

Dr. Niambi Carter: Um, so our primary goals were how do we talk about the graduate student experience is not, um, just one about sort of difference and sort of what's gone wrong, but what can we do, right? Because we didn't want this to be just about all the things that are wrong with graduate school, but how can we create a space where the door swings both ways. Right so, the gate isn't just closed, um, but it's one that opens. So we wanted to talk about a range of possibility, um, with this project and to that end...

Dr. Niambi Carter: There we go. Um, one of the things we had to happen was a really deep conversation about what we mean by diversity and whose graduate student experiences count, right, and what constitutes, um, part of the con... conversation. I think we're accustomed to talking about race, ethnicity, gender, but in this particular case we also want to include national identity, um, and immigration status, sexuality, gender identity, class and social status, which are also very much a part of this process. But we also wanted to include things around student evaluation, so how students are being discussed in departments or not, um, what kind of feedback students may be able to get um from their department, disciplinary representation, which has been talked about a lot, not just in terms of faculty members but in terms of what students get to read, what kind of materials students are exposed to. And then just larger notions of departmental inclusion. So there's what happens in the discipline and then there's what happens in your department and those can look very different, right?

Dr. Niambi Carter: Like let's talk about where Michigan was and how the Michigan model for bringing in students of color became really prominent. So there are several issues, if you will, that we kind of talk about because there's the stuff that happens on the front end and then there's the stuff that happens during and then there's the stuff that happens on the back end. Um, so one of the first things that often comes up are the many barriers to acceptance to graduate school. So the GRE is probably one of the most prominent, almost all graduate programs use them, um, or used them, uh, in the past tense. Some abandoned the GRE in the wake of, um, the pandemic and, uh, found that it didn't really do anything to affect quality. Some schools had already talked about getting rid of it beforehand because we know it doesn't really tell you anything about a student's likelihood of success. But the GRE for some, um, marginalized communities are not really helpful when, uh, people are going to school. The other is application fees, so if you want to go to school, most of the time you are paying application fees for multiple schools and they are not cheap. So if you think of 10 schools and you're paying 70, 60 dollars per, this can be very expensive and usually the fees are waived only if you are apart of something like a McNair program or something like that. So um, it can be really difficult for students who may be experiencing financial distress, um, to... to get, uh, into school.

Dr. Niambi Carter: The other is mentorship, so we talk a lot about mentorship that happens within the discipline as we are professionals, but it's also really important for undergraduate students. So when do students get their first contact with the discipline of political science? It's going to be as undergraduate students. And then who encourages students to go to graduate school. It's their undergraduate faculty. Um, and so students know if your faculty has been telling you to apply for things like Ralph Bunch Summer Institute or Shroff or some other enrichment exercise if no one's ever told you potentially

about going to graduate school, um, you may not know that that is an op... or that is an option available to you professionally. Right um, I know anecdotally that was me, right. If I was not a McNair student, I probably would not have gone to graduate school in political science. And it was actually [inaudible] at the University of Pennsylvania who told me about the Ralph Bunche Institute, not my home institution and it was too late to apply. So I didn't go to Bunche, um, but we'll come back to why it matters in a minute. We'll talk about why that matters in a minute.

Dr. Niambi Carter: Then there's the hidden curriculum stuff, right. Like things that people don't know about going to graduate school because they don't know anybody who's ever done it. Um, so they don't know about how to pull together maybe their research statement or their statement of interest and those kinds of things that are very much a part of, um, getting into a graduate program. They don't know that when they're writing letters to mention a faculty member and the work that they do, that kind of stuff is just left off the table. Um, campus visits. When we do get students into school, it can be very difficult particularly if a university has students front the cost for those visits. It assumes that people have access to money, to credit that they can float that kind of expense, um, that they can do that over multiple days, right. Like these kinds of things are and can be, um, a big issue. There are challenges to retention and graduation. Um, some peop... point out isolation, right, feeling like they're alone, um, perhaps not getting a lot of attention from faculty or having faculty mentors. We've been talking about this over over lunch.

Dr. Niambi Carter: Um, Carol talked about some of this a moment ago, the harassment in various forms that students may experience. It can be in the form of bullying, it could be you know about who or how they identify, those kinds of things. Um, the curriculum itself, right. People feeling like they're not interested, that it's dry, that it doesn't speak to them, um, that it is not for them, right. And so people, um, view the... the enterprise as not a one of interest and then their job market and beyond, uh, kinds of concerns. So if a student is successful and finishes, the job market presents its own kinds of challenges. One, there may be limited jobs and we know universities have been cutting back on tenure track positions, um, you've already talked about, uh, joint appointments as an avenue with its own set of issues, but there are also financial limitations to the job market. Again, having a graduate student or recent graduate fund their own visit to your university for a job interview on the promise that they're going to be reimbursed, without interest of course, that they have access to credit, that they're able to have clothing even for multiple days, right, or professional interviews.

Dr. Niambi Carter: Um, are our maybe perhaps hard, um, things to... or those are a lot of assumptions to make about people, I'll say that. And then the norms of participation in the discipline more generally, right, in terms of conferencing, being able to go, being able to afford, being able to, um, even know that like you have to register to get into the corral at APSA, right. Those kinds of things, uh, can present some issues. So let's talk about finances, right. Uh, this was one that I think of students... on students and recent graduates on my committee, but in the APSA report and we use the APSA graduate student climate survey, that's the proper name. Um, and just to a nod to the point that Sandy made earlier, this survey only had about 300 respondents across all the graduate programs. So it's a very low response

rate given the amount of people that we know are in graduate school. Um, there's only one person who identified as native or indigenous there were only about, uh, 30 or so students who identified as Hispanic, Latino, you'll see it in a moment, and only 11 who identified as Black or African-American.

Dr. Niambi Carter: So we didn't do anything fun or predictive with this, these are just, um, mostly crosshairs. Um, so both students said that they felt some level of financial security, which I think speaks to probably the funding, um, issue in some schools, um, and of course programs are... I think getting the message at least. We've seen two big strikes, right um, at Temple most recently, but also at UC, um, that funding is an issue. About 40 percent said they were very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with their institution's level of financial support and about the same amounts that they were unsatisfied. Um, 78 percent of graduate students had some sort of financial support to attend conferences, but only nine percent had their conference travel fully funded and I think that makes a difference, especially if students are selecting where they want to go. Um, female graduate students reported noticeably less financial security and greater dissatisfaction with institutional support than their male counterparts. We can't say why, um, necessarily, um, but we do know that there is a likelihood that people are receiving less support, maybe just about the institutional choices that they're making. Um, they are also carrying student loan debt, which is also going to be there.

Dr. Niambi Carter: And let me just say, I'm talking about these findings in the most general sense, not about any group in particular. Um, there was also greater financial insecurity among those students who identified as bisexual, gay, or lesbian than students... uh, or gay or lesbian than students who were identified as straight. Um, and I think this also dovetails with some of the findings we had about people's feelings of their own emotional, uh, needs in their programs and not being, um, adequately addressed and we can talk about that more. There you go. Um, I know this is... I'm sorry, this is really hard to see. I was trying to give you all the sense of what it looked like, um, and I do want to say we included, um, the Pacific Islander, Native American, um, students. As you can see, very very small numbers of those students who answered, um, and this is just on one question about, um, student loan debt and they're in the report at least five other tables that talk about where students are finding, uh, themselves financially. Um, and this question about finances is not just about kind of what students have to do to stay in school.

Dr. Niambi Carter: A lot of students do side work and if you know a lot of university contracts prohibit students from working outside of their contract with the institution as TA's and GA's or other things. so students could be putting themselves in financial jeopardy if, um, someone really wanted to enforce that and when we think about students who are immigrants, who have visas, this is even more dangerous for them and students who might be undocumented, this is another layer of potential danger. So it's not just a matter of people having money or not, it's a matter of people potentially having their visas revoked and other kinds of financial offering for folks. So there were also a number of questions around, um, diversity, equity, and inclusion, right. So in general, graduate students were critical of the discipline of political science, whether it came to religion, race, gender, etc. People did not feel that this discipline respected, um, those kinds of differences. More than 60 percent disagree with

the statement that the discipline is tolerant and respectful of differences in socioeconomic background, excuse me, in socioeconomic backgrounds, right. Which I think kind of tracks because we operate I think as a discipline as if everybody has access to the same resources financially, and you know that's not the case.

Dr. Niambi Carter: Um, on the brighter side, I guess you should say, people were more favorable about their department. And that kind of makes sense in some respects if you think about people choosing departments that make sense for them. So if you have an identity that is marginalized, you're probably not going to choose the institution that is most hostile, you probably didn't apply to an institution that would be in a place that was most hostile. You probably picked that institution because it looked more, um, open to a person like you. So at least people felt like, um, the departments that they were in were more tolerant than the discipline itself.

Dr. Niambi Carter: Oh good, thank you.

Dr. Niambi Carter: Um, so this is, um, about the political science, uh, profession and its level of tolerance and respect of people like me. I have issues with the question for sure, but um, as you can see these, uh, there's some big across group differences, right. Um, so if you look at Blacks, for example, even though there are 11 of them, none of them strongly agree with this thing. Right, the same is true for people who are identified as Middle Eastern and North African, same is true for the singular Native American person, um, the same is true for the Pacific Islanders. Um, on the other hand about, uh, 63 of whites were strongly agreed to agree on this question. Um, for people who identify as other strongly agree to agree, about 70 percent agree with that statement. But there were a lot of people who deferred, right, and said neutral. So I don't know what we do with that, I don't know if these people don't want to say one way or the other.

Dr. Niambi Carter: Um, and then when you look at, um, sexual orientation, people who were asexual, there's one... one person who identified that way, um, it's zero percent and for folks who identified as bisexual, about uh, 38 percentage, um, agreed to strongly agree, um, straight people. I think that makes sense in that the world is, um, straight oriented. Um, gay or lesbian people about, let's say 4.2, 45.8... it's like 50 percentage, about half said, um, they felt, um, that they... the... the profession was tolerant and respectful. And then when you look at gender, um, you see the the distinctions there. Women are a little less sanguine than men about the level of respect that they received in discipline. People who are identified as men say, um, overwhelmingly that they feel like the discipline is respectful and tolerant for them and this is table 18 by the way, um, in the... in the report.

Dr. Niambi Carter: So preparedness and support, now this is an area where I think at least we can say, um, the discipline and departments are doing pretty good. Overall, the appraisal by graduate students, um, was... was positive meaning that, um, most students said that they had two or more mentors, I

should say when you look by race however, that breaks down a bit. When you look at um Latino, uh, Latinx, Hispanic students, they report having fewer mentors. Um, now we didn't know whether these mentors were in their programs or in their school or in other departments across institutions. So we don't know who these mentors are, but people are saying that they have them. Also, most students are reporting that they understand the program requirements, which I think is probably an improvement over where most of us are. It means that you know what is required of you, what the bulletin says or whatever they call it, a handbook now, um, you know what the requirements are for testing and other things, which I think is a positive thing because the people know the rules, it probably helps them, uh, get to... get to the degree, uh, faster.

Dr. Niambi Carter: The academic market preparation, most of the students said that they had felt prepared, um, for the job market of course. The flip side of that is we do less well for students who don't want to pursue an academic career for whatever reason, right. Um, I don't know that any of us are probably trained for non-academic careers quite frankly and therefore, probably will have a very difficult time, um, training students for non-academic, uh, job preparation. But that's an area where, um, we should be thinking, especially given the climate of universities right now. One because our colleagues in places like Florida, Georgia, Texas are probably not going to find themselves working in institutions of higher education for numerous or sundry reasons, but also because institutions are scaling back. Conflict management, now this was another area where, um, students did express, um, some misgivings. There was little faith that the department could do a lot to handle student to student conflict and less faith that they could do anything where a student and a professor had a conflict.

Dr. Niambi Carter: And I think we can talk about why that is, right, especially if we're asked to be the arbiters for our friends and other kinds of things. Um, but in general, preparedness is one of the places where there was sort of broad agreement that departments were doing a pretty good job. Um, so these are just, um, the top line for all students regardless of race, gender, identity, sexuality, etc. uh, nationality, um, on do you understand what is required in your program, prepare as, uh, for academic careers and for non-academic careers. But just you can see those in that in the latter part. Uh, um. Sorry. So I just put this here because I'm thinking about this as I was putting this together and part of what the challenge is is how do we make this thing better? And the way we do it is by talking about the people who are the least well represented and I've made a mistake, I thought I had double checked it, but it's people, it's not "peopoe".

Dr. Niambi Carter: Okay, so how do we get to this better thing? I think one of the things that has been said over and over and over again, there's just a lot we don't know. There's a lot of data that is missing, so we definitely need better data efforts, not just in terms of the number of people that are represented. We certainly have to do a better job of that, um, but the kinds of things that we're asking about and the ways that we ask them. So improve data gathering and I think there are a number of possibilities, right. John's earlier point, like some of this data we can talk to our colleagues who are doing, uh, the work and talking to folks from underrepresented groups that we're trying to get access to like Indigenous, um, and Native individuals. Um, there's also the possibility of of thinking about

partnering with other institutions because, um, NCOBPS for example, or using some of our affiliate, um, groups right, like Committee on the Status of Asians in the Profession or other or Latinos in the Profession and using those to bring more awareness. And then sometimes we just have to go where people are, right. So we want to talk to say Black graduate students, Clark Atlanta and Howard University are the two HBCU's that grant PhDs. We have to go to them, especially since many of the faculty may have opted out of APSA membership or any relationship to any professional organization for that matter, right.

Dr. Niambi Carter: And so if that is the case, then we have to go to them and an email blast won't do it and certainly, uh, Kim and India can't do by themselves. So I think we have to encourage, um, our colleagues and graduate students to do that. The other is having better measures. So one of the things that came up in some of the questions, um, particularly the questions around, um... uh, sexuality, um, were... whether these questions were the right questions and whether the, um, the language was the right language, right? Um, so I just wanted to quote, uh, something that someone, uh, wrote. Um, one respondent from the survey highlighted the need to update the question around, uh, gender identity because the question says, "What is your gender identity? Man, male, woman, female, non-binary, transgender." And this person wrote, "These are not gender identifications. I would select female, but what is the point of a climate survey if it makes this type of mistake." So if we want to talk to this community of people, then we need to talk to this community of people about how we might best identify them for this purpose.

Dr. Niambi Carter: And then the same thing was said something, uh, something similar was said about the question about sexuality. Which it asks, "With which sexual orientation do you most closely identify? Heterosexual, straight, homosexual, gay or lesbian, bisexual, asexual, other. Explain." And the person wrote the term homosexual was used as a clinical term to suggest same-gender loving people were psychologically unwell. We suggest using terms that more accurately reflect the parlance of the time and there were a couple people who just wrote in "queer" right and didn't use any of those terms. So I think that might be something to think about in addition to disaggregating this gay or lesbian, homosexual... like those might be worth doing including pansexual and queer and other options. And some suggest even making it a sliding scale, right um, that that since these identities can, um, be fluid, right, and that maybe the way we ask it should reflect that in some fashion.

Dr. Niambi Carter: Exposure, so building more undergraduate experiences... I know Leslie you were talking about something they want to do, um, at Johns Hopkins or want to do, um, but there is only one Bus program, right, and Bus can't do it all. Um, so we could think about, uh, expanding Schropp. Um, there's also the, um, college style research lab at Jackson State University, DeAndre Ori runs that has been a great pipeline, um, for getting students from Jackson State to some really good, uh, graduate programs... Princess Williams, Jasmine, these people are out here in the world doing stuff. Um, in part for that, um, at Howard University there's the, um, Kenisha Grant runs the, um, free PhD summer enrichment program, which is not political science specific, but it does have political scientists in it and that program is the aim is just to introduce kids who might not have thought about graduate school or

thought about a PhD as an option, uh, to think about PhD as an option. There's also the UC region HBCU program that I can imagine could be scaled up or something smaller could be done. We were able to put one together for Howard and UCLA. Uh, there was one between Spellman, Morehouse, and UCSD. Um, uh so I think that could be a part of it, uh, as well and just better undergraduate mentoring more generally.

Dr. Niambi Carter: Um, I know some of us think of undergraduate mentoring as a pain, it's not something that people want to do, um, but it is nonetheless critical when we talk about marginalized students into getting into these spaces. Um, inclusion, so operative anti-discrimination policies, right, I think would be one way to go. And write it down, right, and let people know that it's a thing that lives and there are consequences if it's violated. That there's a way that students can complain if something happens and be protected. Um, chosen name policies would also go a long way to extending to, um, gender non-conforming individuals or trans people that, um, they're respected and their choices about who they are and how they are in the world are respected. Curriculum, right. So John's point about citations and what we consider to be the canon, even Cathy's earlier point about why we fetishize these three journals and why we say, these are the ones, right, are things we can do or things we can challenge in our classroom by what we decide to expose our students to and what they can read. We don't all have to read, you know, Robert Dahl. I know, shoot me, but like seriously.

Dr. Niambi Carter: Um, um self-study, right. Like so part of this is taking stock of what you do in the department. So there's what we do as a discipline, but there's what we do in departments and universities. So holistic DEI policies... so yeah, you can do hiring and retention, but it has to be more than that because for numerous and sundry reasons these people become settled down from the surface, may not actually be able to make it to tenure and all these other things. And all we're doing is sort of repeating the same cycle, um, of hiring and people leaving and all that other kind of stuff. Um, it needs to be more than a box that we check, like we went to some workshop and you get a little certificate at the end. Um, curricular audits, so what do our classes teach, right? Um, if we are all teaching the introduction to American politics survey class, what do our syllabi look like, right? I think those would be, um, helpful. Um, so things that we can launch, right. Star prac... stop practices that harm. Reimbursements should be stopped, full stop for graduate students. As a practice, I mean I know that there might be some issues around state institutions that might be a little bit more cumbersome, but having students shoulder the cost for things like campus visits, for things like job visits is an undue burden. Right, the assumption around people's credit, right, the assumption around people's ability to manage and hold on to those debts until those reimbursements can happen, um, is detrimental.

Dr. Niambi Carter: The nine month pay schedule for student stipends is ridiculous. It... and it is, you know, if students don't have a way to support themselves in the summer, this can present a lot of stress, right. Because right about now, there's some student somewhere trying to figure out how they're going to pay for summer. Luckily when I was in graduate school, I was a TA for the Bunche program so I was able to make it. But in that last month, I still had to take out a student loan. Lots of students are taking out loans. I know Duke moved to a 12-month process, which yes, I'm glad it did, but paying students on

a nine month pay schedule when they barely make 15 dollars an hour I think is what the average student stipend is. I know that there are some variations like UC just went up, um, Temple just went up, I think Duke went up and added more money for, um, child care, um uh, for students that need it, but most institutions don't offer child care, that's rare. Um, so the the the nine month pay schedule is a thing.

Dr. Niambi Carter: Um, the scholarly fees and the academic fees, so there's things that the university requires you to pay for like your health insurance and put some money towards that. Um, we would suggest that taking up a bigger portion of those premiums would be helpful for the insurance and then when we think about the end, right, not having academic regalia. I know that seems like a small thing, but that's a huge thing. I didn't buy my academic regalia until two years ago, three years ago. I couldn't afford it, it was too expensive. So those kinds of things, the cost of participating in this discipline are high and the assumption that everybody can make it on is I think outstripped. So, um, in summary, what we were trying to do here is talk about the ways that we can make this thing that we do called political science better, right. Um, it's not just about, you know, sort of tearing down, but how do we think about removing obstacles as a real part of what it is we do, right. We say we care about justice, then that means you have to start thinking about some of these things. And I know I talked a lot about finances and that's in part because this was a leisurely man occupation and that is not the world that we live in anymore. Increasingly, our students have children, right, increasingly people have, um, you know obligations. Uh, we're talking about a lot of people who may not have been the people who would have normally been trapped into this profession, but our profession has not kept pace with this diversity. So, um, with that I will stop.

Dr. Niambi Carter: Thank you and also, some of this didn't make it in, I was also [inaudible] as we were going.

Audience Member: I... I had a few questions. [inaudible] One is: any of the things that you notice here seem to me to have a indirect response ... but in terms of general mental health that's responsive... [inaudible]... how you you see... interacting [inaudible]

Dr. Niambi Carter: So, yes. In general, we didn't talk about it a lot here, but there were a lot of, uh, there were a few items about people's mental wellness. Um, and there were places and certain kinds of students who expressed more mental, um, issues particularly students who were, um, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender identified. Um, and those people along with their colleagues did not feel that their advisers, their departments were well equipped to help them manage those crises and while it's not here, one of the pieces we cite talks about how having a very functional relationship with an advisor can help students navigate those crises. Um, but I think one of the things that a university can do, um, I'm blanking on the author's name... it's in the... in the citations, talks about having a very prominent mental health presence on campus, like a counseling services. And if you can make that part of our orientation to the school, not just tell students all the things that we do great academically, but what is our wellness

services look like? And I would say, if we can even expand that, I think most of the time that's covered by student health fee. Um, but you know, making sure that students know that those things may be of no cost or very low cost to them could go a long way to helping students seek the help that they need sooner rather than later.

Dr. Niambi Carter: Because by the time most of us see our students who are experiencing some kind of mental health crisis, they are at a crisis. I mean, you know, this is again anecdotal, but I had a student come to me at the end of the semester like I'm about to check myself into inpatient, so what can I do? And we're still thinking about trying to finish like coursework and so had I known, hopefully, you know, sooner I would have been able to assist. I don't know what I could do beyond say go to counseling services, but hopefully... I'm glad she felt comfortable enough to come to me and say I am having a crisis, but the fact that we were at a crisis point, um, made me afraid. But there is evidence that having prominent mental health counseling on campus and making students aware of those resources goes a long way, also having functional relationships with advisors helps.

Dr. Niambi Carter: Um, the collective bargaining piece I think actually is important because at least, um, in two of the cases that I talked about, um, Temple most recently, you know Temple just ended their strikes, I think it started in January they just ended. Um, one of the things that they were able to do was raise their money to like 24 thousand dollars a year, still not a lot of money, but more than what they were getting. Same thing with the UC system, they were able to raise it to I think 36 and a half thousand dollars. The other thing the students at Temple were able to do was to get more parental leave, they only had five days parental leave. They got 21. Um, and then including, uh, healthcare premiums as opposed to making them pay for it, the university take care of it. Um, and I think, you know, I think collective bargaining can be really effective. I do think though, you know, those students probably did suffer a lot of emotional distress because one of the things that happened was essentially the university telling you you're on strike, so your tuition isn't paid, so you're not enrolled, so you're not a student. That is retaliatory and dangerous. Um, and I think it is incumbent upon us as faculty to support our students in those efforts, I mean we're paying them peanuts. I mean we've all been grad students, we know how little we got paid when we were in graduate school and some of us were parents in graduate school trying to to to do this.

Dr. Niambi Carter: I mean if you were lucky to have a partner or somebody who could help you shoulder financially, then that's one thing, but some people don't have that. So I don't know that it would make them worse off than they already are because I do think the the system, I'm assuming is supposed to be an apprenticeship, but it can be another form of abuse, right. Um, for our graduate students, the amount... the amount that they get paid are, um, really stressful and so you do have a number of students who do go for outside work. And I don't think we want that either, right um, but students are risking those kinds of of burdens just to make ends meet. So I don't know that collective bargaining would do worse than what they're experiencing on their own.

Audience Member: Uh, yes. So I'm back to this point, we also raised, um, our stipends... I think it's going to happen, uh, certainly in progressive locations, progressive states. We're New York state so we just went up to 26, done striking but this was in response to reading the tea leaves, right, seeing what's happening in California. What I'm not sure about is we're not a greatly endowed campus, so now I don't know what's going to happen, how many lines will we end up getting? We're a big science campus, so of course our science departments funds students on their grants. They look at us like well these departments are rather expensive, aren't they? You know, we have to pay for these graduate students they teach... I think they're tremendous... we actually make our graduate students teach a class towards the end for the value, but I think that the consequences are unclear. I'm still not sure what exactly is going to happen. I mean our budget doesn't seem to be expanding, but are constantly going up, um, and I can see a lot of pressure at state universities... We're losing lines. What we're getting are full-time instructors or, uh, contract instructors, um, we're not getting tenure track lines. And this I think is another trend that we're going to see, which is problematic for our graduate students as they go out. They're all seem to be vying now for one year teaching positions, you know, on contract. So I... I don't know, I mean higher education is not in its best location right now financially.

Dr. Niambi Carter: So this might be where it's important to think about non-academic careers.

Audience Member: Exactly!

Dr. Niambi Carter: Right, pivoting... because there are people who are... I mean like one of my former students found herself, you know, in private industry working in tech. I don't know that that was where she thought the PhD would take her, but it's more lucrative... I'm saying... But... but, you know, but there are people who are willing to pay for the expertise that our students do have, whether it be statistical or philosophical that are applicable to other areas. And I don't know... so... so I agree with you there are ways that this is putting other pressures on, but I think that they... we can be creative too and thinking about how we... think about the training that we give our students as being useful in multiple domains. Because a lot of us probably consult and do other things with our degrees that don't have anything to do with, you know, political science in the traditional academic sense, but can be of service, um, in other places. So I think maybe bolstering some of that and it might be, you know, I don't know that we take advantage of like employment services on campus the way we encourage our undergraduates to... right? Like there's usually an office of employment or something another. I don't know what it's called, office of employment, it sounds like social service agency, but you know what I mean. Like we don't encourage that or even how to make a CV adaptable to industries that are not, you know, academic. I think that's something we can think about, I mean here for example, I mean the federal government is huge. The federal government is huge and they are looking for people with skills. Um, I don't know that that's attractive to everybody, but I think being employed is attractive to lots of people. [laughter]

Audience Member: [inaudible]systemic, but also idiosyncratic. People can give their own individual accounts about how they survive. Yes. But one thing to me, my experience in this and then what I know from research, is decision making is a king element. Deciding to go to graduate school, which for first... first generation is a late decision, which puts you at a disadvantage in terms of choices and funding, etc. So essentially is one is how do, you know, how do you try to intervene earlier so that it doesn't put that disadvantage? The other issue I think is what I call best fit. Uh, of course Michigan is not necessarily the best of situations, but in the late 60's early 70's, Michigan took an aggressive action... position to recruit more students of color, predominantly African-American and Latino.

Audience Member: They went to schools, I don't know about [inaudible]... St. Mary's University in San Antonio produced a lot, their MA program. So it generated a lot of master's candidates who [inaudible] recruited them. I talked, I think, 780... every student of color who was at that program came and introduced themselves to me the first week I was there. [inaudible] ... the faculty, they don't understand me, don't appreciate me. And the big question that most people were asking was, well why did you come to Michigan? [inaudible] They had a great financial package, they had a good reputation. So the question is... is a better fit you know analogy you put on a very young person, how do you make that decision that institutions that maybe have certain attractiveness, but at the same time in terms of your interests and your potential for success and completion instantly diminished and so the best fit is... is this part. And given that since we're in the middle of March Madness, is there a... [inaudible]

Audience Member: [inaudible] ...what other places can I go to? I mean that's another... I mean... well at least Michigan that's the end of my academic progression. So is there... you know people do that. You know, go elsewhere, they drop out of whatever program they started with. And the other thing is the ingenuity of gratitude. [inaudible] ...I argue is basic survival. [inaudible] ...isolated, aggressively sought and developed their own communities outside of their department and other... the other graduate students, faculty and that's the way they survived. So survival can be a significant motivation in terms of both persistence and completion and I don't think we given students enough credit or enough [inaudible]. If I want to survive, I got to do something other than what my department is doing or the university is doing. And... and then the last thing about stress and going back to the Michigan model, one of the mental health stresses I see in Michigan does being a very good department, very productive department, a lot of graduates have gone on [inaudible]. The anxiety level among Michigan graduate students, they're not unique. It's... they're worried about publishing and producing work in their first year of graduate school. So the level of anxiety is... is incredible, I mean.

Audience Member: [inaudible] ...generational, junior faculty. Let's think about this in your third year. And so it's an high level of stress and everything is driven in that way so that... if that is the climate... So there's a number of things that that come into play that I think we need to sort of recognize and deal with it, but also I guess the bottom line is that students who do pursue graduate education can be very inventive, creative, survival in conjunctions not only with their own efforts, but with other... but with the institutional context.

Dr. Niambi Carter: So two things really quickly. I think you're absolutely right about best fit, but I think for some students particularly those who don't know a lot, it's like is this the best... the best school that I know and is the money right. And if you're thinking about an academic career and I don't know that... I mean I was and I wasn't. Um, you want to send the best signal you can, right? So if I got into, you know, Princeton, might not be the best fit, but I know if I have a Princeton degree, that says something. Right, and I think that's how some people select and they may find themselves in really difficult positions and I think you're right, looking outside of your department is a way... a strategy for survival, but it was something you said on the... on the tail end that I also, uh, made me think about, um, about how, um, the departments can be of help. Because at least for me, Duke wasn't my first choice, actually the University of Chicago was. I wanted to go to the University of Chicago or New York City. I wanted to go work with Michael Dawson and I went to go meet with him and he wasn't there and I was like, okay. And then I looked at the news, you know, in March and it was cold in Chicago I was like, oh, I don't want to do that. But what really tipped the scale was John Brim called me.

Dr. Niambi Carter: John Brim who'd been... who was with the University of Chicago. But he called me, he was the only director of graduate studies that called me. And he called me at my job because this was '99, we didn't have, you know, cell phones and it just... I was like, this is the place I should go. Right, because somebody called me.

Audience Member: [inaudible] real quick is that... [inaudible] That so and so is there. right? But that so and so may or may not be a good person. [inaudible] ...the opposite reputation, but you don't know that.

Dr. Niambi Carter: Exactly.

Dr. Niambi Carter: And... but this is also something we were talking about at lunch about like, there are people who have lineages of academic families. Right, right. And I didn't know that that was a thing until I got to graduate school and you don't know that. Right. You... this is stuff that you have no idea about and thankfully I say to [inaudible] the next year but like, there's just things that you don't know about things like fit and that's why that mentorship piece is really important at that early stage. Oh, gosh. It was something else you said at the end that made me... I wanted to address, um.

[inaudible]

Dr. Niambi Carter: Maybe we could combo them?

Audience Member: You... you said enough [inaudible]. Oh, okay.

[inaudible]

Dr. Niambi Carter: Oh yes, they definitely were mine.

Audience Member: Thank you. So, um, talking about the training of like [inaudible], I was wondering if you have any data on that. Right, because if we have let's say... [inaudible] ...very often we... I hear a lot about the skills that we have to provide [inaudible] ...out there and I... I don't know it, right? Other people want those type of skills, but you got... [inaudible] ...because we don't know [inaudible]. So it will be very useful to have some type of survey to really understand, you know, why because that capture the attention of an employer from the perspective of [inaudible] social scientists, political scientists. And the other point and this is an announcement more. Uh, one of the pipeline programs that is coming out is the [inaudible] and political economies pipeline program that is gonna start... [inaudible] for undergrad.

Audience Member: [inaudible] If you go to the website of the graduate school at Duke... there's a whole professional development... [inaudible] dean for professional development, there's a whole [inaudible] workshop... [inaudible] ...and turn it into a resume. I mean, Duke is on the forefront of that kind of thing. The stumbling block however, are faculty. The faculty want to train [inaudible] and they tend to be for students, right, who come to professional development, but don't tell my advisor [laughter] that I'm here because they'll stop working with me. You know, and that... so we have a lot of that, but it's us that have to change and realize [inaudible] ...students need to find their passion for what it is they want to do... [inaudible]. And we have to be supportive of that.

Dr. Niambi Carter: And I think you're right, and even the same thing when people were like, I want to be at a teaching institution, it's like, don't tell my advisor because they don't [inaudible] but R1 work. I know your last point, um, about, uh, the... the anxiety and the stress. Um, part of that is that the market is so competitive, right? I mean, like so do you have to have at least a publication before you go out? Um, I was even told by a very senior person who's very famous, like, I don't think I would get tenure now. Because... so... but we have to also think about that. Like that bar doesn't keep getting raised by itself, we're doing something to that, right? And so we want our students to be less stressed and less anxious, we might want to think about how we can find different ways of choo... of choosing and sorting, um, students that they don't look like little junior professors coming out of graduate school when they first start. Because I'm like, the bar doesn't get raised on its own and I know some of it is just we have fewer positions and so it's it's stricter and stricter. But, um, are we still selecting on the same things that keep people excluded? Are you R1? Are you... who is your advisor? Are we looking at, you know, are we looking at a person who looks like they have something interesting to say and they have a

trajectory that they're going on? And maybe they need mentorship and maybe they need tutelage because, as you say, all universities are not equally situated.

Dr. Niambi Carter: I was very fortunate, um, to go to a graduate program that was very well funded and I got into Michigan too and got very close. Um, um thankfully because Lester and Marietta were very nice to a... an undergraduate student. But, you know, for those places that don't have those kinds of signals to send about worthiness, um, because I think if you look at the top departments and you look at who's working there, they come out of the same places, their CV's are very similar. So maybe we need to do some self-reflection and think about when we're on these hiring committees what are the things we are looking for when we're looking at these newly admitted graduate students. And think about, um, whether we just want to reproduce what has already been done.

Audience Member: [inaudible] ...faculty, kind of, mentality... [inaudible] ...right? And then...essentially, that basically you start strategizing, uh, I'm not sure I'm going to invest my time [inaudible]. It develops a certain value. [inaudible] ...here's a pathway you take and we don't need to consider any other pathways, for the most part [inaudible].

Dr. Niambi Carter: No, it does not.

Audience Member: Thank you so much.

Dr. Niambi Carter: Thank you guys... you all.