SOCIALLY-JUST DISABILITY RESOURCES IN HIGHER EDUCATION: AN APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY

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Abstract

To replace the current professional paradigm of higher education disability resources, socially-just disability resources emerged as the next step for the field to progress relative to creating experiences for students with disabilities that are not only accessible and equitable but also socially-just. Overall, descriptions of socially-just disability resources take the social model approach a step further by directly mobilizing disability resource professionals to organize for greater change in higher education to holistically address barriers with an ideal outcome of reducing the need for accommodations altogether. However, because this is a novel framework, there is a paucity of research regarding its implementation. The purpose of this study was to understand what the ideal implementation of socially just disability resources would entail and how these practices can be sustained. Following a review of the findings from an appreciative inquiry initiative conducted with one disability resource center, implications are discussed.

Keywords: Appreciative inquiry, socially-just disability resources, higher education, disability

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In the United States, colleges and universities created disability resource centers (DRCs) in response to both the Americans with Disabilities Act (2008) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (1973), the two primary civil rights laws that collectively ensure equal access to public programs and services for people with disabilities. To uphold the mandates of this legislation in higher education settings, disability resource professionals' (DRPs) responsibilities are centered on facilitating access for disabled students through the development of reasonable accommodations that mitigate disability-related barriers in curricular and co-curricular environments (Hatzes et al., 2018; Oslund, 2014). Despite being compliance-focused by design, DRPs have the potential to exceed the scope of federal regulations in their approach to access and proactively work to remove disability-related barriers (e.g., procedural, social, physical; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020), not just accommodate them (Kraus, 2021).

Accordingly, *socially-just disability resources* (SJDR) emerged as a framework through which DRPs can reframe their work relative to creating accessible educational experiences for college students with disabilities, shifting focus away from legislative compliance and toward proactive, inclusive design (Evans et al., 2017; Kraus, 2021). Specifically, through SJDR, DRPs are encouraged to reflect on *why* their roles exist (i.e., inaccessible designs and structures) and *how* they can reduce the need for individual accommodations altogether through proactive design (Dolmage, 2017; Loewen & Pollard, 2010). Overall, by continuously engaging in this critical questioning, SJDR may provide a means through which DRPs can adjust their practices to extend beyond accommodation development and ultimately ensure that disabled college students' experiences are not only accessible, but also equitable.

Given the extent of the work set forth by the SJDR framework, however, inherent challenges in its implementation persist. It has consistently been the case, for example, that many DRCs are underfunded and, as a result, insufficiently staffed (Dolmage, 2017). As a result, without proper staffing, disability resource centers likely lack the time and resources to engage in proactive work (e.g., faculty outreach) outside of developing accommodations (Evans et al., 2017). Further, buy-in from other university stakeholders in SJDR-related efforts is essential to ensure that they translate to greater changes in institutional cultures of inclusion (Mohr, 2021). Due to a paucity of research on SJDR and its impact on disabled students' experiences and outcomes, however, efforts from DRPs to obtain stakeholder buy-in may be impeded.

For this reason, developing a foundation of research on SJDR is a necessary first step in understanding its effectiveness in enhancing access and equity for disabled college students and, consequently, obtaining support from stakeholders to support its usage in the field. In the following sections, this paper will:

1) Describe appreciative inquiry as an approach to researching SJDR
2) Discuss the implementation of an appreciative initiative to explore SJDR in one disability resource center
3) Outline key findings and corresponding implications for disability resource centers in using appreciative inquiry methods to explore SJDR

Theoretical Framework

Appreciative Inquiry

Appreciative inquiry[1] is increasingly used as a methodology to engage members of an organization in their research to collaboratively bring about positive, systematic change (Dewey & Moeller, 2022; Gray et al., 2019; Perrelle et al., 2022; Shuayb et al., 2009). More specifically, appreciа-

[1] Note that appreciative inquiry differs from appreciative advising.

tive inquiry was developed as a framework of analysis for organizations to refine their internal practices by exploring how they function at their 'best' relative to a specific topic (Cooperrider & Srivasta, 1987). Although flexible in implementation, conducting an appreciative inquiry involves moving an organization through five key steps (see Table 1): (1) definition, (2) discovery, (3) dream, (4) design, and (5) destiny (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2003).

In Step 1: Definition, organizations clearly define the focus topic for an appreciative inquiry initiative (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2003). Generally, focus topics are an internal policy, practice, or procedure that the organization determines has the potential to be transformed. In addition to selecting a topic of focus, Step 1: Definition also helps the organization to set an agenda and goals for their inquiry (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005; Watkins et al., 2011) and facilitate conversations around who should be involved in the inquiry and to what extent (Reed, 2007). Importantly, considerations regarding who participates in an appreciative inquiry include (a) internal organization stakeholders and (b) advisory team members. Specifically, the advisory team is comprised of individuals with diverse roles in the organization to help design and facilitate all phases of the appreciative inquiry initiative (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005).

Following Step 1: Definition, organizations move into Step 2: Discovery. The discovery phase of appreciative inquiry is focused on engaging the organization in activities (e.g., interviews and focus groups) to collaboratively determine its positive core (i.e., the best) with regard to their selected topic (Reed, 2007; Watkins et al., 2011). Then, after mapping out the positive core, appreciative inquiry participants engage in Step 3: Dream, in which they dialogue around what the ideal implementation of the positive core would look like in practice (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2003). Building on Step 3: Dream, participants then move into Step 4: Design to develop action plans to implement the 'ideal' of the positive core in their organization (Reed, 2007). Finally, the organization moves into Step 5: Destiny, where members implement its action plans in practice (Watkins et al., 2011).

Recognizing the appeal of a collaborative and unconditionally positive approach to change (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2003), researchers have employed appreciative inquiry to develop or refine theories of practice in various professional and educational settings. For example, Dewey and colleagues (2022) used appreciative inquiry to better understand how clinical residents in neurology thrive to enhance well-being throughout their programs of study. Further, Perelle and colleagues (2022) facilitated an appreciative inquiry initiative in an age/dementia care setting to improve their theory of trauma-informed care for dementia patients. Finally, in the realm of education, Gray and colleagues (2019) conducted an appreciative inquiry initiative to enhance pedagogy among physical education teachers to improve student engagement.

Altogether, applications of appreciative inquiry as a research method demonstrate its effectiveness in facilitating collaboration within organizations to advance theory and practice. For this reason, appreciative inquiry may prove valuable when applied to SJDR to empirically explore its implementation in college and university settings. The purpose of this study, therefore, was to use an appreciative inquiry framework to understand what the *ideal* implementation of SJDR would entail and how these practices can be sustained in the field of disability resources. This study builds on the prior work from Strimel & Francis (2023), where we facilitated Step 1: Definition and Step 2: Discovery with one DRC that resulted in an SJDR-focused positive core. The following questions guided this research:

1) What is the ideal usage of the SJDR frame work?
2) What institutional factors influence the implementation of SJDR?

Method

We blended qualitative methods with an appreciative inquiry framework to understand the ideal implementation of SJDR within one DRC and how these practices can be sustained in higher education disability resources. See Strimel and Francis (2023) for a detailed description of Step 1: Definition and Step 2: Discovery that culminated in the DRC's positive core to guide the subsequent phases of appreciative inquiry discussed in this paper.

Positionality

In qualitative research, it is important to understand how researcher positionality (i.e., identities, experiences, epistemology) influences all aspects of the research process (Holmes, 2011). Both authors hold the epistemological belief of critical constructivism and consequently understand knowledge as subjective (i.e., no single truth) and in relation to both context and power (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Additionally, at the time of this research, the first author is a doctoral candidate with invisible disabilities, previously worked as a disability resource professional, and had a pre-existing professional relationship with a portion of this study's participants. The second author is a faculty member in her institution's special education department and previously conducted appreciative inquiry research. For these reasons, we maintained memos to capture our evolving reflections, emotions, and reactions to the study. We also engaged in consistent peer debriefing with one another to monitor our biases and perceptions during all portions of this research.

Participants

We used purposeful selection to identify a DRC in which to implement this research after obtaining Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval (Creswell, 2002). Purposeful selection was used to ensure that the DRC aligned with the study's intent to explore SJDR and had the resources (e.g., time, staff) to engage in a full appreciative inquiry initiative (Patton, 2002). The selected DRC was located at a large (39,000 total students on average from 2019 to 2022) public university (later referred to as Gladstone University) within the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States. At the time of this research, the DRC's total number of staff members was 14. Staff members varied in their specializations and levels of leadership. Further, approximately 3,000 students (7.7% of the total institutional population) were affiliated with the office to receive accommodations. Psychological/emotional, ADD/ADHD, and medical disabilities were most commonly reported among the total population of students served.

After contacting the director of the DRC and explaining the study's purpose, the first author employed snowball sampling methods (i.e., use of referrals) to recruit internal members of the DRC's staff to engage in this research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Additionally, the first author solicited input from the DRC's director on who among their staff would be a good fit to form an advisory team. In appreciative inquiry, advisory team members – comprised of internal members of the organization – are directly involved in helping design the initiative and maintaining momentum among participants during the appreciative inquiry process (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2003). While meeting with the DRC staff member recommended by the director to provide details of the study's purpose, the first author obtained an additional recommendation for a second advisory team member, with whom they then met to explain the study's purpose; both agreed to participate in this research. Five total DRC staff members volunteered and consented to participate in this study. For reporting, we invited participants to provide pseudonyms to protect their identities. See Table 2 for full participant information.

Data Collection

During day one of this two-day appreciative inquiry initiative, DRC participants (see Table 8)

and two special education faculty members engaged in Step 1: Definition and Step 2: Discovery. This work concluded with developing the DRC's positive core relative to SJDR, with a particular focus on facilitating access and equity for disabled teacher candidates (see Strimel & Francis, 2023) for more information on the development of the positive core). This paper reports on data collected with DRC participants on day two of the appreciative inquiry initiative during Steps 3, 4, and 5 of appreciative inquiry. Design of this initiative (e.g., workshop activities) was influenced by foundational literature in appreciative inquiry methods (e.g., Watkins et al., 2011; Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2003)

We collected data from several sources for Steps 3, 4, and 5 (see Table 3). All three steps occurred in a retreat-style workshop over two hours on the DRC's campus to allow participants to focus fully on the appreciative inquiry initiative. This section details the procedures used for data collection and implementation of each step of the appreciative inquiry initiative.

After welcoming participants and reviewing the agenda for the next three steps of appreciative inquiry, we drew their attention to the positive core concept map created in Step 1: Discovery, projected at the front of the room. We then prompted participants to reflect individually on the positive core concept map and activities from the previous day's activities for approximately 10 minutes. Next, the first author engaged participants in a group discussion about their reflections with open-ended prompts (e.g., "What came up in your reflections?") as the second author recorded field notes to make any necessary changes to the positive core concept map. Finally, after all participants had the opportunity to share, we formally transitioned the group to Step 3: Dream, where participants would build off the positive core and collectively imagine the future of SJDR in the DRC (i.e., "What could be?").

Step 3: Dream

We began Step 3: Dream by writing the phrase "Dream Poster" on the whiteboard at the front of the room. Then, we prompted participants to think of *what could be*, or the ideal, for implementing SJDR. We specifically asked them to think limitlessly and beyond the bounds of staffing, resources, or other limitations to truly dream about how they could implement SJDR moving forward. As participants shared their ideas, we wrote their responses on the Dream Poster (see Figure 1 in the Findings). After all participants shared, we asked them to take approximately 10 minutes to reflect on the following prompt: *What are the three boldest opportunities for innovation you see presented in the Dream Poster?* (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2003). Following independent reflection on the boldest SJDR-related opportunities, participants shared their responses with the group. At the same time, the second author placed a "star" by each component participants identified on the Dream Poster. For example, all participants agreed that "buy-in from university leadership" was the boldest opportunity for innovation, followed by "enhanced DRC staff" and "intentionally inclusive spaces." As participants discussed the boldest opportunities, we created a new poster titled "The Future of [DRC] at [Institution]" with each of the three opportunities for innovation listed on it to prepare for Step 4: Design.

Step 4: Design

We began Step 4: Design by facilitating a group discussion on the following prompt: *Which of our three opportunities for innovation do we want to transform?* (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2003). During this discussion, participants identified obtaining "buy-in from university leadership" as what they wanted to change relative to SJDR in the DRC (see Figure 2 in the Findings). We then prompted participants to consider what elements (i.e., resources) would be needed to achieve the boldest opportunity identified in Step 3: Dream. Subsequently, the group collaboratively crafted a 'provocative proposition' of what *could be* rel-

ative to SJDR and obtaining buy-in from university leadership, written in the present tense and intended to capture how it could manifest in the future (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2003). During this process, we provided an example of a 'provocative proposition' on a PowerPoint slide to guide participants' thinking. The proposition developed by participants (see Provocative Proposition in the Findings) served as the foundation for Step 5: Destiny.

Step 5: Destiny

We first encouraged participants to reflect on the accomplishments of the group thus far in the appreciative inquiry initiative (e.g., a review of the progress from the positive core concept map development in Step 2: Discovery). Then, we reviewed the provocative proposition crafted in Step 4: Design, and invited participants to consider the following prompt: *What ideas are there for tangible action items, practices, or processes to see this proposition through?* (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2003). Following this reflection, we facilitated a group discussion around participants' reflections and how the proposition could be implemented in practice. During this discussion, we captured participants' ideas and strategies on the original poster titled "The Future of [DRC] at [Institution]" underneath the provocative proposition to reflect an action plan for the DRC to take back to their department and implement once the study was complete. We then typed the action plan and shared it as a draft with participants via email and invited feedback, revisions, or additions. Participants did not provide additional feedback and in its final form, the action plan developed in Step 5: Destiny of this research reflected the beginnings of the ideal implementation of SJDR in the DRC.

Data Analysis

Following Steps 3, 4, and 5 of the appreciative inquiry initiative, the first author transcribed, cleaned, and de-identified the audio recording. Because we were heavily involved in the data generated within this study, audio recordings allowed us to capture the exact phrasing of participants' ideas and stories to be used in the analysis. Participants' suggestions to transform practice (i.e., enhanced DRC staff, intentionally inclusive spaces, buy-in from university leadership) became the three primary themes guiding subsequent thematic analysis. The authors engaged in a robust and lengthy inductive open coding process using cumulative data from research field notes/memos, posters, and other artifacts (i.e., participant note taking forms used in group discussion). Data were used to develop thematic maps for each research question/component of the positive core participants identified in Steps 1 and 2 to cluster like data and make connections between key ideas (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The researcher team used these maps to create a codebook. The first author used this codebook to recode all data employing a basic thematic analysis to determine subthemes across all data from the final phases of the appreciative inquiry initiative (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Trustworthiness

To ensure the trustworthiness of data collection and analysis, we engaged in several activities throughout the research process, including: (a) maintaining an audit trail of decision-making (e.g., design and analysis designs); (b) member-checking with participants during the appreciative inquiry (e.g., soliciting feedback on appreciative inquiry materials) and after the study's conclusion (e.g., sharing copies of the findings and inviting feedback); (c) participating in peer debriefing with one another during data analysis (Merriam & Tisdell, 2017); (d) triangulating data across multiple sources and observers; and (e) engaging in reflexivity to self-scrutinize the influence of our positionality in the research process through peer debriefing and continual memoing (Holmes, 2020).

Findings

This section will detail the findings from the

final three steps of the appreciative inquiry initiative: dream, design, and destiny. First, this section will include the themes drawn from the dream dialogue to encompass the ideal implementation of SJDR. Then, this section will present the components of the DRC's action plan developed in Step 5: Destiny to reflect the next steps in implementing SJDR. Pseudonyms are used throughout to protect the identities of the institution, the DRC, and the participants.

Dream Dialogue

When prompted to identify the three boldest opportunities for innovation from their collective Dream Poster, participants unanimously selected (a) enhanced DRC staff, (b) intentionally inclusive spaces, and (c) buy-in from university leadership as the key themes of their discussion. This section will describe each theme in detail. See Figure 1 for the completed Dream Poster.

Enhanced DRC Staff

Participants discussed several dreams related to enhancing the DRC's staff. Specifically, participants felt that the DRC needed "more staff members" to support students holistically and in a way that went beyond accommodation development. Jessica, for example, expressed her desire for more staff who are "experts within specific fields." Following this, participants collectively agreed that the DRC would ideally staff DRPs in each of the roles detailed in Table 4.

Overall, participants felt that each of these roles would inherently be "intertwined" with one another and collectively support the DRC in engaging in more proactive efforts around campus because as of current, they at times feel "limited to compliance" (i.e., accommodation development) in their roles.

Moreover, throughout discussions related to staffing, participants emphasized enhancing staff well-being by "increase[ing] staff" (e.g., "the more staff we have, the more natural our well-being would be") or by hiring a staff member to exclusively support well-being in the office. Ann, for example, noted that without adequate staffing to handle all aspects of a DRC's role (i.e., matters of compliance and efforts related to advancing a university culture of inclusion), trying to balance them can quickly lead to burnout: "…we feel like we're just working, working, working." Lucky expanded on Ann's point by emphasizing that DRP's are also "dealing with people's lives" and cannot "leave their emotions at the door," making self-care essential to being "refreshed" and better-equipped to support students (i.e., facilitate both access and equity in their experiences). For these reasons, participants' dreams around DRC staff self-care expanded to include having a DRC staff member to exclusively: (a) lead well-being initiatives, (b) manage staff burnout, and (c) lead reflexivity dialogue (i.e., discussing emotions and reactions from interactions with students and faculty).

Intentionally Inclusive Spaces

In addition to enhancing DRC staff, participants also dreamt of creating intentionally inclusive spaces across Gladstone's campus. Robin, for example, described her dream of creating both a physical and virtual "hub" with up-to-date resources and information for disabled students as to how they can "be a part of" or lead efforts to further disability culture on campus. In its physical manifestation, Robin and other participants underscored their desire for the "hub" (e.g., room on campus) to be a disability cultural center where disabled Gladstone community members (students, faculty, and staff) could "connect" with one another and "celebrate" their collective disability identities. In its virtual form (i.e., a website), Robin dreamt that this space could mirror the physical disability cultural center for those who may not feel "comfortable going somewhere" in person.

Along with creating a cultural space, participants also collectively dreamt about improvements to the DRC's office location to make it more intentionally inclusive. For example, participants expressed a desire for the DRC to "feel more like

cultural space" as opposed to a transactional location to obtain accommodations. To do this, participants discussed leveraging their location in relation to other identity-based offices (e.g., the LGBTQ+ office) to represent disability as an intersectional identity in the building the DRC is housed in. Dominique, for example, emphasized that "it matters to students to see that other [identity-based] offices working together." She further elaborated that if she were a student of "multiple marginalized identities" and saw "these offices working together," it would "make an impression on her" (instead of feeling like disability is "that quiet thing"). Overall, participants unanimously agreed with Dominique that visible, intentional connections to other identity-based offices at Gladstone would be "ideal."

Lastly, participants felt that adequate accessible housing was "a missing piece" at Gladstone. Lucky noted that inaccessible housing is "very impactful" on students' perceptions of disability inclusion at the institution: "If you're not comfortable where you're living, you're not going to be successful elsewhere." To this point, Lucky added that one of her "dreams" to create intentionally inclusive spaces extended to transforming Gladstone's on-campus housing options through the availability of intentionally inclusive housing. All participants echoed this sentiment and further added their dreams of transforming on-campus housing, such as (a) "pet-friendly buildings," (b) "rooms on the first floor" of buildings, (c) more single rooms, and (d) dorms in closer proximity to academic buildings.

Buy-in from University Leadership

Participants discussed obtaining "buy-in from university leadership" at length during the dream dialogue, and they unanimously identified this dream as the boldest opportunity for innovation in the DRC. Within these discussions, participants emphasized that fostering a culture of disability inclusion is not solely the responsibility of the DRC; rather, they agreed that the commitment of the university was critical to their work. Specifically, participants expressed a desire for disability identity to "be given the same space that other identities" have at the institution in terms of recognition, support, and dedication (e.g., a physical, cultural space). Robin, for example, felt that it would be impactful for university leadership to "consistently articulate" the importance of learning about disability and disability culture in their messaging to campus community members, at which point Jessica underscored the impact this would have on "the university community's" buy-in to disability inclusion as a whole.

To achieve this dream, participants emphasized the importance of university leadership communicating the difference between "ensuring access" for students with disabilities (i.e., upholding matters of compliance) versus ensuring student success (i.e., committing to equity and inclusion) in communication to faculty and staff. Participants dreamt of a mandatory workshop for all faculty and staff at Gladstone to learn not only about accessibility and implementing accommodations for students with disabilities, but also about "disability inclusion" and "disability identity." Altogether, when discussing the buy-in and support of university leadership in enacting SJDR across campus, participants quickly agreed that a key component to seeing this dream through was to first obtain buy-in from the president of the institution.

Provocative Proposition

In Step 4: Design and Step 5: Destiny, participants: (a) crafted a provocative proposition for obtaining buy-in from university leadership and (b) identified tangible action items for seeing it through in the future. See Figure 2 for the outcomes of Steps 4 and 5 of the appreciative inquiry process.

As demonstrated in Figure 2, participants collectively crafted the following provocative proposition relative to obtaining buy-in from university leadership:

> Dedication [of university leadership] is critical to a culture of disability value and inclusion. As a result of leadership's dedication to disability inclusion, disability identity will have the same space as other identities at Gladstone, and learning about disability inclusion will be mandatory of all faculty and staff; not because of compliance, however, but because it is consistent with social justice culture (i.e., the right thing to do).

In its finalized form, this provocative proposition reflected how participants believed this opportunity would manifest in the future. During the development of the proactive proposition, participants agreed to substitute the word "buy-in" (which was used in Step: 3 Dream), with the word "dedication" — a word participants believed more accurately reflected what they wanted from leadership's perspective of and approach to disability inclusion (e.g., "…dedication, yes. [The DRC] can only take you so far" in advancing disability culture).

Once the provocative proposition was crafted in Step 4: Design, participants developed several action items in Step 5: Destiny that culminated in an action plan to see the proposition through (see Figure 2). First, participants agreed that it was important for DRC staff to hold "focus groups" with (a) disability community members (disabled students, faculty, staff) and (b) disability "advocates and allies" (i.e., those who do not identify as disabled/have a disability) to explore current perceptions of disability access, equity, and inclusion at Gladstone. Then, the data from the focus groups would inform "next steps" in approaching university leadership with tangible suggestions from the community in how to improve access, equity, and inclusion across campus. Participants agreed than in an "ideal" scenario, they would "have a conversation" with Gladstone's president on campus to assess the current state of the institution based on the focus group data. During this conversation, DRC staff would present the president with "data-driven" action items to obtain their dedication and lead the charge in enhancing institutional disability culture.

Dominique added that in addition to being data-driven, any action items presented to university leadership would need to demonstrate the positive impact that disability-related efforts would have on other identity groups (e.g., connecting to anti-racist efforts at the university), highlighting the connection of disability as diversity. Other participants added that intentionality in obtaining buy-in should also extend to discussions of mutual benefit; for example, participants noted anecdotally that many families and students expressed to them that they chose Gladstone "because [they] hear great things" about the DRC. For this reason, participants agreed that they would need to carefully prepare ideas for extending disability inclusion into marketing and branding with Gladstone and connect these ideas to the benefit of the institution (i.e., increased enrollment).

As a final component of the participants' action plan to obtain dedication from university leadership, Robin emphasized the need for "[DRC] staff to be able to dedicate" time to the outcomes of the discussions with leadership stakeholders. Like discussions among participants in the dream dialogue, it was evident again in Step 5: Destiny that advocating for adequate staffing in the DRC would be necessary to ensure that they could see their efforts through and address all institutional needs identified in the focus groups. Finally, participants concluded with a final action item of their own: "we have to, as a [DRC] team, demonstrate commitment to making whatever changes we can to support this [plan]." In other words, participants unanimously agreed that they would need to make internal changes based on focus group data to ensure that they continue to reflect the same willingness to change that they would ask of university leadership and the Gladstone community as a whole.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to use an appreciative inquiry framework to understand what the *ideal* implementation of SJDR would entail and how these practices can be sustained in the field of disability resources. This study built on the prior work from Strimel and Francis (2023), where we facilitated Step 1: Definition and Step 2: Discovery with one DRC that resulted in an SJDR-focused positive core. Altogether, the outcomes of the final phases of appreciative inquiry illustrate how the SJDR framework can be implemented in higher education disability resources, enhancing the field's understanding of how to make this paradigmatic shift long-term.

As a key finding of this research, the components of the original positive core concept map (see Strimel & Francis, 2023) remained consistent through the final steps of appreciative inquiry, including: (a) communication, (b) information and support, (c) internal collaboration, (d) relationships, and (e) culture. Notably, participants drew on the components of the DRC's positive core to enhance the descriptions of their approach to implementing SJDR at Gladstone. Figure 3 provides an updated conceptual model of the DRC's positive core relative to SJDR, including the enhanced descriptions of how participants described their intent to implement each in practice.

As demonstrated in Figure 3, participants expanded on the foundational components of the positive core ("relationships" and "culture") to add that they are inherently university-driven. Specifically, in the present study, an emphasis on university leadership's role in SJDR (i.e., building relationships and sustaining culture) was an undercurrent of Steps 3 through 5 of appreciative inquiry (e.g., identifying "buy-in of university leadership" as the boldest opportunity for innovation). This finding adds to those of Strimel and Francis (2023) to highlight not only an interdependency of campus stakeholders in enacting SJDR, but also a more direct focus on the importance of the top-down aspect of enacting systemic change.

Specifically, participants' discussions of a top-down approach to enacting SJDR centered on obtaining leadership's "dedication" to fostering a culture of disability inclusion, not only "disability acceptance" or "buy-in." To achieve leadership's dedication to disability inclusion, participants explored how they could craft a call to action that is meaningful and authentic to their audience (e.g., knowing that leadership is data-driven and, consequently, collecting a large dataset to present within their call to action). This finding contributes important information to how DRCs may approach leadership at their institutions to initiate top-down SJDR initiatives, particularly concerning the importance of authenticity and intentionality in any efforts to enact institutional change.

Participants also emphasized that the provision of "information and support" from the positive core needed to expand beyond compliance and accommodations to also include information and support related to disability identity and disability culture. Notably, participants also discussed their desire to work more closely with other identity-based offices on campus (e.g., the LGBTQ+ office) as an approach to better represent and cultivate disability as an intersectional identity at Gladstone. This sentiment has been supported by previous research indicating that an intersectional approach to student affairs in higher education honors students' intersectional experiences in higher education, as opposed to the traditional siloed approach to identity-based support (Abes & Wallace, 2018; Miller, 2018).

However, within this component of SJDR and others, participants described the need for adequate staffing to ensure this proactive work could occur; the desire for adequate staffing extended, for example, into conversations around monitoring and facilitating DRPs' well-being. For this reason, even if DRCs have enough staff to meet compliance-related obligations at their institutions, it may be necessary for DRCs to have additional staffing to exclusively handle all other aspects of SJDR

(e.g., student identity development, job coaching). In this study, specifically, participants agreed that dreams related to staffing were intertwined with all others, making it an essential component of effectively and fully implementing SJDR.

Limitations

Three primary limitations to this research should be considered. First, the first author had a pre-existing professional relationship with some participants that may have influenced their responses throughout the appreciative inquiry process. Second, although this study provided an in-depth exploration of implementing SJDR, we did not recruit student participants to provide their perspectives on developing actionable steps for the DRC to enact the SJDR framework, limiting the perspectives presented in this paper to those of DRC staff members only. Third, it was beyond the scope of this study to conduct a more in-depth exploration of the DRC staff members themselves (e.g., demographic information, personal beliefs, identities); future research should seek this information and consider conducting one-on-one interviews with DRC participants to better understand the influence of personal characteristics on implementing SJDR.

Implications

Despite the limitations of this study, there are several implications for higher education disability resource professionals to consider when enacting SJDR at their institution. Because the findings of the present study reveal the importance of university leadership's buy-in and dedication to SJDR-related efforts, DRCs should consider how to approach their institutional leadership teams to have intentional conversations about disability identity and disability culture. In preparation for these conversations, however, DRC staff should identify the gatekeepers to leadership team members (e.g., provost, cabinet) and foster connections with them first. By developing relationships with leadership gatekeepers, DRCs may be able to (a) more easily gain access to leadership and (b) obtain essential information as to how to authentically approach them (e.g., through rich, data-informed discussion).

Moreover, because the need for staff with varied expertise (e.g., well-being, job-coaching) was underscored throughout this study as another essential component of SJDR and supporting students holistically, DRCs would benefit from assessing their office structure accordingly. In particular, DRC leadership may consider ways to delegate components of SJDR to particular staff members and subsequently connect them to appropriate training opportunities (i.e., professional development) to ensure they can carry out the functions of their particular role. It may also be necessary, however, for DRCs to advocate to institutional leadership to hire additional team members who can fulfill each role.

Finally, in any efforts to advance SJDR at their institutions, it is essential for DRCs and DRPs to center the perspectives of people with disabilities. Participants in this study, for example, identified focus groups with disabled Gladstone community members as a critical first step in determining any action items for moving forward with internal changes to the DRC or presenting a call to action to university leadership. For this reason, DRCs should consider ways to authentically engage disability community members in enacting SJDR and co-facilitating change at their institutions (e.g., focus groups, interviews, working groups).

Implications for Future Research

There are several directions for future researchers to take in exploring the implementation of the SJDR framework in higher education disability resources. First, because disabled college students are directly impacted by any SJDR-related practices, it is essential for future researchers to involve them in any subsequent studies of this nature. Specifically, researchers should intentionally recruit diverse groups of students (e.g., year, degree program, disability/ies, identities, expe-

riences) in future studies and center their perspectives in developing action plans for change in higher education disability resources. Second, because of the absence of students with disabilities in the present study, we recommend that future researchers compare the findings from this appreciative inquiry to those from any future iterations of this research that does include students or focuses exclusively on students.

Third, because less than half of Gladstone's DRC staff members volunteered to participate in this appreciative inquiry initiative, we recommend that future researchers consider ways to incentivize entire DRCs to engage in the appreciative inquiry process and facilitate a collective change in practices. Fourth, because this final product of the present appreciative inquiry initiative was an action plan for implementing SJDR in Gladstone's DRC, we recommend that future researchers follow-up with the DRCs over time (e.g., after six months, one year) to assess the extent to which the determined practices have been implemented. Fifth, because of the limited amount of time in this study (2 hours) and consequential impact on our ability to fully develop the SJDR framework within this DRC, future researchers should consider expanding the time allotted for the appreciative inquiry to allow for further engagement in Steps 3 through 5 (i.e., crafting additional provocative propositions and action items). Sixth, as developing relationships with institutional gatekeepers was an important component of obtaining leadership's dedication to disability inclusion, we encourage future researchers to explore how these relationships can be initiated, fostered, and sustained overtime.

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Table 1

The Appreciative Inquiry Process

Note: Table 1 is adapted from Strimel and Francis (2023).

Step	Purpose	Activities
Step 1: Definition	To set goals and objectives for the appreciative inquiry and prepare the organization for the upcoming initiative	• Selecting a topic of focus • Forming an internal advisory team to assist in developing and implementing the appreciative inquiry • Making the organization aware of the goals of the appreciative inquiry • Determining whom to involve in the inquiry • Introducing appreciative inquiry to the organization
Step 2: Discovery	To collectively uncover the organization's positive core (i.e., 'best') relative to a specific topic	• Providing an overview of the topic of focus • Conducting peer-to-peer appreciative interviews • Making meaning of appreciative interview findings (i.e., themes) • Drawing themes to visually map the organization's positive core
Step 3: Dream	To imagine the organization's ideal implementation of its positive core	• Reflecting on the positive core • Engaging in dream dialogue to imagine 'what could be' regarding the topic of focus • Creating an opportunity map from the dream dialogue • Identifying tangible opportunities for change within the organization
Step 4: Design	To develop descriptions of the organization's 'ideal'	• Identifying aspects of the organization to transform • Determining the elements needed to make successful transformations • Crafting 'provocative propositions' of how the organizational transformations will manifest in practice
Step 5: Destiny	To create an action plan for seeing the 'ideal' through in practice	• Reflecting on provocative propositions • Developing action items for implementing the provocative propositions • Seeing action plans through in practice

Table 2

Participant Information

Note: Table 2 is adapted from Strimel and Francis (2023)

Pseudonym	Role	Title	# Of Years in Role
Dominique	Internal Advisory Team	Associate Director	3
Lucky	Internal Advisory Team	Access Consultant	1
Ann	Internal DRC Participant	Director	6.5
Jessica	Internal DRC Participant	Associate Director	2
Robin	Internal DRC Participant	Access Consultant	5

Table 3

Data Collection Sources

Step	Sources	Description
Step 3: Dream	• Researcher notes and memos • Observer notes and memos • Appreciative inquiry materials • Audio recording	We recorded memos throughout all phases of this study (i.e., reactions, initial themes). Appreciative inquiry materials included Dream Poster. All steps of this study were audio recorded.
Step 4: Design	• Researcher notes and memos • Observer notes and memos • Appreciative inquiry products • Audio recording	We recorded memos throughout all phases of this study (i.e., reactions, initial themes). Appreciative inquiry materials included the 'provocative proposition' crafted as a group. All steps of this study were audio recorded.
Step 5: Destiny	• Researcher notes and memos • Observer notes and memos • Appreciative inquiry products Audio recording	We recorded memos throughout all phases of this study (i.e., reactions, initial themes). Appreciative inquiry materials included the action plans for implementing SJDR in the DRC. All steps of this study were audio recorded.

Table 4
Participant-Suggested DRC Roles and Descriptions

Role Focus	Description
Job/Career Coaching	Provide "job coaching for people with disabilities"
Access/Compliance	Manage all matters of compliance and accommodations
Outreach and Education	Provide university-wide educational opportunities (e.g., workshops on disability access and inclusion)
Disability Culture	Enhance and promote disability culture, foster connections with other identity groups
Supporting Faculty and Staff	Support faculty and staff in accommodation implementation and inclusive course design
Transition Support	Connect with local high schools to share information on access in higher education
Connecting with Families	Engage with families in "advance of coming" to college or university settings

Figure 1

The DRC's Dream Poster

Note: Some information is redacted to protect the identity of the DRC.

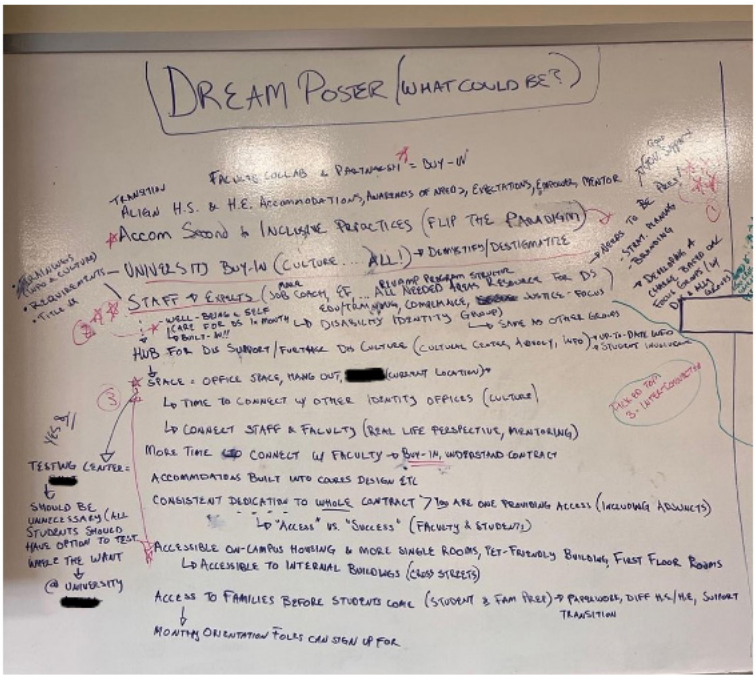

Figure 2

The Future of SJDR in the DRC

Note: Some information is redacted to protect the identity of the institution.

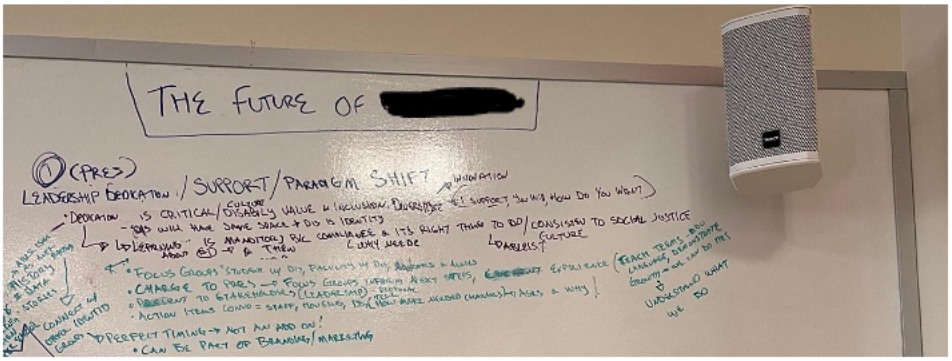

Figure 3

Conceptual Model of Implementing SJDR