far from 0, univariate normality was not met, resulting in violating an assumption and rejecting the null hypothesis on these variables. Since this process just tests variables individually, further tests for multivariate normality were necessary for the dependent variable to meet assumptions for MANOVA. P-P plot showed bystander intention, university belonging, and campus climate plotted along the diagonal line, indicating a normal distribution for the scale, meeting the assumption, showing that the sample came from a typically distributed population. However, there was a slight variation from the P-P plot line for flourishing, indicating that flourishing results show slight variation from a normal distribution. Normality was not met, Shapiro-Wilk result either, so Pillai's Trace was used. No multicollinearity in the dependent variables was also met, with no $r > 0.9$. Box's Test of Equality of Covariance Matrices met the assumption of covariances (RQ1a: $p = 0.42$; RQ1b: $p = 0.83$).

Levene's Test of Error Variances showed significant results ($p < 0.05$) for university belonging $F(1, 169) = .471$, $p = 0.01$ which did not meet the assumption of homogeneity of variance for RQ3a and RQ3b. As such, data and results should then be interpreted with caution. Flourishing $F(1, 169) = .169$, $p = 0.41$, bystander intention $F(1, 169) = .410$, $p = 0.53$, and perceptions of campus climate $F(1, 169) = 2.367$, $p = 0.33$ met the assumption with nonsignificant results. Box's Test of Equality of Covariance Matrices met the assumption of covariances ($p = 0.42$).

Research Question 1a

Research question (RQ) 1a examined if there were significant differences in students' perceptions of campus climate, flourishing, university belonging, and bystander intention based

on their identity as undergraduate or graduate/professional students. I ran a MANOVA in SPSS to test differences in the independent variable, which was academic level. The dependent variables were flourishing, university belonging, campus climate, and bystander intention. A MANOVA creates a linear combination for all of the independent variables, with different levels of the independent variable. I ran follow-up tests to analyze unique differences across each dependent variable, separately.

The descriptive statistics showed slight differences in means between undergraduates and graduates for each variable. Undergraduates showed slightly higher mean scores for their university belonging (M = 3.46) and bystander intention *(*M = 4.94). Graduate and professional students showed slightly higher means for flourishing (M = 4.47) and perceptions of campus climate (M =2.98*)*. More specific information is shown in Table 5.

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics, RQ1a MANOVA (N=171)

Measure	Academic Level	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
University Belonging	Undergraduate	3.46	.679	93
	Graduate/Professional	3.38	.866	78
	Total	3.42	.769	171
Flourishing	Undergraduate	5.40	1.062	93
	Graduate/Professional	5.47	1.182	78
	Total	5.43	1.115	171
Bystander Intention	Undergraduate	4.94	.718	93
	Graduate/Professional	4.87	.656	78
	Total	4.91	.689	171
Campus Climate	Undergraduate	2.90	3.17	93
	Graduate/Professional	2.98	3.77	78
	Total	2.94	.347	171

MANOVA Results

There was not a statistically significant difference for academic level [F (1, 169) = 0.859, p = .49], on a linear combination of the dependent variables: university belonging, flourishing,

bystander intention and perceptions of campus climate. Overall, 2% of the variance ($\eta_p^2 = 0.02$) in university belonging, flourishing, bystander intention and perceptions can be explained by academic level. The variance for each variable was: university belonging ($\eta_p^2 = 0.003$), flourishing ($\eta_p^2 = 0.01$), bystander intention ($\eta_p^2 = 0.02$), and campus climate ($\eta_p^2 = 0.02$).

Tests of between-subjects effects revealed no statistically significant results for university belonging ($p = 0.49$), flourishing ($p = 0.68$), bystander intention ($p = 0.52$), and campus climate ($p = 0.13$) for academic level. Therefore, we would fail to reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is no significant difference between undergraduates and graduate/professional students on measures of university belonging, flourishing, bystander intention, and campus climate.

Research Question 1b

Research question (RQ) 1b examined if there were significant differences in students' perceptions of campus climate, flourishing, university belonging, and bystander intention based on their intersecting marginalized identities, using the Identity Risk Index. Table 6 shows a demographic breakdown by binary risk/non-risk identities.

Table 6

Demographic Breakdown of the Sample by Binary Identity Variables (N=171)

Demographic Variable	*N*	% of Sample
Race/Ethnicity		
Black/African American, Asian, Middle Eastern, Hispanic, 2+ Races	99	57.9%
White	71	41.3%
Missing	1	0.6%
Sexual Orientation		
Heterosexual	127	74.3%
Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Pansexual, or Other (Questioning, Queer, 2+ Sexualities/Multiple identities)	44	25.6%

Gender		
Male	44	25.9%
Female or Other (Non-binary, Queer/non-conforming, Nonbinary+Queer, Questioning, 2+ Genders/Multiple Genders, Transmale and Transfemale)	125	73.1%
Missing	2	1.2%
International Student Status		
International Student	7	4.1%
Domestic Student	164	95.4%
First Generation College Student Status		
First Generation	47	27.5%
Multi Generation	117	68.4%
Missing	7	4.1%
Registered Disability Status		
Registered Disability	14	8.1%
No Registered Disability	157	91.8%

Note. The only demographic information on ability asked about registered disability at the university.

Table 7 shows the descriptive statistics for the total risk index based on intersecting marginalized identities. The $M = 1.97$, SD = 1.002. The Identity Risk Index score ranged from 0 - 5, where a student could gain a point based on holding a marginalized racial/ethnic identity, gender, sexual orientation, first-generation college student, international student status, and disability status. There was a relatively normal distribution, with some skew toward fewer risk factors.

Table 7

Identity Risk Index Breakdown By Number of Intersecting Marginalized Identities (N = 171)

Risk Factor Score	*n*	% of Sample
0	14	8.1%
1	35	20.3%
2	76	44.4%
3	36	20.9%
4	9	5.2%
5	1	0.6%

Note. Risk index scores indicate sums of intersecting, marginalized identities.

MANOVA Results

After running descriptives based on binary identity and creating the Identity Risk Index, a MANOVA was conducted to analyze how the Identity Risk Index impacted flourishing, belonging, perceived campus climate, and bystander intention. The independent variable included a summative score variable calculated from the five risk factor categories for race, gender, sexual orientation, ability status, international student status, and first-generation college students status. For this analysis, there were six levels of the independent variable, with a risk index ranging from 0 - 5. A score of 0 indicates no marginalized identities from those listed. Conversely, a score of 5 indicated intersecting marginalized identities across all Identity Risk Index categories. As with question 3A, a MANOVA was used to analyze all risk factor predictor variables with all of the outcome variables, which were campus climate, flourishing, belonging, and bystander intention.

Table 8

Descriptive Statistics, RQ1b MANOVA (N=171)

Measure	Number of Intersecting Risk Identities	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
University Belonging	0	3.69	.570	14
	1	3.41	.794	35
	2	3.34	.740	76
	3	3.22	.855	36
	4	3.64	.786	9
	5	4.00	.	1
	Total	3.42	.769	171
Flourishing	0	6.11	.885	14
	1	5.61	1.043	35
	2	5.40	1.066	76
	3	5.25	1.140	36
	4	4.71	1.586	9

	5	5.00	.	1
	Total	3.42	.769	171
Bystander Intention	0	4.67	.640	14
	1	4.70	.733	35
	2	4.98	.718	76
	3	4.98	.604	36
	4	5.11	.558	9
	5	5.00	.	1
	Total	4.91	.689	171
Campus Climate	0	2.86	.199	14
	1	2.97	.326	35
	2	2.93	.342	76
	3	2.95	.378	36
	4	2.98	.552	9
	5	3.00	.	1
	Total	2.94	.347	171

Note. There is no *SD* for a score of 5, as there was only 1 participant with this score.

Mean patterns in the descriptive statistics indicated that flourishing levels steadily decreased as students indicated greater risk scores. Campus climate and bystander intention means increased as risk scores increased. University belonging decreased somewhat in the middle, and were higher toward 0 and 5 scores.

Since the assumption of normality was not met, Pillai's Trace, a more conservative estimate was used to account for the Shapiro-Wilk result. There was not a statistically significant difference for the risk index level *[F* (1, 169) = 1.408, p = .11], for a linear combination of the dependent variables: university belonging, flourishing, bystander intention and perceptions of campus climate, indicating no problems (Hancock et al., 2019). Overall, 4% of the variance (η_p^2 = 0.04) in university belonging, flourishing, bystander intention and perceptions can be explained by risk index level. The variance for between variables were: university belonging (η_p^2

= 0.032), flourishing (η_p^2 = 0.64), bystander intention (η_p^2 = 0.04), and campus climate (η_p^2 = 0.01).

Levene's Test of Error Variances showed no significant results ($p < 0.05$) for university belonging [$F(4, 165) = .471$, $p = 0.384$], flourishing [$F(4, 165) = .169$, $p = 0.381$], bystander intention [$F(4, 165) = .410$, $p = 0.093$], and perceptions of campus climate [$F(4, 165) = 2.367$, $p = 0.05$] which met the assumption of homogeneity of variance. Testing between-subjects effects revealed no statistically significant effects for belonging ($p = 0.37$) and risk level, flourishing ($p = 0.05$) and risk level, bystander intention ($p = 0.23$) and risk level, or campus climate ($p = 0.937$) and risk level.

Exploratory Post-hoc Analysis

I ran post-hoc analyses to more deeply investigate relationships between the Identity Risk Index and the outcome variables: campus climate, university belonging, flourishing, and bystander intention. Pearson correlations showed that there were significant, weak relationships between bystander intention and risk level ($r = .17$, $p < 0.05$) and flourishing and risk level ($r = -.23$, $p < 0.01$). There were nonsignificant, weak correlations between campus climate and risk level ($r = .04$, $p < 0.05$), and belonging and risk level ($r = -.07$, $p < 0.05$).

Based on the significant results, I used a stepwise hierarchical regression to examine the effects of bystander intention, flourishing, university belonging, and campus climate individually on the Identity Risk Index variable. For step one, I input bystander intention as it seemed to contribute the most to the model. This was followed by flourishing, university belonging, and campus climate. Bystander intention ($\beta = .171$) accounted for 3% of the variation in the model, and was statistically significant [$F(1, 169) = 5.114$, $p = 0.03$, $R^2 = 0.03$]. The model that included bystander intention ($\beta = .201$) and flourishing ($\beta = -.257$) accounted for 9% variance, and was

statistically significant [$F(2, 170) = 8.111$, $p = 0.01$, $R^2 = .09$]. Bystander intention ($\beta = .109$), flourishing ($\beta = -.276$), and university belonging ($\beta = -.039$) accounted for about 10% of the variance, and was not statistically significant [$F(3, 167) = 5.472$, $p = 0.65$, $R^2 = 0.10$]. Lastly, bystander intention ($\beta = -.199$), flourishing ($\beta = -.275$), belonging ($\beta = -.050$) and campus climate ($\beta = -.026$) accounted for 10% of the variance and was not statistically significant [$F(4, 166) = 4.126$, $p = 0.75$, $R^2 = 0.10$].

Research Question 2

To answer the second research question, I examined whether perceived campus climate, university belonging, and flourishing, predicted bystander intention for students (including undergraduate, graduate, and professional students). I first ran this question as a multiple linear regression, and then ran it again including a Risk Index as a covariate, to determine the influence of intersecting, marginalized identities on any of the underlying relationships.

Assumptions for Multiple Linear Regression with a Covariate

In the multiple linear regression, the bystander intention score was the dependent variable. The predictor variables: campus climate, university belonging, and flourishing, exceeded the recommended sample size for regression analysis (N =171). I checked for multicollinearity between campus climate, flourishing, and university belonging and no multicollinearity was found, with no correlations greater than $r = 0.70$. Multicollinearity was checked with correlations between university belonging and campus climate was $r = -0.45$, the correlation between university belonging and flourishing was $r = 0.51$, and the correlation between flourishing and campus climate was $r = -0.28$. No multicollinearity was found between the predictors. Cook's distance fell within the acceptable range (Min.= 0.000, Max. = 0.059, Mean = 0.006, SD = 0.010) (Starkweather, 2018).

A visual examination of a Normal P-P plot showed linearity, and no values fell outside of ± 3 in the scatter plot, satisfying outliers. I checked for normality using the Shapiro-Wilk Test (Hancock et al., 2019; Laerd Statistics, 2018; Starkweather, 2018). Assumptions were not met for normality with bystander intention (p <.00) showing significant results. The Fisher-Pearson test for skewness (National Institute of Standards and Technology, n.d., Statology, 2022, January 22) showed skewness for bystander intention was -.36, indicating that the distribution was left-skewed. The kurtosis of intention was found to be -.23, indicating that the distribution was more light-tailed compared to the normal distribution.

Multiple Linear Regression Results

Results of multiple linear regression showed that the model for campus climate, flourishing, and university belonging was statistically significant [$F(3, 167) = 2.721$, $p = .05$, $R^2 = 0.047$] in predicting bystander intention. This model explains about 5% of the total variance in the bystander intention variable.

The model found a negative, nonsignificant relationship between campus climate and bystander intention ($\beta = -.128$, $p = .13$). The model found a positive, non-significant relationship between a university belonging and bystander intention ($\beta = 0.112$, $p = .23$). Lastly, there was a positive nonsignificant relationship between flourishing and bystander intention ($\beta = .023$, $p = 0.79$). This suggests that we fail to reject the null hypothesis.

There was an overall effect from the combination of campus climate, flourishing, and university belonging in predicting bystander intention. However, there was no significant effect univariately for campus climate, flourishing, and university belonging, meaning that there are other factors influencing the overall results.

Results With Identity Risk Index as Covariate. Covariates can increase precision in a

model by reducing potential error (Starkweather, 2018). I used blocks in SPSS to isolate the effects of the Identity Risk Index on the predictive model and univariately. The multiple linear regression with the Identity Risk Index as the covariate showed that the model for campus climate, flourishing, and belonging was statistically significant [$F(4, 166) = 3.842$, p = .05, R^2 = 0.085] in predicting bystander intention. This model explains about 9% of the total variance in the bystander intention variable, which was almost double compared to the previous model.

Univariately, there was a negative, nonsignificant contribution from campus climate on bystander intention (β = -.128, p = .12). The model found a positive, non-significant contribution from university belonging and bystander intention (β = 0.098, p = .29). There was a positive nonsignificant contribution between flourishing and bystander intention (β = .078, p = 0.38). Lastly, the Identity Risk Index (β = .20, p = 0.01, partial correlation = .20) had a significant impact on bystander intention in the model.

There was still an overall significant effect from the combination of campus climate, flourishing, and university belonging, and risk in predicting bystander intention. The Identity Risk Index variable itself was significant and there was a higher model fit. The Identity Risk Index covariate, did not change statistical significance univariately for campus climate, flourishing, and university belonging.

Research Question 3

To answer RQ3, I reviewed frequencies for the types of intervention that students engaged in (Table 9), and how many situations in which they intervened (Table 10**)**. Then, I tested assumptions for a Poisson regression by examining the bystander intention and intervention variables. Lastly, the Poisson regression showed results for the effect of bystander intention on intervention.

Table 9

Intervention Behaviors across Situations (N = 171)

Situations Intervened	*n*	% of Sample
Risky Alcohol Use	53	31.0%
Sexual Assault	22	12.9%
Hurtful/Offensive Language	49	28.7%
Mental Health Issues/Suicidal Ideation	72	42.1%
Physical Fight	6	3.5%
Intervened - Other	3	1.8%
None of the Above	48	28.1%

I created a count variable for the number of times participants intervened by totaling the six intervention situation questions and setting the "None of the Above" option to 0.

Table 10

Number of Situations Participants Intervened in the Last 12 Months (N =171)

Times Intervened	*N*	% of Sample
0	48	28.1%
1	68	39.5%
2	34	19.8%
3	15	8.7%
4	6	3.5%
5	0	0%
6	0	0%

Note: These numbers only indicate the number of situations in which a student intervened, not how many times for each situation.

Assumptions for Poisson Regression

For RQ3, I visually examined a box plot and histogram for outliers in the bystander intention and bystander intervention scales. No outliers were found (N = 171). A visual examination of a histogram for bystander intervention was skewed toward the right. This skew can also be seen in Tables 4 and 5. The Fisher-Pearson (National Institute of Standards and

Technology, n.d., Statology, 2022, January 22) results for bystander intervention found skewness of .78. The kurtosis of bystander intention was found to be .96, indicating that the distribution was more light-tailed compared to the normal distribution. The Poisson model requires that the dependent variable's mean (M = 1.2) and variance (1.11) are identical. Since this assumption was very close but not exact, a Pearson Chi-Square Parameter method was implemented when running the Poisson regression (Grande, 2015b; Laerd Statistics, 2018). The results showed an underdispersion [$\chi 2$ (1)= 0.92, p = .007], with 1 as the measure for equidispersion. With a sample this size, it is unlikely to be a serious violation of this assumption and shows the goodness of fit for the model.

Poisson Regression Results

A Poisson regression was used to predict the number of risky situations in which students intervened in the last 12 months based on their intention to intervene. The independent variable used the total mean scale with mean imputation for bystander intention. The dependent variable was the total sum scale for bystander intervention. For every time a student intervened, they had 1.307 (99% CI, 1.073 to 1.593) higher intentions to intervene again, a significant result, (p = 0.008).

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the results of statistical analyses related to the study's research questions. The preliminary analysis included data cleaning, missing data procedures, and reliability analyses for each of the study's scales. The data were evaluated against assumptions related to two MANOVA analyses, a multiple linear regression with a covariate, and a Poisson regression. Efforts to address violations were also discussed. Demographic information was also reported, with most of the survey being undergraduates (54.1%), female (68.4%), heterosexual

(74.3%), White (41.5%), no registered disability (91.8%), and not an international (95.9%) or first-generation college student (68.4%). Demographic information was compared to available population data at the university surveyed for 2020 - 2021.

Bivariate Pearson correlations were reported. There were statistically significant correlations among flourishing and university belonging (r =.51, $p < 0.01$), bystander intention and university belonging (r = 0.18, $p < 0.05$), campus climate and university belonging (r = -0.446, $p < 0.01$), campus climate and flourishing (r = -0.275, $p < 0.01$), and campus climate and bystander intention (r =-.184, $p < 0.05$).

Results from the MANOVA for RQ 1a did not indicate statistically significant differences between undergraduate and graduate/professional students' experiences of university belonging, flourishing, campus climate, and bystander intention. Tests of between-subjects effects revealed no statistically significant results for university belonging (p = 0.49), flourishing (p = 0.68), bystander intention (p = 0.52), and campus climate (p = 0.13) for academic level either.

For RQ 1b, the demographic breakdown in Table 6 indicated the majority of students in the sample held historically marginalized racial/ethnic identities (57.5%, n = 99) and gender identities (73.1%, n = 125). Traditionally privileged identities such as domestic students (95.4%, n = 164), multi-generation college students (68.4%, n = 117), students without a registered disability (91.8%, n = 157) and heterosexual students (74.3%, n = 127) were the majority of participants for the rest of the binary risk index.

The Identity Risk Index breakdown (Table 7) indicated that the majority of participants held two marginalized identities (44.4%, n =76), followed by three marginalized identities (20.3%, n = 36), and then one (20.9%, n = 35). There was only one participant with all five

marginalized identities (0.6%), and fourteen participants (8.1%) with none. Mean patterns in the descriptive statistics indicated increased flourishing levels as risk levels increased. Patterns in the means also showed that bystander intention and campus climate steadily decreased as risk scores increased. However, there were no statistically significant differences in students' perceptions of campus climate, flourishing, and university belonging based on the Identity Risk Index.

Post-hoc analyses found a significant negative correlation between flourishing and risk level (r = -.23, $p < 0.01$). There was also a significant, positive relationship between bystander intention and risk level (r = .17, $p < 0.05$). A stepwise hierarchical regression confirmed that there were significant effects for both of these variables and their impact on students who hold marginalized identities.

Results from multiple linear regression in RQ2, showed an overall statistically significant result ($p = 0.05$) for campus climate, flourishing, and university belonging predicting bystander intention. However, the coefficients table indicated that university belonging (t = 1.19, p = 0.23), flourishing (t = .266, p = 0.79), and campus climate (t = -1.509 p = 0.13) were not statistically significant. There was still an overall significant effect from the combination of campus climate, flourishing, and university belonging, factoring in marginalized identity status as a covariate in predicting bystander intention. The Identity Risk Index variable itself was significant and there was a higher model fit (9% compared to 5%).

In answering RQ 3, frequencies in Table 9 showed that the majority (42.1%) of students (n = 71) intervened in a situation regarding mental health issues/suicidal ideation followed by students who intervened with someone's risky alcohol use (31%; n = 53). Approximately 29% of students (n = 49) did not intervene. A count variable for the amount of situations in which students intervened (Table 10), showed that no students intervened in all six experiences or in

five experiences. The majority of students (n = 123), 71.5%, intervened in at least one situation compared to those who indicated not intervening at all which was 28.5% (n = 49). The Poisson regression indicated a statistically significant positive relationship ($p < 0.01$) bystander intention and number of situations in which a student intervened. The model suggested that the number of situations that students intervened increased their intentions to intervene as a bystander.

Chapter Five will present this study's conclusions with a discussion of their meaning and their relationship to previous research. Additionally, the study's limitations will be outlined. The chapter will conclude with implications of the findings and recommendations for counseling and higher education fields.

Chapter Five: Discussion

Despite rapidly emerging research that examines the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on higher education, there is little known about how university students' perceptions and experiences during this time influenced their bystander intentions. Recent literature indicates that positive mental health (Active Minds, 2020a; Active Minds 2020b; Grubic et al., 2020; Kiebler & Stewart, 2021; Mishra & Kumar, 2021; Oh et al., 2021; YoungMinds 2020) and feelings of belonging (Benson & Witson, 2022; Hernández et al., 2021) among students were negatively impacted during the pandemic. These factors, along with an inclusive campus climate, have traditionally contributed to students' sense of safety, and well-being (de la Fuente et al., 2022; Fink, 2014; Griffin et al., 2022; Jorgensen & Nelson, 2018; Peter et al., 2011; Rey et al., 2019) and academic success (Ahn & Davis, 2020; Griffin et al., 2022; Hirshberg et al., 2022; Keyes, 2002; Kivlighan et al., 2018; Ouweneel et al., 2011). With the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on students' well-being and the necessity for campuses to shift to safer remote environments, it was necessary to explore the impact of these components together.

In addition, researchers before and during the pandemic, have found that there are often disparities in university students' experiences based on their identities. Graduate students (Dost et al., 2020; Hurato & Carter, 1997; Le et al., 2016; McMahon et al, 2021; Oh et al., 2021; Risisky et al., 2022; Rosenthal, 2016; Underwood, 2019) and students with marginalized identities tend to experience less welcoming campus climates (Slay et al., 2019; Walsh et al., 2021; Ward & Zarate, 2015) and university belonging (Gopalan et al., 2021; Johnson et al., 2007; McCoy et al., 2015; Walsh et al., 2021) as compared to their counterparts. Only a few studies have examined the experiences of students with marginalized social identities (Grier-Reed et al., 2022; Haliwa et al., 2021; Oh, 2022; Oh et al., 2021) or graduate/professional

students (Birmingham, 2021) during the COVID-19 pandemic. To date, there have been no studies that explore the relationships between students' flourishing, university belonging, campus climate, bystander behaviors, and identity during this time. These gaps in the research, along with the rising acuity of students' well-being concerns (Gopalan et al., 2022) and the growing diversity in students pursuing higher education (Carey et al., 2023; Bradley University, 2023), call for a more comprehensive understanding of factors that can contribute to increased health and academic outcomes for students.

For this study, I used a nonexperimental cross-sectional survey design (McMillan, 2016) with data collected from a random sample of undergraduate and graduate/professional students as part of an institutional Healthy Minds Study (HMS) survey. The research questions were as follows:

RQ1: Are there significant differences in students' perceptions of campus climate, university belonging, flourishing, and bystander intention based on:

RQ1a: academic level?

RQ1b: the Identity Risk Index?

RQ2: Does campus climate, university belonging, and flourishing predict bystander intention for students, and if so, do students' identities impact that relationship?

RQ3: Does bystander intention predict bystander intervention among diverse university students?

I chose the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991) and feminist theory (Crenshaw, 1989; Crenshaw, 1991; Evans et al., 2005), to provide theoretical context for the study. This theoretical framework helped me to formulate the research questions and highlighted gaps in the existing research that the study aimed to address. Though I used pre-existing survey

items from the HMS, variables were selected to align alongside the theoretical frameworks. The bystander intention and bystander behavior variables coincided with the TPB's model which included behavioral intention and behavioral outcomes (Ajzen, 1991; Casey et al., 2017; Coker et al., 2015). Campus climate, flourishing, and belonging were examined as attitudes or beliefs that may contribute to bystander intention. I used an intersectional feminist lens throughout the study (Crenshaw, 1989), from examining the impact of intersecting identities to discussing the influence of power within university relationships and structures (Bilge, 2013; Crenshaw, 1989; Harris & Patton, 2019). In the sections that follow, I discuss the results and limitations of the study, as well as recommendations and implications in the context of individual, interpersonal, and institutional systems.

Discussion of Findings

In Chapter Four, I discussed the statistical analysis and results for each of the research questions in this study. In the following section, I interpret the findings from each research question and their relationship to previous research.

Research Question 1

For Research Question 1 (RQ1) I examined the differences in students' perceptions of campus climate, university belonging, flourishing, and bystander intention based on: (a) academic level and (b) intersecting marginalized social identity status. This is the first study to compare the experiences of campus climate, flourishing, university belonging, and bystander intention for these subgroups at a university.

Research Question 1a

Students had similar perceptions related to campus climate, university belonging, flourishing, and bystander intention regardless of their academic level. The sample consisted of

54% undergraduate students and 46% graduate and professional students. Graduate/professional students were overrepresented in the sample compared to the university to gain better insight into their experiences.

There was some discrepancy between these results and pre-pandemic literature that highlighted differences in students' experiences based on academic level. Previous researchers have suggested that graduate students experience exacerbated challenges when it comes to campus climate (Walsh et al., 2021) and belonging (Ward & Zarate, 2015, Slay et al., 2019), though little research exists on graduate student experiences for flourishing or intentions to intervene as a bystander.

It is important to consider the difference in the university environment during the COVID-19 pandemic. Almost all students, regardless of academic level, were at home and interacting in a virtual environment (Birmingham et al., 2021; Grubic et al., 2020). Some post-pandemic researchers indicate that this may have closed the gap that typically impacts students' perceptions and experiences at their university by academic level (Dost et al., 2020; Oh et al., 2021; Risisky et al. 2022; Wallace et al., 2021). In other words, confirming previous research during the pandemic, graduate/professional students and undergraduates had similar perceptions of their campus climate when outside of the traditional on-campus environment.

Research Question 1b

The participants in the sample held a variety of identities that were similar to that of the university's population. Most students held two marginalized identities (44.4%), followed by three marginalized identities (20.9%), and a single marginalized identity (20.3%) (See Table 7). However, there were similar perceptions in students' experiences of flourishing, university belonging, campus climate, and bystander intentions regardless of the number of intersectional

marginalized identities they held. While most researchers have investigated one identity at a time rather than intersecting identities, previous findings suggest that students with marginalized identities generally experience additional barriers to flourishing (Grier-Reed et al., 2022; Haliwa et al., 2021; Oh, 2022; Oh et al., 2021), belonging (Anistranski & Brown, 2021; Gopalan et al., 2021; Johnson et al., 2007; Strayhorn, 2008; Walsh et al., 2021), and campus climate (Campbell-Whatley et al., 2015; Le et al., 2016; Slay et al., 2019; Ward & Zarate, 2015). Thus, further research seemed necessary to explore the impact of the intersecting identities in this study.

To explore the discrepancy between the findings and previous research, further analysis showed that the more marginalized identities a student held, the more positively they perceived their campus climate to be. While this is contrary to previous research, this could be because some students found their university to be accommodating to their needs during the COVID-19 pandemic or because of this university's public stance on anti-racism during nationally publicized violence toward people of color during this time (Chou & Gaysynsky, 2021; Laurencin & Walker, 2020; Reyes, 2020). It could also be because students were interacting with campus community members less during the pandemic, so there were fewer interactions that negatively impacted their perception of the university climate. Additionally, students with more marginalized identities indicated they experienced less of a sense of belonging at their university. This result was consistent with other literature that has shown students with marginalized identities tend to feel less of a sense of belonging at their institutions (Hurtado & Carter, 1997; Barbera et al., 2020).

A key finding was that as the number of students' marginalized identities increased, their psychosocial well-being (flourishing) diminished. Though there is little research on students with marginalized identities and their perceptions of flourishing, Oh (2022) showed similar results for

students with marginalized identities during and before the pandemic. Additionally, students with more marginalized identities had higher intentions to intervene to help someone. This is a unique finding, as this is the first study to explore the impact of interlocking marginalized identities on bystander intentions. While more research is necessary to examine why this is the case, it could be that students with multiple marginalized identities could relate to why intervening in challenging situations is helpful to others because they have had similar experiences themselves. Some researchers have shown that people with marginalized identities related to race, gender, or sexual orientation tend to experience more challenges with their mental health and are more likely to encounter bias-motivated language or actions (Haliwa et al., 2021; Oh, 2022; Oh et al., 2021). These situations were explicitly asked about in the HMS as opportunities that could necessitate bystander intervention.

Research Question 2

Results showed that students' perceptions of their campus climate, flourishing, and belonging predicted their bystander intentions. When students' intersecting marginalized social identities were accounted for the model had a more precise effect. However, these findings should be interpreted with caution. While significance was reached, it was just at the acceptable threshold. While campus climate, flourishing, and belonging had the same impact on bystander intention, with or without incorporating students' identities, the contribution of identity was still important. The findings indicated that the number of marginalized identities impacted intention, and by accounting for it as a covariate, it showed a clearer picture of the relationship and reduced the chance of a false negative result. Previous literature has indicated positive outcomes for university students when their diverse identities are represented, including increased academic success (Anistranski & Brown, 2021; Bradley University, 2023; Ward & Zarate, 2015), sense of

belonging (Johnson et al., 2007; Strayhorn, 2008) and positive well-being (Le et al., 2016; Slay et al., 2019). These novel findings add more depth to what has been missing in current conversations about connections between well-being and bystander behavior on campuses.

Research Question 3

Findings for RQ3 showed that bystander intention predicted bystander intervention among university students, which confirmed previous literature on bystander behavior and TPB (Asare, 2015; Casey et al., 2017; Chen et al., 2022; Hoxmeier et al, 2018; John et al., 2022; Magid et al., 2018; Struble, 2021). The majority of the students in the sample (39.5%) intervened in at least one situation over the last twelve months. Mental Health Issues/Suicidal Ideation (42%), Risky Alcohol Use (31%), and Hurtful or Offensive Language (29%) were the top three situations in which students intervened. Based on previous research, these results show that some of the top issues that students have reported experiencing during their time at a university, such as alcohol misuse (Gordie Center, 2022; John et al., 2022; LaBelle, 2018; Palis et al., 2012; SAMHSA, 2019) and mental health concerns (Active Minds, 2020a; Active Minds 2020b; Graham & Eloff, 2022 Grubic et al., 2020; Kiebler & Stewart, 2021; Mishra & Kumar, 2021; Nyunt et al., 2022; Oh et al., 2021; YoungMinds 2020), were the top issues in which they are intervening. The evolving literature on college students' experiences during the pandemic shows persisting acuity for mental health concerns (Abrams, 2022, October 12; Surovell, 2023, January 18) that alcohol use remains a concern for college students (Hirshberg et al., 2022; John et al., 2022). With the bias-motivated violence and events that happened during the time this study took place (Laurencin & Walker, 2020; Goldberg, 2020; Reyes, 2020), the number of students who intervened for hurtful or offensive language (29%), adds more to the literature about the issues undergraduate and graduate/professional students were experiencing and intervening during this

time. Students intervened least in situations involving sexual assault (13%), physical fights (3.5%), or in another way (2%). The results for sexual assault were unexpected due to the amount of previous literature and resources on bystander intervention dedicated to the issue (Conley & Griffith, 2016; DeMaria et al., 2018; Htun et al., 2022; McMahon et al., 2021). For these situations, less intervention could potentially mean that students felt less comfortable intervening in that way, that these circumstances were happening less, or that students identified the opportunity to help less frequently. Overall, these findings highlight a need for bystander intervention education to span a variety of situations that students face.

The results indicated that as students intervened, they became more likely to intervene again. This is consistent with the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) and points from Hoxmier et al.'s (2018) study regarding the power of practicing bystander intervention skills with students to increase their confidence. If students can practice intervening in a variety of situations, they may be more likely to intervene if a real opportunity is presented, ultimately increasing positive health outcomes (Chen et al., 2020) and shared responsibility to reduce harm (Chen et al., 2020; DeMaria et al., 2018; Exner & Cummings, 2011; Hoxmeier et al., 2018; LaBelle, 2018) among campus members.

Limitations

There were several limitations to this study including potential threats to validity and generalizability. The next section will discuss these considerations in depth.

Validity

This study used secondary data from an institutional Healthy Minds Study (HMS) survey distributed in Spring 2021. After receiving the data from the university, I attempted to connect with the university's Healthy Minds Network (HMN) survey liaison for clarification about the

setup of the HMS raw data and the scales that were incorporated into the survey. After working with several members of the original campus roll-out team to find a contact, I was notified by the HMN that the university liaison who was originally assigned to the institution had left the organization. Unfortunately, this vacancy left a gap in historical knowledge. I relied on answers that the university roll-out team and the general HMN administrative team were able to provide as they related to the data package and scales, which informed the methodology in Chapter Three and the data that were analyzed in Chapter Four.

Criterion-related validity was another limitation of the study. The campus climate scale was adapted from Rankin and Reason's (1998) Perception of Campus Climate, however, the scale had no prior psychometric testing. Additionally, the HMS's sense of belonging scale seemed to measure different concepts related to belonging based on the scale's construction of items. I ran an exploratory factor analysis (Fabrigar et al., 1999) and found two factors for the scale. I chose to use questions in the factor that made the most theoretical sense for the study.

There were validity concerns related to the construction of the items that measured bystander intervention as well. Some researchers have found that students have different comfort levels intervening in different situations, like sexual assault or drinking behaviors for example, which impacted whether they intervened or not (Hoxmeier et al., 2018). The results do not necessarily give the "why" behind students' intervening behaviors and no causal links can be inferred from the study. The frequency distributions show a breakdown of how many students intervened or not across different situations. The bystander intervention count variable also shows the cumulative number of situations in which students intervened. Additionally, most students were at home or slowly returning to campus due to the COVID-19 pandemic at the time they took the survey. It is possible that students were not exposed to as many risky situations to

intervene as they typically would have in an on-campus environment. Participants' answers reflected intervening behaviors spanning from the peak pandemic period in Spring 2020 to Spring 2021.

The average scores for the bystander intention scale were fairly high, indicating that most students intended to intervene to help if a risky situation arose. In the past, researchers have discovered that students feel more inclined to intervene with friends and have varying levels of comfort levels for intervening in different situations (Hoxmeier et al., 2018). There was no way to know the proximity of the relationship between the student and the person for whom they intervened or to assess the student's comfort level in different situations.

Additionally, there were several limitations associated with the Identity Risk Index. While the Identity Risk Index shows how many intersecting marginalized identities students have, this study did not measure if there were differing effects at particular intersections. There were no questions in the HMS that measured socioeconomic status or financial concerns, which would have given more insight into the impact that students experienced during the pandemic (Birmingham et al., 2021; Kiebler & Stewart, 2021; Stowe et al., 2021). Religious and spiritual identities, as well as traditional and post-traditional aged students were not captured in this study. The Identity Risk Index also used a demographic question meant to measure a student's disability status. The question asked students if they registered their disability with a campus resource. It is possible that there may have been students in the sample that had a disability, but it was not registered with a campus resource office. These students were likely not captured due to the wording of the question.

Lastly, social desirability may have impacted how participants answered the questions in this study. The variables in this study require participants to disclose sensitive health and

behavior information that is sometimes stigmatized. It has been noted that privacy concerns were also a challenge for students who were at home for isolation during the pandemic (Son et al., 2020). While participants were reminded of confidentiality and could opt out of any question in the HMS, there is a possibility that students were more likely to choose more socially acceptable answers.

Generalizability

Although the results from this study provide insight into students' experiences in April 2021, the climate of higher education continues to rapidly change (Abrams, 2022, October 12; Surovell, 2023, January 18). Due to the cross-sectional design, the results are a snapshot of the time that data were collected, and are not perfectly indicative of a post-pandemic landscape. Universities have recently shifted back to a primarily in-person environment, which may limit the generalizability of the study.

Sample characteristics, sampling bias, and participant attrition may also limit the results. The sample came from a large, urban, public, majority-minority university in the southeastern United States. The population and campus climate in the study is unique to the university and should be considered when applying the results to other institutions. Despite the HMS survey's random sampling method, non-response bias and self-selection also threaten the generalizability of the findings (Keeter, 2018). Only about 30% of the original sample were a part of this study instead of 50% that theoretically were filtered into this study's survey modules. Although the HMS split participants into half of its elective modules, the survey was still quite long (The Healthy Minds Network [HMN], 2021, January 5). There were only n = 177 students who responded to the bystander intention and bystander intervention questions (located in Module 10), which is significant attrition compared to the N = 553 who were selected to take that half of

the survey. Additionally, I removed three cases for students who did not complete at least 80% of the flourishing scale (FS), belonging, campus climate, bystander intention, and answers for the demographic questions. The length, combined with the sensitive nature of the content, could have served as factors for students ending their participation before the survey was completed. All students at the university had the opportunity to take the HMS if they accessed the survey link, however, students who elected to participate in the survey might have different experiences than the larger university population.

Lastly, based on institutional reports from 2020-2021 (Virginia Commonwealth University, 2021), this sample had a similar demographic makeup to the university as a whole (see Table 3). The sample consisted primarily of White (41.5%) and women (68.4%) participants. Black/African American participants (8.8%) were underrepresented in the sample compared to the institution, while Asian (25.1%) and multiracial students (15.2%) were underrepresented. Graduate and professional students (45.6%) were intentionally overrepresented because the university roll-out team hoped to gain better insight into the health behaviors of these populations. The university did not report data for students' sexual orientation, transgender or nonbinary individuals, first-generation college students, international students, Middle Eastern students, or students with registered disabilities for the 2020-2021 academic year. With unknown comparable university data for each identity group, this limits the generalizability of the results.

Implications for Practice

In this section, I outline implications for practice for student affairs professionals and counselor educators. I conclude with specific steps that I will take as a professional at the

intersection of these roles. In line with feminist theory, each section takes a systems-based approach, from individual action to institutional advocacy.

Academic and Student Affairs Professionals

The results of this study underscore that higher education leaders must consider students at the intersections of their diverse identities, and across undergraduate and graduate/professional academic levels, to support their well-being. The section that follows outlines implications for student affairs professionals at the individual, program, and institutional levels.

Individual and Interpersonal Implications

Results of the study showed that students' sense of belonging decreased as they had more intersecting, marginalized identities. To address this concern at the individual and interpersonal level, student affairs leaders can start by advocating to increase identity representation among students and staff and encourage student affairs professionals to invest in mentorship relationships with diverse students. This could be done through opportunities like serving on staff hiring committees or connecting with personnel at university admissions offices to discuss diverse student outreach initiatives. Additionally, student affairs professionals could consider serving as an advisor for a campus student organization, as culturally-sensitive mentorship has been shown to increase belonging for diverse student groups (McCoy et al., 2015; Maples et al., 2020; Morrow & Ackermann, 2012; Strayhorn, 2018). Staff from resources offices that support affinity and identity groups, student organizations (Le et al., 2016; Riskisky et al., 2020; Vacarro, 2012), and Greek organizations (Hurato & Carter, 1997) have a history of assisting students in building a sense of community, friendship, and cohesion among their peers. Building a relationship with campus leaders in these offices, and offering to serve as a mentor, can show

support as a campus partner and show students that staff that care about them, which can increase their sense of belonging (Gopalan et al., 2021; Johnson et al., 2007; Walsh et al., 2021).

The results showed that as students had more intersecting marginalized identities, their well-being (flourishing) diminished, and there were no differences between undergraduate and graduate/professional students' perceptions of flourishing. Staff in student well-being offices such as counseling services, student health services, the dean of students office, student accessibility, and university health promotion should work together to share information about trends they are seeing among the undergraduate and graduate/professional students they are reaching. Wrap-around wellness committees like these can also be used to reduce silos between offices, highlight students' strengths, address concerns, and strategically plan to reach students who are not accessing their resources. Additionally, these committees should familiarize themselves with existing university data collected on their students' holistic health. Committees should note where there are gaps in the health topics, which students are (and are not) represented in the university's sample, and decide which next steps are necessary to support diverse students' well-being at their institution.

Programmatic and Campus Community Implications

In addition to creating relationships and planning for student success, collaborative programs between campus resource offices will be essential for higher education professionals. Funding for public higher education institutions declined in 37 states between 2020-2021, and university leaders expect funding to decrease again in 2023 (National Education Association, 2022). Collaboration not only brings in multiple areas of expertise but could be most the strategic way to bring together student populations that resource offices typically draw in and serve separately.

The results of this study indicated that most students had intervened at least once in the past 12 months, and in a variety of ways. While bystander intervention training is traditionally led by personnel who work in university health promotion and advocacy offices, additional collaboration may be best practice moving forward. Health promotion and advocacy teams could create a train-the-trainer model for a variety of student affairs staff and students at the university. A train-the-trainer program model creates the opportunity for students and campus resource offices to have buy-in into how bystander intervention applies to their roles at the university. It could create opportunities for more diverse perspectives, and give others the ability to be co-leaders in this topic area. A train-the-trainer model creates further reach and shared responsibility to create a safer culture within the campus community. In this study, bystander intention predicted bystander intervention among university students, by showing that students felt they were more likely to intervene the more they were able to put it into practice. A train-the-trainer model can allow students and staff to practice intervention skills, and increase their confidence in their intentions to intervene.

As feelings of flourishing increased for students in this study, so did feelings of university belonging. University offices like academic advising, or the campus learning center, should consider collaborating with health promotion and multicultural office personnel to address students' flourishing and belonging for an intersectional approach to well-being and academic success. Higher education leaders like academic advisors and tutors tend to see students repeatedly and may have greater insight into their personal experiences. It could be more meaningful for students to hear about multicultural or well-being programs from professionals in roles like advising, than from a student affairs staff member they met one time. Academic support staff may also consider showing up to a multicultural or health promotion

program with colleagues or students, to show that they believe in and support the work of these offices. Advisors or academic support professionals can even ask health promotion or multicultural office professionals to bring programs into their office spaces for opportunities like a queer coffee hour, a meet and greet drop-in program for community building LGBTQIA+ students and staff, or a weekly meditation study-break program. There are several opportunities to make stronger connections at the programmatic and campus community level.

Institutional and Policy Implications

The results of this study showed that university belonging, flourishing, and campus climate predicted bystander intentions for students, and findings were more applicable when students' identities were accounted for. Recent headlines have challenged diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programming and policies in higher education (Curran, 2023; Lu et al., 2023; Marijolovic, 2023). In the past, students with marginalized identities have indicated less flourishing (Kiebler & Stewart, 2021; Oh et al., 2022; Maples et al., 2020), belonging (Rankin & Reason, 2005; Slay et al., 2019; Vacarro, 2012; Walton & Cohen, 2007; Ward & Zarate, 2016), and less welcoming campus climates (Campbell-Whatley et al., 2015; Hurtado & Carter, 1997; Le et al., 2016; Slay et al., 2019; Vacarro, 2012; Waldo, 1998; Walsh et al., 2021), and there is little research on their bystander intentions. Moving forward, it is important to include students with diverse identities in both research and practice to address these issues more effectively.

As of June 2023, 21 states have proposed anti-DEI bills in the United States this year (Curran, 2023). However, there is evidence to show that DEI initiatives create opportunities to increase belonging (Anistranski & Brown, 2021; Strayhorn, 2008; Walsh et al., 2021), student well-being (Le et al., 2016; Slay et al., 2019), and a more welcoming campus climate (Slay et al., 2019; Ward & Zarate, 2015). Student affairs professionals should advocate for diversity, equity,

and inclusion considerations to be integrated as a requirement for university strategic plans aimed to support students' success. The impact of DEI initiatives may contribute to how students can thrive and how they view supporting each other in their campus community. Student affairs leaders could form departmental DEI committees, work closely with assessment personnel to get student outcome and program usage data, and collaborate with other universities that are leaders in this arena to advocate and gain support.

The study's results showed that bystander intentions predicted bystander intervention across a variety of situations for diverse university students. The top three situations in which students intervened from 2020-2021 included mental health issues/suicidal ideation (42%), risky alcohol use (31%), and hurtful or offensive language (29%). These were followed by sexual assault (13%). These findings are significant as previous bystander intervention trainings have had a major focus on sexual assault (Banyard et al., 2014; Bollinger, 2019; Chen et al., 2020; Coker, 2020; Exner & Niner, 2011; Hoxmeier et al., 2018; McMahon et al., 2020; O'Brien et al., 2021; Struble, 2012) and alcohol use (John et al., 2022; LaBelle, 2018). In addition to a train-the-trainer bystander intervention model, student affairs personnel can help to lead institutional policies that promote bystander intervention. Health Promotion teams can provide critical insight into evidence-based education from prevention, to intervention, and risk reduction on topics like mental health, sexual health and healthy relationships, alcohol and other drug concerns, and physical health that traditionally impact students' holistic well-being. Some health promotion offices have worked with partners like Student Conduct and the Dean of Students to inform university bystander intervention policies such as medical amnesty for students who call for help in situations involving alcohol or drugs on campus. Medical amnesty increases bystander intervention among students, protects them from being penalized for seeking support, and can be

life-saving (Anderson, 2019). With alcohol as the second most frequent situation in which students intervened in the study, it is possible that this number will continue to rise as students return to campus in person and the university has since instituted a medical amnesty policy. Other systemic initiatives that support the bystander intervention may include a 24-hour on-call line for students in mental health crisis, or trauma-informed and implicit bias training for student conduct offices, Title IX offices, and campus police. These initiatives would address the other situations in which students most frequently intervened, including students' mental health concerns, hurtful or offensive language, and sexual assault.

Counselor Educators in Higher Education

Counselor educators have a nuanced understanding of mental health and well-being in the context of higher education. The following section outlines considerations for these professionals and their work with counselors-in-training (CITs).

Individual and Interpersonal Implications

The results of this study showed that graduate/professional students' perceptions of their flourishing, university belonging, bystander intention, and campus climate were similar to undergraduate students. Counselor educators have the opportunity to support graduate students in their programs by having an understanding of the campus resources available. Previous researchers have shown that graduate students experience less of a sense of belonging (Ahn & Davis, 2020; Walton et al., 2012) and a less supportive campus climate (Gallagher, 2011; McMahon et al., 2021). Graduate students may perceive campus resources as solely for undergraduate students, may not know that they exist (Gallagher, 2011; McMahon et al., 2021), or may not know that many of them are incorporated into their student fees. Despite its different results, this study shows that resources for students are important, no matter their academic level,

especially post-COVID-19 pandemic. Counselor educators can build relationships with student affairs professionals at campus resource offices, like university counseling services and health promotion, to support their students' well-being as future counselors. Additionally, identity-based support offices like first-generation, international student, accessibility offices, or multicultural student offices can help to better support students with traditionally marginalized social identities (Johnson et al., 2007) in counseling programs. Having familiarity with personnel in these offices can help counselor education faculty give informed referrals and discuss the services that are to CITs.

Students in this study indicated that their sense of belonging decreased with more marginalized identities. Faculty mentorship is especially important for graduate students' well-being (Ahn & Davis, 2020; Le et al., 2016), and historically more difficult for students of color due to a lack of faculty representation or self-awareness (McCoy et al., 2015). Counselor education faculty may consider diverse pipelines for faculty recruitment, including identity-based counseling listservs (e.g. Association for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Issues in Counseling [ALGBTIC]) or outreach to faculty from historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs). Additionally, counselor educators should be thoughtful in providing mentorship opportunities, like research, professional development, or academic organization membership for diverse students, and consider their own intersections of power and privilege in the relationship (Ahmed, 2012; Tisdell, 1993).

Classroom and Departmental Implications

Most of the students in this study indicated they intervened in some way in the last year. Counselor educators may consider introducing discussions on bystander intervention to CITs, as a way to acknowledge it as a method for advocacy. Based on the results of the study, it would be

important to acknowledge that some of the students in the classroom may have had experiences or opportunities to intervene on someone's behalf as well. This could be an opportunity to discuss strengths and barriers to supporting others. Intervention methods (e.g. the 5 D's of bystander intervention) could be framed as counseling techniques to broach with future clients. Techniques could include discussing intervention methods as a form of psychoeducation, acting out client scenarios through role-playing (i.e. intervening in a challenging situation involving a family member, partner, or friend), and practicing with clients as a form of assertiveness training. Counselor educators may also use this opportunity to bring in a campus partner as a guest speaker. There are some offices on campus that likely already address prevention or bystander intervention, with training opportunities designed for the classroom. Bringing in guest speakers gives CITs a touch point with these offices on campus, and allows future counselors in student affairs to get to meet professionals in their field.

The demographics for this study indicated that the majority of students had multiple historically marginalized identities, and hurtful or offensive language ranked was in the third (29%) in the situations in which students intervened. Researchers have determined five primary factors that create a more welcoming climate for students with diverse backgrounds including respect, conflict, diversity engagement, diversity interest, and diversity exposure (Campbell-Whatley et al., 2015). Faculty should work to actively address diversity, and disrupt power, and oppression in the classroom to increase students' well-being outcomes (Johnson et al., 2007; Haskins & Singh, 2015; Kishimoto, 2018; Le et al., 2016; McCoy et al., 2015; Slay et al., 2019). Counselor education faculty may create a departmental commitment to engage in DEI professional development together, as a unit that is committed to this work and these factors. This commitment also models expectations for CITs within the counseling profession.

Lastly, about one-third of students in this study intervened on behalf of a peer's alcohol use within the past year. In general, graduate programs tend to center alcohol at many of their social events as most students are of legal drinking age (Nieri et al., 2022). Researchers in a 2016 study found that approximately one in six students enrolled in coursework met DSM criteria for alcohol dependence or misuse (Bugbee et al., 2016). With alcohol as the sole activity at graduate program events, it can undermine the challenges of students and faculty in recovery who wish to socialize or network (Nieri et al., 2022; Bugbee et al., 2016). Counselor educators may consider celebrating with additional options so that students can still feel connected and engaged with faculty and peers in the department.

Institutional and Policy Implications

Participants in this study with more marginalized identities had lower perceptions of their well-being. As students have continued to experience heightened levels of mental health concerns post-COVID-19 pandemic (Abrams, 2022, October 12; Griffin et al. 2022; Surovell, 2023, January 18), faculty can be a resource to support students where they are. Counselor educators understand the importance of basic helping skills and cultural humility when someone needs mental health support. Counselor educators can work with student affairs professionals and university counselors to advocate for mental health first aid as an option for other university faculty. As faculty are on the front lines of working with students, this could provide them with the skills to enhance students' well-being in the classroom. This type of training could also provide CITs with the opportunity to facilitate basic skills for university faculty as a practicum or internship experience. This could also help CITs on college counseling tracks to connect with campus community members and grow the number of staff trained to support students.

At the policy level, counselor educators can bolster students' interests in legislative advocacy. An example may include class discussions about supporting state and federal funding increases for mental health services in higher education. Additionally, counselor educators may reinforce the necessity of DEI, its necessity beyond multicultural counseling courses to accreditation programs.

Next Steps for the Researcher

As the researcher, I hold intersecting professional identities as a counselor, educator, and student affairs professional who works in university health promotion. This section discusses how the results from this study reinforce some of my existing practices and inform my next steps.

Individual and Interpersonal Implications

As a leader of a university health promotion team, the results of this study inspire the work I do in our campus community. The findings of this study indicated that as the number of students' marginalized identities increased, their well-being diminished. To me, the role of our office is to support students through interactions, programs, and policies that enhance their ability to thrive. I see this as an opportunity to continue the work we've started to create a more inclusive campus, to examine growth opportunities, and to lead other campus stakeholders in the process. Some of the work that I currently do requires that all of our staff, from undergraduates, to graduate students, to our professional team, complete LGBTQ+ Safe Zone training, Green Zone training for military allyship, and Recovery Ally for people recovering from substance use disorders within their first semester. Onboarding for all team members incorporates discussions about the use of affirming language, sharing salient identities and cultural norms, broaching power in the relationships that we navigate as a team and as practitioners, and the expectation to

engage in ongoing, mutual feedback. All staff also get trained in basic helping skills including open-ended questions, affirmations, reflective listening, and summarizing (OARS). While having a counseling background is not a requirement for any person's role in our health promotion office, it has helped me in framing health and relationship building within the campus community.

At times, this intensive training for the team has come under scrutiny because it requires a time investment from me and our staff. However, this study's results indicate that incorporating DEI in conversations about health and well-being is crucial to reaching university students and addressing their needs. By starting discussions and training early, and consistently across all roles, the team also models that this work can and should take place at all levels. This has helped to create confidence in me and the staff to approach conversations about health with cultural humility. It also provides an informed foundation for programming, which is critical when our team speaks with thousands of diverse students, faculty, and staff each year.

Classroom and Programmatic Implications

I am cognizant of the results that showed that students experience similar perceptions of campus climate, bystander intention, flourishing, and belonging regardless of academic level. Thus, resources and support related to these variables should be offered for both graduate/professional and undergraduates. At the campus health promotion office, we provide opportunities for both graduate counselors-in-training and undergraduate students to represent their peers when discussing topics related to their health. Graduate counselors-in-training (CITs) promote belonging and connection by working with our graduate student association on well-being programs, presenting on topics like finding opportunities to increase mental health as a graduate student, and representing our office at graduate resource fairs to teach incoming

students about the university resources that are available to them. This type of placement for graduate CITs is important as it helps students experience how spaces do not have to be clinical to be therapeutic (a sentiment offered to me recently by a student affairs colleague with a counseling background).

In addition to graduate students, I teach and supervise a group of undergraduate peer health educators (PHEs), which is a common practice for health promotion professionals in student affairs. These are students who serve as peer-to-peer liaisons to provide health information to students in a fun, evidence-based, way. PHEs address topics such as alcohol and other drug risk reduction, how to have healthy relationships and positive sexual health, and how to reduce stigma by discussing skills to support mental health. Based on the bystander intervention results, and the variety of situations in which students have intervened, I will work with the PHEs to incorporate bystander intervention into their health topic programs for their classroom requests, ongoing outreach initiatives, and requests from student organizations and residential assistants. PHEs typically include bystander intervention skills in their alcohol and other drug and sexual health/relationship programs, and they learn about different methods for bystander intervention in their required coursework. This year, we will work as a team to provide more robust bystander engagement information for different health topic areas.

The results underscore a need to amplify bystander intervention education in a variety of ways. At the programmatic level, I will discuss the results from this study with the health promotion team, with the goal to incorporate them into their office's strategic planning for the upcoming year. Typically, the office does the majority of its bystander intervention training during Red Zone, which happens during the first six weeks of the semester (Campbell, 2022). The Red Zone is the period when alcohol use and sexual assault are statistically most likely to

occur for students (Campbell, 2022). In addition to addressing violence prevention and alcohol-risk reduction, through opportunities like hosting alcohol alternative events, we will collaborate with key well-being and identity-based campus resources to broaden our scope and address issues like mental health/suicidal ideation and bias-related intervention.

Additionally, I teach coursework in counselor education and health promotion programs, reaching undergraduate and graduate students. Flourishing, belonging, campus climate, and bystander intention are topics that may benefit students in the classroom, both during their time at the university and in their future professional careers. I will be intentional about broaching discussions in these areas, providing resources, and mentorship opportunities for students, whether they are at the graduate/professional or undergraduate academic level.

Students with higher intersecting marginalized identities indicated feeling less of a sense of flourishing and belonging, and higher intentions to intervene as a bystander. Recently, I was selected Diversity, Equity, Belonging, and Inclusion (DEBI) Champion for the university, one of five campus professionals with this designation. I work in collaboration with the members of the group to grow DEBI initiatives for students and university staff. I have been working with the DEBI team to create a podcast for staff that includes fun and accessible information about diversity, equity, and inclusion in student affairs. Guests on the podcast hold a variety of social identities, discuss their cultural and professional backgrounds, and give their recommendations for centering DEI in higher education. I plan to discuss these findings in an upcoming episode of the show.

I also serve as the chair of my department's Student Development Committee (SDC). This committee hosts workshops and events for approximately 300 student employees within the department, with specific aims to increase retention and student belonging. The next step for me

is to survey students about their experiences with the SDC events thus far, to offer more cultural recognition opportunities (such as holidays, or current events) in collaboration with our departmental DEI committee, and to provide more opportunities for students with diverse identities to be a part of the planning process for future events.

Institutional and Policy Implications

At the institutional level, the campus health promotion office runs a monthly health campaign called the Stall Seat Journal. This is a social norms newspaper created by students and staff that highlights health topics indicated by student survey data. The Stall Seat Journals are posted in over 1,3000 campus bathroom stalls and are how most students and staff recognize the department. The results of this study provide an opportunity to highlight students' prosocial behaviors. For example, the Stall Seat Journal may include that most students surveyed believed they would intervene by trying to help if an opportunity was presented. In addition, bystander intervention resources like the university's medical amnesty policy, as well as skills and resources for student belonging and mental health will be included.

I also plan to share the results of this study at their university's division-wide monthly meeting. This meeting invites hundreds of student affairs professionals to engage in professional development and program sharing. With the institution in the midst of developing an Office of Student Advocacy, these results can serve as a resource for understanding students' perceptions and behaviors.

Lastly, I will apply to counseling and student affairs conferences such as the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA), the American Counseling Association (ACA), and the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES) to share the results. The findings begin to fill in some gaps in the existing research and provide

potential opportunities for counselor educators and student affairs professionals to support students at their universities.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study sets a foundation for more inclusive research in counseling and higher education. This study took place at a large, majority-minority urban research institution with robust undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs. More research is needed on diverse students' experiences of well-being and campus climate post-COVID-19 pandemic, and how these concepts can inform prosocial behaviors, like bystander intervention in their campus communities. Graduate/professional and undergraduate students from the same university are typically studied in isolation. Future researchers should include comparative analyses by academic level to deepen their understanding of similarities and disparities between undergraduate and graduate/professional students on their campuses. More information is needed from universities with a variety of demographic make-ups as well. Including historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs), and predominantly white institutions (PWIs), would contribute to the literature on the impact of university belonging, campus climate, flourishing, and bystander behavior post-pandemic. Campus climate surveys, like the HMS, continue to provide a window into unique campus cultures and could be used as a way to collect this information. However, surveys should include more robust questions about the reasons for students' bystander intentions and intervention behaviors. This study could only examine if someone intended to intervene, and intervened or not in certain situations. The Healthy Minds Network offers an option for universities to include their own survey questions (The Healthy Minds Network [HMN], 2021, January 5). This could serve as an opportunity to collect more nuanced data on bystander behaviors and participant demographics.

Although intersections among minoritized groups were examined through the Identity Risk Index, there was no analysis to determine statistical significance between specific groups based on race, gender, sexual orientation, registered disability status, international student status, or first-generation college student status. Quantitative research with a larger, diverse sample could highlight systemic forms of oppression by certain intersections, or by unique social identities, that shape students' flourishing, university belonging, perceptions of campus climate, bystander intentions, and intervention behaviors. Additionally, future researchers may use a risk index as a moderator, by examining the interaction between variables, rather than using the index as a control.

A drawback of the cross-sectional nature of this study is the inability to examine the ongoing impact of students' experiences with variables. For example, the campus climate results showed negative relationships amongst each of the other variables. This is contrary to previous research, and may be due to the time that the study took place. Most students remained off-campus or at home due to the safety measures of the pandemic. These results may impact generalizability as well, and calls for further investigation. A longitudinal study or another examination of the variables in this study post-COVID-19 would provide deeper and more relevant insight now that students are mostly back on campus again. Although previous researchers showed that student's perceptions of their campuses climates were greatly altered this time (Birmingham et al., 2021; Dost et al., 2020; Kiebler & Stewart, 2021; Mishra & Kumar, 2021; Oh et al., 2021; Pagoto et al., 2021; Risisky et al., 2022; Stowe et al., 2021; Wallace et al., 2021; Walsh et al., 2021), more in-depth exploratory analyses are recommended for variables that showed non-significant univariate results (belonging and campus climate) in this study.

The current study's findings provide some preliminary support for the connections between the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991) and feminist theory (Crenshaw, 1989; Crenshaw, 1991; Evans et al., 2005). In particular, it showed how bystander intentions predicted bystander intervention for students who have diverse identities. Future researchers should test the TPB with measures specific to campus social norms, attitudes, and beliefs to predict bystander intentions and behaviors for students with diverse identities.

Lastly, previous researchers have shown that university personnel have a great deal of influence on the success and experiences of students (Anistranski & Brown, 2021; Benson & Whitson, 2022; Griffin et al., 2022; Johnson et al., 2007; Walsh et al., 2021). Researchers should share findings on these topics to make them more accessible for practitioners, like student affairs professionals and counselors, to ensure implications move beyond the page. To take it one step further, researchers should include practitioners in the process as stakeholders by way of community-based participatory research.

Conclusion

The purpose of this exploratory study was to address gaps in the literature related to the relationships between diverse students' perceptions of their campus climate, university belonging, flourishing, and bystander engagement. To better understand students' intersecting marginalized identities and how students intervened, I measured descriptives and frequencies within the sample. The results showed that the majority of the students in this study held multiple marginalized identities and intervened in multiple ways. This highlights the strengths in students' ability to help others, even when outside factors like the COVID-19 pandemic or national trends in hostility related to social identities (Chou & Gaysynsky, 2021; Goldberg, 2020; Laurencin & Walker, 2020; Reyes, 2020), may be influencing their well-being.

While there were no significant differences between students by academic level or the number of intersecting marginalized identities for flourishing, campus climate, university belonging, or bystander intention - by using an Identity Risk Index in a posthoc analysis, I found that students' flourishing significantly decreased as the number of their marginalized social identities increased. Additionally, students with more marginalized social identities were significantly more likely to have higher intentions to intervene as a bystander. Overall, campus climate, sense of belonging, and flourishing predicted bystander intentions for university students. The analysis had more practical significance when accounting for students' intersecting marginalized social identities, showing a strong relationship between the number of students' marginalized identities and bystander intention. Lastly, I found that bystander intention significantly predicted bystander intervention among university students.

The results support that continuing to center experiences of diverse student groups is critical to gaining a holistic understanding of the flourishing, university belonging, campus climate, and bystander behaviors. The findings give insight into the ways that students, regardless of their academic level, could use support and the ways that they support one another. Though still important, the study also showed that bystander intervention spans beyond traditional discussions of sexual violence and alcohol at universities. With emerging literature emphasizing the prevalence of mental health concerns (Goldberg, 2020; Laurencin & Walker, 2020) and the micro- and macro-aggressions faced by people with marginalized identities (Carey, 2023, January 2; Chou, 2020; Goldberg, 2020; Laurencin & Walker, 2020), bystander intervention should be studied and discussed in ways that capture a variety of students' experiences.

As university professionals navigate how to enhance student well-being post-pandemic (Abrams, 2022, October 12; Surovell, 2023, January 18), student affairs professionals, counselors, and counselor educators must be intentional about their roles in creating an institutional system that supports students. The results of this study provided a snapshot into the well-being and helping experiences of university students. The recommendations and implications in this study provided tangible ways to contribute to research and practice. The next steps can be addressed through multiple systemic levels, from individual advocacy to influencing policy.

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Appendix A

Survey Invitation Email

Hey, [university students]!

I can't believe that April is already here. It is an understatement to say that this last year has challenged us in ways we never imagined. In the midst of grief and loss, we have had to evaluate what is truly important to us - our relationships, health, safety, and values. At the [Campus Health Promotion Office - web link included], we believe all of us deserve compassion, dignity, and care. We work to amplify messages of mental well-being at [institution], and create a community that supports one another's health- **#[Social Norms Campaign Hashtag]**.

To learn how to better serve our community, we need to hear from you. The [Campus Health Promotion Office] has launched [institution]'s Healthy Minds Survey. The results of this survey provide a clearer picture of our collective mental well-being. With this anonymous data, we get closer to understanding the [Social Norms Campaign Tagline], and how to best support you.

Please take a few moments to anonymously share your experiences with us, and pass on this link to your fellow [university mascot's name] to participate as well. All [university] students can access the [institutional] 2021 Healthy Minds Survey through this link:
[Link]

We value your time. As a way to say thank you, students who participate can enter to win one of 20 $100 credits to [campus technology store] and Barnes and Noble to spend however you want. Please email me at [contact information] for more information about the survey.

I would also like to share with you these additional resources to help support your well-being:

- **[Links to institutional resources]**

With Hope,

[University Staff Contact Information]

Vita

Amelia “Mia” Liadis was born in Virginia and is an American citizen. She is a first-generation college student and earned her Bachelor of Science in Psychology, with a double major in Gender, Sexuality and Women’s Studies from Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) in 2014. She earned her Master of Education in Counselor Education, with a concentration in college student counseling and development from VCU in 2017. She worked as a progress coach for first-generation college students at VCU from 2016 – 2017, and continued her work at the university by serving as a confidential advocate and violence prevention health educator from 2017 to 2018. In this role she worked with students who experienced sexual violence, intimate partner violence, hate and bias- motivated violence, and stalking, with a special focus on LGBTQIA+ student populations. From 2018 to 2021 she continued her work in VCU’s health promotion office as a health educator with a focus on mental health, sexual health, and alcohol and other drug concerns. Since 2021 she’s served as the assistant director for health promotion at VCU. She has served as the editorial assistant for the American Counseling Association’s ASERVIC academic journal, *Counseling and Values*, since 2022.