



ACADEMIC EXPERIENCES, PERCEPTIONS OF CURRICULAR DIVERSITY, AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE: A STUDY OF UNDERGRADUATE CHRISTIAN STUDENTS IN FAITH-BASED STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

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The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of undergraduate Christian students involved in faith-based student organizations at one public, Midwestern research university. Specifically, we were interested in examining select academic experiences, perceptions of the religious and spiritual diversity in the curriculum, and the academic performance of these students as compared to other Christian students and non-Christian students. To that end, we analyzed data collected through a campus climate survey. Findings revealed that Christian students in faith-based student organizations had more favorable perceptions of their academic experiences and the religious and spiritual diversity in the curriculum than did non-Christians, and their academic performance (measured by GPA) was more likely to be higher than that of other Christians and non-Christians. We present several implications for practice, most of which pertain to recognizing and addressing Christian privilege along with encouraging students of all religious and spiritual identities to become involved in relevant faith-based student organizations on campus.

OVER THE LAST DECADE AND A HALF, many scholars have sought to understand how religious, spiritual, and non-religious students perceive and experience various aspects of the campus climate (e.g., Cole & Ahmadi, 2010; Mayhew et al., 2016; Moran, Lang, & Oliver, 2007; Rockenbach, Mayhew, Kinarsky, & Interfaith Youth Core, 2014). Similarly, others have conducted research in an attempt to elucidate whether, and to what extent, students of various religious, spiritual, and non-religious identities report instances of marginalization or discrimination on campus (e.g., Cragun, Blyde, et al., 2016; Riggers-Piehl & Lehman, 2016; Rockenbach, Mayhew, & Bowman, 2015). Higher education professionals have benefitted from such research in that it has illuminated ways to work towards creating campus climates, in general, that are more inclusionary of diverse religious, spiritual, and non-religious perspectives. Because most of the research mentioned above focus on campus climate in out-of-class contexts, professionals in higher education still lack an in-depth understanding of the perceptions and experiences of religious, spiritual, and non-religious students with regard to their academics. It is essential for campus activities professionals to know more about the academic lives of the students with whom they work to best provide support toward facilitating their holistic development.

While a variety of faith-based student organizations exist on many campuses, Christian student organizations have been the fastest-growing of their type at public colleges and universities for several decades (e.g., Brick, Nielsen, Jao, Rogers, & Monson, 2019; Bryant, 2005). As a result of numerous conversations that we have had with campus activities professionals and others working in student affairs, we know that some are concerned that the time-intensive involvement that is often characteristic of many Christian students in such organizations may be detrimental to these students' academic endeavors and success. To be sure, such a concern with regard

to other forms of student co-curricular involvement has an empirical basis (e.g., Nesloney, 2013; Zacherman & Foubert, 2014). Given the large number of Christian students who are involved in faith-based student organizations on campuses nationwide, and the large amounts of time that many of them are investing in such activities, it seems important to gain a better understanding of some of their academic-related experiences, perceptions, and performance. While our research design was not causal (i.e., determining how, if at all, their involvement in faith-based organizations leads to adverse academic outcomes), one goal of this study was to shed light on possible academic implications for their involvement in faith-based student organizations by comparing some of their academic-related experiences, perceptions, and performance with those of other students on campus.

CHRISTIAN STUDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

There is great diversity within the Christian tradition (e.g., Roman Catholic, Mainline Protestant, Evangelical Protestant), which makes it difficult to provide one overarching definition of the Christian identity. However, there are some fundamental Christian beliefs that cut across this diversity (Schwarz, 2004). First, Christians believe that God created the heavens and the earth. Second, Christians believe that they are spiritually separated from God because of sin. And, third, Christians believe they are saved from their sin by the grace of God through Jesus Christ. That said, in spite of the different ways of self-identifying within the Christian religion, students who identify as “Christian” has been the focus of a growing body of literature.

As mentioned earlier, most studies about Christian students have focused on their perceptions of the campus climate and their experiences, in general, on campus. Some scholars have found evidence that Christian students have more positive perceptions of the campus climate than students of other religious identities. For instance, research suggests that a more substantial proportion of Christian students report supportive spaces and resources on campus than their peers who hold different religious, spiritual, or non-religious perspectives (Rockenbach, Mayhew, Kinarsky, & Interfaith Youth Core, 2014). Also, previous analyses of the data used for this study revealed that Christian students at one midwestern, research university were more likely to report feeling comfortable with their classroom climate, valued by their instructors, and valued by students in the classroom than were students of other religious or non-religious identities (Craft & Yang, 2019). Findings such as these are not surprising to many who write about Christian privilege in higher education (e.g., Siefert, 2007).

Others, however, have found that some Christians hold negative perceptions of the campus climate. For example, Riggers-Piehl and Lehman (2016), Rockenbach and Mayhew (2014), and Mayhew, Bowman, and Rockenbach (2014) all found that some of the Christian students in their studies were less satisfied with the spiritual climate on campus and perceived it more negatively than did those of other religious and non-religious identities. Such dissatisfaction led to some of these students suggesting that they were hesitant to talk about their own religious beliefs on campus due to negativity from their peers (Riggers-Piehl & Lehman). In previous similar studies, some Christian students, specifically those who identified as evangelical, reported feeling marginalized or isolated on campus (e.g., Hodge, 2007; Magolda & Gross, 2009; Moran, Lang, & Oliver, 2007).

While understanding students’ perceptions of campus climate and their overall experiences on campus is essential, so too is understanding their academic-related experiences, perceptions, and performance during college. Previous analyses from the dataset used for this study revealed that Christian students at one midwestern, research university were more academically successful than were their non-Christian peers. In those analyses, however, academic success was operationalized by using seven items that measured students’ self-perceived academic success (Craft & Yang, 2019) rather than using an objective measure of academic success. This finding about the academic success of Christian students corroborates research conducted by others (e.g., Broberg & Krogstad, 2015; Logan, 2018; Wood & Hilton, 2012). What is still unknown, however, is whether or not Christians who are involved in faith-based student organizations have similar academic-related experiences, perceptions, and performance as other students, both Christian and non-Christian, on public college and university campuses.

Christian Students Involved in Faith-Based Student Organizations

As stated earlier, many Christian students attending public colleges and universities are actively involved in a faith-based student organization on campus (e.g., Binder & Wood, 2014; Wilkins, 2008). Most of the fastest-growing faith-based student organizations are affiliated with a particular Christian denomination or with national or regional parachurch ministries, such as InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, the Navigators, and Cru (Brick, Nielsen, Jao, Rogers, & Monson, 2019). In general, research suggests that involvement in religious activities (e.g., attending church, praying) is beneficial for most students during college. For instance, Rockenbach, Mayhew, Morin, and their colleagues (2015) suggested that participation in religious activities has been linked to increased well-being, social integration, and academic performance. In earlier studies, others also found that religious involvement (Astin, Astin, & Lindholm, 2011) and religious commitment (e.g., Bryant, Choi, & Yasuno, 2003) are related to stronger academic performance.

In spite of the insightful research about the overall campus perceptions and experiences of Christian students in higher education, very little is known about the academic lives of the subset of Christian students who are involved in faith-based student organizations during their undergraduate years. What we do know is based on research that is over ten years old. For instance, Bryant (2007) studied first-year students and found that involvement in religious organizations during students' first year was not strongly related to first-year academic success. A couple of years later, Schubmehl, Cubbellotti, and Van Ornum (2009) studied sophomores and juniors who were involved in a campus ministry at one college and found similar results: There was not a significant correlation between the campus ministry involvement of those students and their GPA. This research seems surprising given the large body of research focused on student involvement in higher education in general, which suggests that students who are engaged in a reasonable level of social and other extracurricular activities earn higher grades and report higher levels of satisfaction with their academic experience (e.g., Pike, Kuh, & Massa-McKinley, 2008; Webber, Krylow, & Zhang, 2013).

Furthermore, though a small body of previous research has suggested that some Christians hold negative perceptions of the campus climate (e.g., Riggers-Piehl & Lehman, 2016; Rockenbach & Mayhew, 2014; and Mayhew, Bowman, & Rockenbach, 2014), very little is known about the basis for those perceptions. Are those perceptions based on in-class experiences or out-of-class experiences, for example? Specifically, how might students perceive the curriculum with regard to religious and spiritual diversity? And, how do those perceptions differ between Christians involved in faith-based student organizations and those who are not? One of the purposes of this research is to address these issues.

As previously mentioned, because of the large number of Christian students involved in faith-based student organizations (Brick, Nielsen, Jao, Rogers, & Monson, 2019), coupled with anecdotal concerns about possible negative impacts associated with being overinvolved in these groups, it is essential to gain a better understanding of their academic-related experiences. This particular study was designed, then, to fill the gap in the literature by addressing the following research questions: 1) Are there differences between Christian students involved in faith-based student organizations and other Christian and non-Christian students in terms of their perceptions of their academic experience? 2) Are there differences between Christian students involved in faith-based student organizations and other Christian and non-Christian students in terms of the extent to which they believe the curriculum represents sufficient religious and spiritual diversity? 3) Are there differences in academic performance between Christian students involved in faith-based student organizations and other Christian and non-Christian students? 4) For Christians in faith-based student organizations: To what extent can we predict academic performance based on their perceptions of the religious and spiritual diversity of the curriculum and on their perceptions of the academic experience?

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework for this study draws on scholarly work related to student involvement and campus climate. Astin's theory of student involvement (1984) served as the other primary portion of the conceptual

framework for this study. As students are both physically and psychologically engaged on campus, they will experience positive outcomes from that involvement. In particular, Astin found that three of the most powerful forms of involvement are academic involvement, involvement with faculty, and involvement with student peer groups (1996), with the most influential single source of influence and cognitive development being a student's peer group.

With regard to campus climate, the foundational work of Moos (1979) provides insight into the impact of social-ecological settings upon students' behavior and performance. For instance, Hotchkins and Dancy (2015) and Norton (2008) all reported that perceptions of the classroom climate impact students' academic success. Where this study is concerned, perceptions of the religious and spiritual diversity of the curriculum (one aspect of campus climate) were measured, were compared among subgroups of students, and then used in an analysis to see if GPA could be predicted from those perceptions for Christians in faith-based student organizations.

METHOD

Data Source and Participants

This study was conducted at a large land-grant research university in the Midwest. The Campus Climate Assessment Project (*abbre.* "climate survey"), conducted at the university, was designed to assess various aspects of campus climate, including perceptions related to race, gender, sexual orientation, and religion (Rankin & Associates, 2015). The climate survey was administered in 2015 to all undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, and staff at the research site ($n = 7,411$). The study presented here focused on one subset of the larger dataset: the classroom and overall academic experiences of undergraduate students. A total of 3,900 undergraduate students provided usable data. Students who self-identified as Christian represented 74.5% of the sample; those affiliated with a religious minority tradition (i.e., other faith-based affiliation) represented 2.2% of the sample; those who identified as spiritual but with no faith-based affiliation represented 6.3%; and students who identified as having no affiliation with religion or spirituality represented 17%. Because our sample consisted of very small groups of students representing other religious, spiritual, and non-religious identities, we focused our analyses on comparing the entire group of students who do not identify as Christian (henceforth referred to as "non-Christians") with those who do (henceforth referred to as "Christians"). In this study, for the reasons mentioned earlier, we were particularly interested in the academic experiences of the subset of Christians who reported that they were involved in faith-based student organizations.

Measures

We looked at three dependent variables to better understand the academic experiences, perceptions of curricular diversity, and academic performance of the undergraduate students in our sample, specifically those who identify as Christians involved in faith-based student organizations; the first two variables measured perceptions, while the third measured actual academic performance. Furthermore, due to our interest in the religious involvement of the students in our sample, we used three different independent variables in our analyses. What follows below are the descriptions of the variables.

The first dependent variable, *Academic Experiences*, consisted of the average of seven items regarding an undergraduate student's self-perceived academic efforts and intellectual development during college (Cronbach's $\alpha = .87$). As examples, a couple of those items were: "performing up to full academic potential" and "satisfied with the extent of intellectual development." The reliability and validity of the measures can be found elsewhere (Rankin & Associates, 2015). Each item was rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly agree to 5 = Strongly disagree). We reversely recoded the scale to make it more intuitive to comprehend. Higher scores suggest that a student has a more favorable view of their academic experiences.

The second dependent variable, *Perceptions of Curricular Diversity*, was rated on a 4-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly agree to 4 = Strongly disagree) and was focused solely on religious and spiritual diversity within the

curriculum. We reversely recoded the scale to make it more intuitive to comprehend. Higher scores suggest that a student has a more favorable view of the religious and spiritual diversity of the curriculum.

The third dependent variable, *Academic Performance*, was measured by students' self-reported cumulative graduate point averages (GPAs) at the time of data collection. It consisted of the following categories: 1 = 3.5-4.0, 2 = 3.0-3.4, 3 = 2.5-2.9, 4 = 2.0-2.4, 5 = 1.5-1.9, 6 = 1.0-1.4, and 7 = 0.0-0.9. Very few participants had a GPA lower than 2.0; therefore, we combined all groups with a GPA below 2.0 into one category. The final variable consisted of five categories, 1 = 3.5-4.0, 2 = 3.0-3.4, 3 = 2.5-2.9, 4 = 2.0-2.4, and 5 = 0.0-1.9.

The extremely low number of religious minority students violated the assumption of parametric inferential statistics; thus, it was inappropriate to use in the inferential analyses (Field, 2013). For that reason, as mentioned earlier, we combined all religious minority groups and recoded our independent variable, *Religion*, into a dichotomous variable, 1 = Christians, 0 = non-Christians. Additionally, the *Involvement in Faith-Based Student Organizations* independent variable was a dichotomous variable in the original data. Combining *Religion* and *Involvement in Faith-Based Student Organizations*, the independent variable *Religious Involvement* consisted of three categories, 1 = Christians involved in faith-based student organizations, 2 = Christians not involved in faith-based student organizations, 3 = non-Christians (see Table 1). All analyses were conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) package Windows version 25.

Group	Frequency	Percentage
Christians involved in faith-based groups	477	14.5%
Christians not involved in faith-based groups	1999	60.7%
Non-Christians	816	24.8%

Note. Due to the low number of non-Christians involved in faith-based groups, along with the focus of this research on Christians in faith-based groups, the non-Christian group was not disaggregated in the same way as the Christian group.

Limitations

As with any study, there are some limitations to this research. First, given the small number of students who identified with non-Christian religious, spiritual, or non-religious identities, we were not able to disaggregate the data to determine differences in our variables of interest between students of non-Christian identities. Second, we only examined students who responded to and completed the climate survey. It is unknown whether or not the students who did not respond to or complete the climate survey are different from the sample we had. Third, because our data were gathered from an existing dataset, we were limited to the use of only a few academic-related variables to gain insight into students' academic experiences, perceptions, and performance. For that reason, our research design was guided in part by the academic-related variables for which we had access to data. Finally, given the nature of the dataset, we were unable to determine the extent of involvement of the Christian students in their faith-based student organizations; some may have been only slightly involved, while others may have been overinvolved. Despite these limitations, this research provides valuable insights for all who work in higher education, especially for campus activities professionals.

Results

Research Question 1

Our first research question was: Are there differences between Christian students involved in faith-based student organizations and other Christian and non-Christian students in terms of their academic experiences? A single factor ANOVA test using *Religious Involvement* as the independent variable was conducted on the dependent variable *Academic Experiences*. The three groups (Christians involved in faith-based student organizations, Christians not involved in faith-based student organizations, and non-Christians) showed statistically significant yet small differences on the dependent variable, Welch's $F(2, 1194.89) = 19.23, p < .001, \eta^2 = .011$. The results of post hoc tests indicated that Christian students involved in faith-based student organizations ($M = 4.147, SE = .026$) had more favorable view of their academic experiences than both Christian students not involved in faith-based student organizations ($M = 4.021, SE = .015$), and non-Christian students ($M = 3.924, SE = .024$), p 's $< .001$. Christian students not involved in faith-based student organizations also had statistically more favorable views of their academic experiences than did non-Christian students, $p = .002$.

Research Question 2

Our second research question was focused on the academic perceptions of undergraduate students was: Are there differences between Christian students involved in faith-based student organizations and other Christian and non-Christian students in terms of the extent to which they believe the curriculum represents sufficient religious and spiritual diversity? A single factor ANOVA test using *Religious Involvement* as the independent variable was conducted on the dependent variable *Perceptions of Curricular Diversity*. The three groups (Christians involved in faith-based student organizations, Christians not involved in faith-based student organizations, non-Christians) showed statistically significant yet small differences on the extent to which they believe the curriculum represents sufficient religious and spiritual diversity, Welch's $F(2, 1109.37) = 28.60, p < .001, \eta^2 = .020$. The results of post hoc tests indicated that Christian students involved in faith-based student organizations ($M = 3.161, SE = .035$) are more likely to believe the curriculum represents sufficient religious and spiritual diversity climate than non-Christian students did ($M = 2.896, SE = .031$), $p < .001$. Christian students not involved in faith-based student organizations ($M = 3.155, SE = .017$) are also more likely to believe the curriculum represents sufficient religious and spiritual diversity climate than non-Christian students did, $p < .001$. No statistical difference was found between Christian students regardless of their involvement in faith-based student organizations.

Research Question 3

Our third research question was focused on the dependent variable *Academic Performance*: Are there differences in academic performance (as measured by self-reported GPA) between Christian students involved in faith-based student organizations and other Christian and non-Christian students? The distribution of students' self-reported cumulative GPAs is displayed in Table 2. A Pearson's Chi-square test was conducted to compare cumulative GPAs among students from three groups: Christians involved in faith-based student organizations, Christians not involved in faith-based student organizations, and non-Christians. The results indicated that group membership had a statistically significant and robust association with students' cumulative GPAs, $\chi^2(8) = 117.67, p = .001, \phi_c = .134$. Christians involved in faith-based student organizations were much more likely to have a higher GPA than Christians not involved in faith-based student organizations, who were more likely to have a higher GPA than non-Christians.

GPA	Frequency	Percentage
3.5 – 4.0	1612	49.4%
3.0 – 3.4	900	27.6%
2.5 – 2.9	508	15.6%
2.0 – 2.4	197	6%
0.0 – 1.9	43	1.3%

Research Question 4

Our last research question was solely focused on Christians in faith-based student organizations: To what extent can we predict GPA based on *Academic Experiences* and *Perceptions of Curricular Diversity*? For this fourth research question, we ran a Poisson regression to predict cumulative GPAs based on *Academic Experiences*, *Perceptions of Curricular Diversity*, and the interaction of these two predictors. The omnibus test results indicated a statistically significant overall model with both independent variables included, $\chi^2(3) = 186.82, p < .001$. Tests of model effects further showed that *Academic Experiences* was statistically significant, $p < .001$. GPAs will be 0.795 times greater for every point increase on the response scale of *Academic Experiences*, 95% CI (0.705, 0.896). Neither *Perceptions of Curricular Diversity* nor the interaction term was statistically significant.

DISCUSSION

This study provides insight into the academic experiences, perceptions of curricular diversity, and academic performance of undergraduate Christian students in faith-based student organizations at one public, midwestern university. The findings suggest that Christians, both those who are in faith-based student organizations and those who are not, have more favorable views of their academic experiences than non-Christians. Moreover, while Christian students in faith-based student organizations have more favorable perceptions than non-Christian students with regard to the extent to which the curriculum sufficiently represents religious and spiritual diversity, their perceptions are not significantly different than those of Christian students who are not in faith-based student organizations. A third finding pertains to the academic performance of the undergraduate students in the sample: Christian students in faith-based student organizations were more likely to have a higher GPA than other Christians who were more likely to have a higher GPA than non-Christians. The final result from this study is that, for Christians in faith-based student organizations, GPA can be predicted, in part, by those students' perceptions of their academic experiences.

The first finding was that Christians, both those who are in faith-based student organizations and those who are not, had more favorable views of their academic experiences than non-Christians. As described earlier, the variable *Academic Experiences* was measured using seven items including "Many of my courses this year have been intellectually stimulating," "I am satisfied with my academic experience," and "My academic experience has had a positive influence on my intellectual growth and interest in ideas." In previous analyses using this same dataset, findings suggested that Christian students, both those in faith-based student organizations and those not in such organizations, were more comfortable with the overall classroom climate, felt more valued by their instructors in the classroom, and felt more valued by other students in the classroom than non-Christian students (Craft & Yang, 2019). The positive perceptions of the classroom climate could be one reason why the Christian students in this study have more favorable views of their academic experiences.

A related finding in this research is that Christian students in faith-based student organizations had more favorable perceptions than non-Christian students concerning the representation of religious and spiritual diversity in the curriculum. Still, their perceptions did not significantly differ from those of Christian students who are not in faith-based student organizations. Such positive perceptions of curricular diversity are likely related to favorable views of students' academic experiences, but more research would need to be conducted to investigate that possibility. Also, though this research did not investigate the details of the curriculum at this particular research site, it is plausible to assume that Christians, both those in faith-based student organizations and those not in such groups, could perceive the curriculum as sufficiently diverse with regard to religion and spirituality in part because they might see their own religious worldview reflected in it, or at the very least, do not see their worldview denigrated within it. In spite of the noticeable lack of research about diversity within the curriculum in higher education (Nelson Laird, Hurtado, & Yuhas, 2018), some research does point to the positive effects of curricular diversity on student learning and the reduction of prejudice (e.g., Denson & Chang, 2009; Nelson Laird, Engberg & Hurtado, 2005). It is for these reasons that understanding students' perceptions of the religious and spiritual diversity within the curriculum are important. In this study, the positive perceptions that Christians in faith-based student organizations hold about the religious and spiritual diversity in the curriculum

might also play a role in their positive views of their academic experiences.

Academic performance was the focus of the third research finding: Christian students in faith-based student organizations were more likely to have a higher GPA than other Christians who were more likely to have a higher GPA than non-Christians. This result represents the one primary finding that set the Christians in faith-based student organizations in this study apart from other Christian students. In part, this finding can be explained based on the work related to Astin's theory of student involvement (1984), in that Christians involved in faith-based student organizations reflected the influence of peer groups that Astin claimed were so impactful in terms of their academic success (1996). And, other studies have provided evidence for the positive impact of student involvement upon academic success. For instance, Webber, Krylow, and Zhang (2013) used data from the 2008 National Survey of Student Engagement at one research university to investigate whether involvement leads to student success. They found that, in general, students who reported more frequent engagement in both academic and social activities earned higher grades and reported higher levels of satisfaction with their academic experience. One limitation of our study was that we were not able to compare this group of involved students to non-Christians involved in faith-based student organizations simply due to the lack of such students in our sample.

The final finding of this research study was that, for Christians in faith-based student organizations, GPA could be predicted in part by their views of their academic experiences. So, the more that Christian students in faith-based student organizations embraced positive views of their academic experiences, the more they were academically successful as measured by their GPA. While it is an encouraging finding where Christian students in faith-based student organizations are concerned, it is discouraging when realizing that non-Christian students frequently report less favorable academic experiences on campus (e.g., Rockenbach et al., 2017). Additional research would need to be conducted to determine how, if at all, the views of the academic experiences of non-Christians, along with Christians not in faith-based student organizations, influence their academic performance.

Additionally, all of these findings might be explained, at least in part, by the existence of what many refer to as Christian privilege. In general, "whatever religion predominates in a specific location is privileged, in that it is recognized and honored while other religious traditions are at best ignored and at worst outlawed and persecuted" (Patton, Renn, Guido, & Quaye, 2016, p. 85). Over a decade ago, Siefert (2007) suggested that Christians experience Christian privilege in that there are conscious and subconscious advantages afforded to their faith in America's colleges and universities. She elaborated by suggesting that various "Christian markers" (p. 11), such as rituals, symbols, and practices that represent Christianity, are assumed within U.S. higher education. Small (2011) extended Siefert's work by identifying a perceived three-tiered structure of religious privilege with Christian students as the top of the hierarchy, holding the most privilege. She found that individuals who are not Christian but who are religious are located in the middle of the hierarchy, and hold some privilege, while non-religious students are at the bottom of the hierarchy, with the least amount of privilege. Given all of that, it stands to reason that Christian students, especially those who are active in Christian student organizations, would have more favorable perceptions of their academic experiences and the curricular diversity and that they would perform better academically.

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

There are several important implications of this research for those who work in higher education, specifically for campus activities professionals. First, though it is encouraging to know that Christians in faith-based student organizations, along with other Christian students, reported favorable perceptions of their academic experiences, it is discouraging to realize that the non-Christian students in this study did not hold as favorable perceptions of their academic experiences as did the Christian students. For these reasons, we must gain an understanding as to the reasons underlying this finding. In addition to conducting empirical research, campus activities professionals might engage in conversations with non-Christian students who attend various other events or who are involved in other types of student organizations on campus about their academic experiences to better ascertain the challenges and opportunities within them.

Furthermore, the importance of students' views of their academic experiences cannot be overstated, and it would serve campus activities professionals well to ask about those views. For example, the degree to which religious and spiritual diversity is adequately represented in the curriculum is important to students. While decisions about curricular diversity predominantly lie within the domain of academic affairs, campus activities professionals can closely work with students to better understand whether, and to what degree, they see their own religious or spiritual perspectives reflected in classroom settings. They might then share that information with faculty who are devoted to pursuing diversity and inclusion in classroom spaces. Furthermore, campus activities professionals could potentially buffer the lack of such diversity in the classroom with co-curricular programming that addresses different religious and spiritual perspectives.

A third implication pertains to the importance of student involvement in faith-based student organizations. The findings of this research suggest that such involvement among Christian students plays a role in their academic performance. A primary implication of this research is that campus activities professionals should continue to encourage Christian students to be involved in faith-based student organizations on campus. A second implication is to consider how to encourage involvement in faith-based student organizations among non-Christian students on campus; even those who identify as secular can create organizations with others who hold their same worldview. For instance, such non-Christian faith-based student organizations might include Hillel, the Baha'i Club, the Muslim Students Association, and the Secular Student Alliance.

In conclusion, this research sheds light on aspects of the academic experiences, perceptions, and performance of Christian students in faith-based student organizations in comparison to other Christian students and non-Christian students. While the data points to positive academic experiences for Christians in faith-based student organizations that should be celebrated, it also indicates concerns about the academic experiences of other students. Campus activities professionals can closely work with students of all spiritual, religious, and secular identities to better understand their academic experiences and to support them in their collegiate careers by advocating for appropriate curricular diversity and by engaging in other ways of helping these students see their worldviews reflected on campus.

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