

Appendix A. Supplemental analysis and report

The Libraries hired one of the two Duke graduate students who moderated the focus groups and Photovoice sessions to independently analyze findings and write a report, in order to provide us with the interpretation of someone who was both unaffiliated with the Libraries and a Black student at Duke themselves. See the Methodology section of the full report for more information.

Black Students at Duke

Qualitative Analysis of Focus Group Data

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I. Introduction

This report attempts to answer the eight research questions guiding this project using the data from the five focus groups with Black identifying undergraduate and graduate students at Duke. Undergraduate students had one regular focus group and one Photovoice focus group. Graduate students had one regular focus group and two Photovoice focus groups. I analyzed the five transcripts and the submitted photos and captions using NVivo 12 software. The analysis began with multiple thorough reads of each transcript. These initial read throughs helped me start to develop the codebook that I would depend on for the remainder of the process. A code is “a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data” (Saldaña 2013). I used an inductive thematic coding process in which I looked for explicit and implicit patterns of meaning in the data. This is an iterative process whereby codes are adapted and changed repeatedly as the analysis becomes more and more refined. Over time, codes are merged, split, added, and deleted until they best reflect the information that is contained in the transcripts. The final code book used in this analysis contains 58 individual codes (for codebook see Appendix I).

This report is split up into sections according to each of the eight research questions that were provided at the beginning of the project. In each section, I attempt to answer each question with a summary of what the student respondents said in each of the discussion and provide quotes and examples from the transcripts. The answers are based purely on the student responses. In the event that the student quotes refer to a specific photo from the Photovoice discussions, or I reference the caption that accompanied a photo, the photo will also be included for reference. At the end of the report, I offer a short discussion section that puts the findings from this analysis in conversation with existing literature on the experiences of Black students on college campuses in the United States.

II. Research Questions

1. To what extent are the Libraries viewed as an inclusive space by Black students?

“The library is the least of our problems, if I’m being honest. [Laughter]. Like, the least. The very bottom, in fact.” (Grad Student)

Black students view the Libraries as inclusive spaces in the sense that they meet their diverse learning needs as underrepresented students at a Predominantly White Institution (PWI). When asked whether they see the Libraries as inclusive spaces or whether they feel safe, welcome, and supported at the Libraries, both Undergraduate and Graduate students listed the great assortment of services and resources that the Libraries offer. These services include the variety of study spaces, technological support and resources, events and training opportunities, and academic support and resources. These services will be detailed further in Question 8. With regard to the Libraries as inclusive spaces for Black students, the respondents overwhelmingly report positive experiences with the Libraries overall. However, students also reported negative interactions or aspects of the Libraries that still make them feel unwelcome or like they do not belong in those spaces. These reports are concentrated in three primary areas: 1) negative interactions with staff and library services, 2) territoriality from other students in library study spaces, and 3) the composition of the physical space overall.

While they reported positive experiences on average with library staff and services, the students still reported some negative experiences. These experiences are not necessarily microaggressions, but rather moments when they felt that the Libraries weren’t serving them as well as they should have. For example, in a focus group discussion one undergraduate student reported asking a librarian at the service desk for help getting a book that was being held on reserve.

One time I asked the librarian to find me find a book, and I just really felt like they were talking down to me; I asked for help and she kind of hesitated, asked me what the book was called and started looking it up on the computer. Then while she’s doing that, she asks me ‘have you ever been on the website, do you know how to use this? Do you know how to find books?’ I said I’ve been on there, but I don’t know where the book would be, that’s why I’m asking you! She’s like ‘Ok, but if you learned how to use it then—’ and I’m like ‘What, girl just help me find this book!’ [chuckles] You know? I told her the book was on reserve so I personally cannot get the book, I need her to get the it. She said, ‘let me check,’ and she checks and says, ‘It is on reserve, let me go get it.’ She brought it back and just put it on the desk. It was such a weird experience. I don’t know.

In the undergraduate Photovoice discussion, another student submitted a photo of the service desk, accompanied by the following caption:

I have had negative experiences with specific circulation desk attendants who were extremely reluctant to assist me and instead, directed me to the Duke Library website.

Another said,

I've had mixed experiences. I really like the student circulation desk people cause they always greet me with a smile. But a question that could have been easily answered by a person – because I made the effort to walk up to the desk and engage you in a conversation, and to actively be like – yeah, I could give you the information, but I think you should just look it up on the website. It's disheartening. I don't know, it's not mean, true. I did get what I needed from the website, but you could have given me that exact same information and that's your job.

While the data does not provide the contexts behind these interactions, they highlight moments of interpersonal contact between staff members and Black students when the students have felt uncomfortable at the tone of the interaction (“talking down to me,” “reluctant to assist”).

However, there were also moments when students reported positive interactions with Library staff at the service desk, as reflected in the following quotes from different discussions.

I think the circulation desk and the actual librarians are excellent. There was a librarian who one time showed me all these tips and tricks and helped me research stuff and he was awesome and super helpful. (Graduate)

The staff is very nice and very welcoming. [unclear] and you need to go talk to them, they're always cracking jokes, or just always there to help me. That's what makes me feel like I belong. (Undergraduate)

The staff that work here are really friendly. There's that one security guard that always recognizes me and waves. (Undergraduate)

There are also moments when students report moments of exclusivity from other students. In particular, they report a kind of territoriality when established social groups on campus study together and take up large amounts of space in the Libraries. Greek organizations were frequently brought up. For example, in the undergraduate Photovoice group, two students had the following interaction:

Student 1: I'm also in Greek Life and I feel like the whole segregation per frat is a real thing. You go there to pick up your wristband [two others agree in the background] and it's like, a transactional space.

Student 2: Yeah, so frats will like – especially on 3rd floor Bostock – frats will reserve the room and give out wristbands for parties. [others agreeing in background] they'll have a sign on the door, “Please have Duke ID ready” or just something ridiculous [others laughing].

In this case, these students are discussing how fraternities appropriate the very library spaces that they find useful and supportive of their experiences. Additionally, these groups are using these spaces to bestow access to resources and spaces (in this case, access to parties) that are highly exclusive and closed to the majority of the campus, which further perpetuates exclusivity on campus.

In other instances, students reported that fraternities take up entire sections of the Libraries to study, creating unwelcoming spaces for other students who may not be in those groups. The following caption accompanied a picture of Perkins 1st Floor that was submitted to the undergraduate Photovoice discussion.

First floor can feel uncomfortable and is more of a social scene than a place to do work. A lot of the space on the first floor is dominated by Greek life, which makes students who are unaffiliated feel uncomfortable, or like it is a place where they aren't welcomed.
(*Multiple students submitted photos of Perkins 1st floor as “unwelcoming”)

An undergraduate described what it's like to walk into a study space and find a large group of students from Greek organizations.

I look and it's just a ring of Pi-Kappa-Alpha hats. And then you go to the Second floor and it's all boys in SNU. You go to third floor it's all the boys in D-Sig sitting in the wide-open space like, yelling even though it's supposed to be quiet. So, it's like all the little frats have their space. I was like what are they even wearing the hats for? Then you walk into LL2 and they all look up simultaneously and you're like, “Yeah, I'm not in Pi-Kap.” [all laughing].

The following interaction between several students in the undergraduate focus group also describes how they feel on the 1st floor of Perkins, a space where these groups tend to congregate.

Student 1: First floor Perkins – I wrote “period” because – but...there's so much going on on this floor. And I didn't even think about the Greek Life part of it, but I think that's also true. I'd rather be on any other floor.

Student 2: I'm in Greek Life and I feel ostracized by the first floor of Perkins. [another woman says, “yeah”] [They are looking at a photo of an area of the first floor now]

Student 3: Oh, is that – if you go back – they call it “Pi-Kap section” because all the boys in Pi-Kap all sit there all the time?

Student 4: Yeah. So, where I am right now [taking photo], the service desk is right behind me and the scanners are also right behind me. There are a bunch of study tables and chairs and it doesn't feel very comfortable.

The language the students use to describe these interactions (“ostracized,” “uncomfortable,” “not welcomed,” etc.) shows the extent to which the presence of these groups in library spaces that are supposed to be inclusive actually makes students feel excluded, or as if they cannot use those spaces due to their lack of membership in those groups.

Finally, students most frequently discuss issues with the layout and the physical space of the library itself as reasons why they do not feel welcome or supported in those spaces, or even as reasons why they do not utilize the Libraries as much as they should. A theme that came up frequently across all the discussions was the idea of there being “white spaces” at Duke. Elijah Anderson (2015) defines “white spaces” as social spaces that are overwhelmingly white, and which normalize the exclusion and absence of people of color. While there were once spaces that were physically and demographically all-white, Anderson uses the idea of white spaces as a perceptual framework for understanding spaces that favor white subjectivities and where people of color face symbolic exclusion. In the case of institutions of higher education, this often means that students of color, and Black students in particular, are exposed to curriculums, histories, and even traditions and campus cultures that are normatively white and exclusive of their presence there.

In the case of the Duke Libraries, the program-specific libraries on campus, and the campus as a whole, the students in the study reported often feeling, as one graduate student put it, “concentrated white domination.” The following quote from a medical student in a graduate student Photovoice discussion described the medical school library as such a space.

In the library at the [redacted Duke professional school], there's this room...a big study area. It has an old school vibe. They have a bunch of huge paintings of old white guys. No other parts of the library really have that many paintings. It means something, right? Cause there's no other part of that library where you'll see a big portrait painting of someone who isn't a white male. It's more white supremacy in itself. The absence of other people being represented in this school, says a lot.

Though this is a program-specific library, another graduate student who frequents the Duke Libraries made a similar comment about the Gothic Reading Room in response to the prior student. She reported feeling uncomfortable in that room, which featured walls lined with “dead white guys,” an epithet that is used frequently throughout the transcripts to describe the centering of white scholarship and a white history at Duke.

I took this photo [of the Gothic Reading Room]. But thinking about what you all just said about the photos [portraits], when we walked in, I literally looked at my friend and told her how uncomfortable I felt, that's why I'm in the corner. Because I felt so uncomfortable when I walked in. But other than that, I like that corner.

On the other hand, aside from the fact that these spaces are white spaces, they describe the Libraries as being generally unwelcoming to everyone due to the characteristics of the physical space. A graduate student in a Photovoice discussion reported the following:

I think Perkins is so uninviting that to me, making it welcome to African Americans in particular is a low priority. At a basic level, it's just not a comfortable, inviting space to me. I hate the lighting. Part of it is that there is very little natural light throughout the library but then I just don't like the colors that are chosen and the bulbs or whatever... it's depressing. It just seems very outdated.

Another student said,

This is not my preferred study space either. I'll study here if I really need to do something or if all my other spaces aren't available. I wish there was more variety of chairs and couches; I personally don't like sitting at desks; I sit crisscross applesauce in chairs; having a variety of seating would make it a little bit more exciting. I wish there were more natural light. [others: "oh my god, yes!"] At night especially I can tell it's too dim, even if the lightbulbs that are being used could be changed so it feels brighter. That could really help make it feel more alive. [others, "yes, yes!"]

An undergraduate student in the focus group discussion echoed this point.

It feels like a prison. I feel so confined going to the library, it's such a "finals" atmosphere. I've got to write this final paper, I'm going to put myself in these terrible conditions to get this thing done.

Multiple students across the five discussions offered comparisons to other places on campus that they find more welcoming to study in, such as the wellness center, the Bryan center, and their various program-specific libraries. They are also careful to differentiate what seems to be the main spaces of the Libraries (i.e., the stacks) and more modern-feeling and -looking spaces like the Link and the Edge, which receive more positive reviews. Though Question 7 has a more thorough discussion of how these spaces are helpful to the students, the following quotes illustrate the comparisons between these spaces. The aforementioned undergraduate who described the library as being like a prison, said the following about the Edge:

... and I really do like Bostock [she's talking about the Edge, specifically], because it really is more open. You get more light in Bostock. I really like those curved chair booth things. And they have study rooms in there. And I don't know why there's a kitchen in there, but – it looks like a kitchen, there's no stove but there's a sink and stuff. It's weird. But I like it. I like the vibe.

Other students noted that, among other things, the Libraries are "dark," "musty," "plain," "dim," and "haphazard." Additionally, the carpets and furniture were described as "hideous" and "dirty." While these

are primarily aesthetic considerations, they are things that make both undergraduate and graduate students not excited about using the Libraries as places to study and spend their time. The students do offer a variety of suggestions for making the Libraries more exciting and engaging, and they are discussed in Question 4.

In summary, the extent to which the Libraries are viewed as inclusive spaces by Black students varies across multiple dimensions. Overall, students report positive experiences with the Libraries, though these experiences are underscored by occasional negative experiences with staff and other students as well as the general unwelcoming feel of the principal library spaces. Additionally, Undergraduate students are more likely to report using the Libraries than Graduate students, who report primarily using their program-specific libraries to do their work. As a result, most of the negative experiences that are reported come from undergraduate students. When asked directly whether they found the Libraries unwelcoming or not inclusive, the students pointed out that they tend to have mixed experiences in the Libraries, and that there are things about the Libraries themselves that could be unwelcoming to all students in general, and not just Black students.

2.To what extent is the University viewed as an inclusive space by Black students?

In contrast to the Libraries, which are primarily seen as welcoming, inclusive spaces, the University as a whole is not seen as an inclusive space by Black students. While there are specific spaces and services on campus that are seen as welcoming and inclusive, the students in this study overwhelmingly identified a variety of things that make Duke a less inclusive space for them specifically.

A significant topic that came up repeatedly was the relationship between Black students and Duke athletics. While athletic teams were identified as a unifying force on campus, the majority of respondents found that the culture around the teams and the overwhelming number of Black students who are here as athletes creates an environment where they feel more exposed to stereotyping, in the sense that people believe they only got admitted to Duke because they are athletes, or disregard, because they aren't athletes at all. An undergraduate in the Photovoice discussion said the following about Cameron Indoor Stadium and being around the sports culture:

And I think Cameron is – I was going to take a picture of it. Cameron has a lot of weird dynamics. Sports have weird dynamics. White fans, Black players.... White fans yelling and making fun of the other team and its Black players. That's something that make me uncomfortable about basketball.

That student later went on to describe in more detail what happened in the stadium during a game that they attended:

I remember at one game people were yelling 'Kevin Hart'.... I was like "do you think that's funny? Just because he's short and Black, you're yelling Kevin Hart?" I feel like Cameron is

an environment with a mob mentality. Most students there are white and they aren't going to be like "should we NOT be calling this short Black person Kevin Hart?" because there's not enough Black students there to be like "everyone stop!" [laughter]. Because of that it can get out of hand. It's why I personally don't like the student section and don't go to men's basketball.

Another student in the undergraduate Photovoice discussion went on to discuss the assumptions that are imposed on Black students due to Duke's athletic culture.

I feel like there is a microaggression that because I am black, I should enjoy or be a fan of duke basketball.

She had submitted the picture of Cameron Indoor Stadium that was being discussed.

I took this picture. I like basketball but I don't like the pressure to like it so much. I feel like I have to be this mega-fan. Sports are so intertwined with our identity. And if I tell people I go to Duke they're like "oh, so are you an athlete?"— there's an assumption that I couldn't get in here on my academic merit, rather than being an athlete (which has its own set of problems – the assumption that if you're an athlete you can't be smart too).

It was not only the undergraduates who felt that Duke only centers Black students when it comes to athletics. Students made several comments during the graduate student focus group about how Duke does not equally privilege different kinds of Black students. One said:

I think Duke makes it accommodating for Black students but only a specific kind of Black student: Black athletes from America, or very rich African kids. I'm African American but not an athlete or rich. I'm academically curious, and I just feel like I'm alone. I don't see enough students in my program who are just Black kids who are not super rich trying to save Africa or just trying to catch a football. In that way, I kind of don't feel welcome.

Another graduate student in this discussion made a similar statement:

I'm always interested when I walk on campus, I ask myself who are the Black students that I see? The ones I see are athletes or occasionally international students. I know from friends that there are very few Black undergrads at Duke. So, I was pleased to see the number of Black grad students at Duke isn't that small. ... I go to Admissions and I ask "what are you doing to bring students of color in? Are you supporting them in a way that recognizes their experiences?"

These associations between Blackness and athletics, and the stereotype that Black students at Duke must only be there because they were recruited to be on a sports team create negative interactions and experiences for Black students. These interactions are just a part of the microaggressions that students report experiencing at Duke, and they will be discussed further in the next section.

Academics are also a space where the Black students in the study do not see themselves represented or valued. Just as the portraits and art in the Libraries are seen as centering and valuing whiteness, so too do the academic spaces on campus. Specifically, the subject matter that is taught in class values and normalizes white thinkers and ideas as the norm and as the kind of knowledge that is valued at Duke. A graduate student in a Photovoice discussion submitted a photo of documents studied in a seminar.

All of the scholarship studied in this seminar comes from dead white men. I feel unwelcome on campus when there is a lack of diversity in the scholarship presented in seminars.

The student comments that followed the presentation of this picture brought up once more the trope of the “dead white guy” and the fact that there is a lack of diversity in scholarship. Another graduate student said in response:

All of the people you study are dead white men. And if you never did any outside scholarship yourself, you might be convinced that those are the only people who have ever done [redacted] science in the world. All of the discoveries, everything. Occasionally these days professors will say “[redacted names of white scientists in this person’s field] didn’t really discover this and they were like, jerks,” but that’s recent and one instance. It’s very tough. And then there’s a double whammy, it’s not just [that they are] dead white men, but: how many of these people would see me as subhuman because I’m both a Black person and a woman? Not just their personal opinion, they would have concrete scholarship and scientific reasoning why they would say so. Even today, it’s not considered PC but every couple years there’s some paper that makes the rounds that says “hm, but maybe Black people, maybe women ARE inferior for xyz reasons.” It’s the same kind of thing but just coded in a different language. Different reasons. It’s annoying. Well, more than annoying. It’s oppressive.

Another student responded:

I agree. I just graduated [from undergrad]. My senior year I mostly did independent studies about [redacted topics about Black experiences]. There’s only one class that I could take this semester that would allow me to expand on anything Black. Like, *anything!* In all my classes it’s just old white men. And it’s really hard for me to deal with and take in, especially because a lot of the work I did right before I got here was strictly on Black [people]. And now everything I’m learning is white men, white men, white men, except one class that is one time a week for two hours.

Finally, the student who submitted the picture of the documents studied in the seminar also said the following:

A lot of this comes down to barriers of access that people encounter before you would even get to the point of considering a PhD... like in [my field]. There are tons of Black [people in this field] but if I’m a little Black girl and I want to learn about [this field], and I

learn about white [people in the field], it seems like this is not a field for me. So, you weed them out before they even got to the undergrad stage. So, then you're trying to improve diversity at the PhD level, and you weeded them out five years ago.

This quote in particular touches on the issue of diversity in scholarship and why that is important at the graduate level. The graduate and Professional programs are meant to prepare the next generations of scholars, and this population of students is increasingly diverse, bringing a wide variety of experiences and perspectives to their fields and programs. The issue seems to be that this variety often clashes with the established norms of each field at the expense of underrepresented points of view. As this student identifies, this indoctrination begins at the undergraduate level and effectively weeds out underrepresented students before they even get to graduate school. If they are weeded out before they even get to graduate school, then attempts to diversify graduate and professional programs are potentially futile.

The undergraduate students also shared their concerns about the lack of diversity in scholarship and the lenient course requirements at Duke. They reported concern that the established curriculum does not ensure that all graduating students will be exposed to diverse points of view and the experiences of different groups through courses in area studies, on underrepresented groups, or things like gender and sexuality studies. An undergraduate student said the following in the focus group discussion:

I think one of Duke's – or like, at these PWIs – one of the biggest forms of violence is the fact that they make math, natural science, etc. mandatory, but don't make it mandatory to take a class about people of color. Like an AAAS class, a class to teach you about history; or a GSF class to teach you about sexuality and gender; it just shows you what these schools prioritize. Black history is American history, it's very important and people are so uneducated. Math? You don't need. Basic math, yes, but QS, I don't need that for where I'm trying to go, I'm trying to be a lawyer, but yet I'm forced to take a QS. But you're not forced to learn about human beings. Us.

This student went on to say:

Our CZs [related to the required Duke Areas of Knowledge undergraduate courses] and the way we can satisfy requirements, they can bypass cultural classes. Students don't take it upon themselves to get educated about the Other. The only time my classes are predominantly Black is if it is an AAAS class. But I walk into my AAAS classes and I see people who already know what's going on. *You* don't need this class. *I* don't need this class. It's preaching to the choir [other student, "it is."] Getting more stories, things that you already know. Because people who do need this class, they aren't going to take it. They don't care.

This sentiment was shared by other students in that particular discussion, showing that undergraduates also feel that their classmates and peers have little to no exposure to diversity in scholarship. They don't

believe the core competencies that Duke students are expected to have are sufficient for educating their peers when their peers can so easily opt out or find ways to not take those classes.

Everything from the art and architecture to the course materials centers white history and white people. As a result, Duke's campus culture, coupled with the low number of Black students in both graduate and undergraduate programs and a lack of representation among faculty, is conducive to feelings of isolation in Black students and feelings of having to prove that they belong.

Photo is on the 3rd floor of the library in between bookshelves. Sometimes I do feel I have to justify my presence in the library. I may have the urge to talk to the attendant to explain why I'm here, or I must have a book and bag pack to implicitly let people know I'm a student.

The following quote in response to the above picture and caption from a graduate student in a Photovoice discussion best exemplifies this dilemma. Here, the student explains the need to constantly prove that they belong, not just academically or intellectually, but physically on campus:

I like the "feel the urge..." to talk to the attendant to explain why I'm here [referring to the picture and caption above]. Yeah. [nodding by others]. That has been inside [of me] and I haven't known how to articulate that. Every time I walk around campus, I'm like, "I need to have my book bag on so people know I'm a student, so people don't think I'm an employee." I don't know why that's in my brain... But always to me, it's a focus: I have to look like I'm a student. It's like I have to prove something to somebody: I'm here for the same reason that you are.

In summary, there are parts of Duke that Black students find welcoming and inclusive, but as a whole, Duke is not seen as an incredibly inclusive campus. While the students reported feeling welcome and supported in inclusive spaces like the Mary Lou Williams Center, which will be discussed further, these spaces are not representative of the feel of campus as a whole.

3. To what extent do students experience microaggressions or bias because of their race in the Libraries, on campus, in Durham, or in North Carolina?

Almost all of the students reported experiencing some kind of bias or microaggression on campus or in Durham or hearing about the experiences of other students who have faced bias and microaggressions. As previously mentioned in the previous section, some of the microaggressions revolve around others' disbelief that they attend Duke or involve pervasive stereotypes about Black students and athletics on campus. Though the students reported a few negative experiences, none reported experiencing bias or microaggressions because of their race in the Libraries, instead indicating a pervasive issue on the broader campus and in the Durham community.

Both graduate and undergraduate students reported experiencing bias and microaggressions, though in different parts of campus. For example, many undergraduates reported experiencing microaggressions in

their living spaces when they were forced to live with white roommates. One female undergraduate shared the following experience in the focus group discussion:

Yes, I have experienced microaggressions. Some examples would be: “what sports do you play?” “I like *you people*.” When I moved into my dorm last year my roommate’s parents said: “Oh, I’m so glad *you people* are nice. I was afraid of who I was going to leave my [child] with.” ...Once [they] had [their] friends over and I had my friends over...then they were leaving and one of [their] friends said, “Oh, I like *these people!*” It just felt like we were being used as entertainment. That’s where it came from, it wasn’t that they liked *me*. Why do they have to say, “these people”? What about “you”? They are in the room but are talking about us, not to us.

An undergraduate student in the Photovoice discussion shared an experience they had with an academic advisor:

One microaggression I had is with my academic advisors, they can or cannot be helpful. My experience with my Academic Advisor was not the best. I came in not knowing what I wanted to study. I took one Black studies class – it was just Black popular culture. And then [they] tried to convince to major in AAAS. Which is OK, but just the way [they] said it.... I just didn’t like [them] trying to push me. I had taken *one* AAAS and *six* Global Health classes! It just made me angry [Notetaker asks if advisor was Black; they were not. Other students tell her she can change advisors.] Even this year I tried to set up a meeting with [them] and [they] couldn’t, [they] asked if we could have a phone call.

Another undergraduate student reported the following interaction that she experienced when she was with a group of Black students at the Bryan Center:

Huge one: there is a big party...thrown on Duke’s campus by Black Greeks...A whole bunch of us, the Black students, we were walking in the Bryan Center [on our way to the party at the CMA]. Then a group of three White boys walked up to us and one said to me, “I have a question, do you guys even go here?” [audible gasp from another student]. Yeah, I know! I was like “yes, do *you* go here?” he just turned around and left with his friends and ignored me. He’s shocked so many Black people attend this school. It was a large group of us.

As these comments show, microaggressions are pervasive and happen in living spaces, academic spaces, and social spaces. Graduate students also shared experiences of both blatantly explicit and more implicit micro-aggressions that they’ve experienced at Duke. In a graduate Photovoice discussion, a graduate student shared the following experience:

... I think the one time I kind of felt unsupported, it was from a colleague. I just brushed it aside. We were talking about what we wanted to do in the future. I said, I want to go on and get an advanced degree and have my own [business] one day. And [they] looked at

me and said, “maybe you’ll work for me.” [other students react with sounds of disapproval, “what?” “wow”] ...Why would you think I would want to work for you? I’m paying this much because I want to on my own, by myself... I felt so hot. Why would I want to work for you?! Did [they] see me as a little less, in [their] mind?

Another graduate student reported the following experience that happened to someone in his friend group:

A friend was walking from East to West campus. He was on the sidewalk. These guys in a truck were driving by, waving the confederate flag at him as he was walking to class. That’s intimidation: you’re not supposed to be here.

This student also shared their own experiences.

...Our professor (who is a Black woman) told us her stories of similar things happening. And then I started to think about all the times that kind of thing has happened to me and I haven’t really recognized it. Then I started paying attention to when that happens to me, like on campus, people walking past and not saying excuse me, bumping you, on the bus having to fight your way to a seat because nobody wants to acknowledge that you’re there. I was sitting on the steps eating lunch and a group of older men walked over me, literally stepped over my lunch, instead of walking around me. That kind of invisibility: you’re constantly reminded of it.

While these are more blatant examples, it is important to note that several students spoke to the subtlety of the microaggressions they experience. A graduate student said:

There are subtle reminders everywhere you go. It’s not intentional, but it’s all the time [nodding from everyone]. Or that maybe you got here because you’re Black and they are trying to meet a quota.

Another graduate student spoke on this subtlety as well.

In any white liberal space, I think of microaggressions. It’s never blatant; there’s never a confederate flag you can capture in a picture [laughter]. It’s a mood; it’s an atmosphere. It’s not things you can get a picture of or have proof of, per se. There just like these little micro things that are done in the moment that can make people feel unsafe.

In addition to the bias and microaggressions experienced in various spaces on campus, students also reported experiencing bias and microaggressions in Durham from community members who assumed without asking that they go to NCCU, the local HBCU. They reported that people often act surprised when they learn that they actually go to Duke. An undergraduate recounted the following interaction:

Microaggressions are part of my daily life. Unfortunately. In Duke or in Durham. Last night my Uber driver was like, “So [name], you trying to be funny with that name, what’s

that about?" [everyone laughs]. And I was like "oh no, it's my name." And he was like, "So, where are you from then?" and then I was like, [redacted name of US state]. And he was like, "No, where are you *from*?" And I was like, you've gone too far. Just, too far.

A graduate student in a Photovoice group submitted a picture with a highway sign designating the exit that leads to Duke's campus. The caption summarizes an interaction that the student has frequently with people in Durham.

"Are you in school around here?"

"Yes, I am"

"Ok, are you attending Central?"

"No, I go to Duke."

in a surprising tone "Oh! Ok"

This caption reflects a common experience that the respondents shared. Students across the discussion groups separately shared the following experiences about being Black in Durham.

I was at the Red Lobster and somebody asked me that. I just got here, and I didn't know what "Central" was so I didn't know what they meant. So, I looked it up and was like "oh, OK." But it was weird because I'm five minutes from Duke, why wouldn't they assume Duke? Then I put two and two together. (Graduate)

When I'm traveling out and then back to the Durham area there's such a difference between here and where home is for me. When I'm coming back, I'll have an uber driver and they'll always ask me "where are you headed back to?" I'll try not to say Duke – 'cause I feel like they don't believe me. I'll just say, "oh I'm going back to school." And they list every other place but Duke and I'm like "OK..." (Undergraduate)

I really just don't hang out with white people at all. Like, *at all*. I just don't put myself in positions to experience microaggressions. The most recent thing I can remember is that my friend and I went to dinner in Durham. Our waitress was a white woman and she asked, "oh, do you go to Central?" I get that a lot actually. Usually from white people, occasionally from Black people too. Not that there's a problem with Central, but they act so surprised when I tell them that I go to Duke. (Undergraduate)

As is evident in these comments, Black Duke students will go so far as to hide the fact that they attend Duke to circumvent the discomfort that comes from people acting surprised or doubting that they could have gotten in based on their own merit. When it comes to sharing these experiences or reporting microaggressions, students overwhelmingly shared that they have to deal with these incidents on their

own. When dealing with the “microaggression of the week” (as it was called by one Undergraduate student), the students overwhelmingly shared the following sentiments:

Everyone: No. who would we report to? What are they gonna do? They’ll be like “free speech brah!” or make an excuse, “he didn’t mean it like that,” but how do you know how he meant it? You his friend?

In summary, the Black students in this study reported a multitude of experiences with bias and microaggressions at Duke and in Durham. These experiences were implicit and explicit and were focused on the fact that these students don’t belong at a place like Duke. The students do not feel that reporting such incidents will have any kind of effective outcome.

4. What changes can the Libraries make to ensure Black students feel supported and included? How can the Libraries improve spaces, services, and programs to ensure Black students feel supported and included?

The students offered numerous suggestions for the Libraries to consider. These suggestions primarily concern the accessibility and navigability of the Libraries, the availability of technological and academic support, and the overall lack of multicultural representation in the Libraries. Regarding the space itself, students recommended putting up more signs that clearly communicate where books are located in the Libraries. One of the biggest issues that students reported having with the Libraries is not knowing their way around and not knowing where to find materials. A graduate student in a Photovoice discussion said:

[I] Haven’t been in the Libraries that much. There’s a lot more people here than I’m used to seeing at a Library. When I come here, I find myself getting lost because it seems like just a lot of books everywhere that I don’t know how to navigate. The knowledge of what library services there are could be more clearly communicated. I don’t know what the library has for me that I couldn’t just find to do by myself.

An undergraduate student said:

On the ground floor – we were talking about books – they should have a section that tells you where each genre of books is in the building. Fiction on the first floor, science fiction on the second floor, non-fiction on the fifth floor

[Another student] Yeah! Cause I just see rows of books and I don't know what to do. I wonder – do people actually check out those books? Do they? I've never seen anybody check out those books.

This applies to both the spaces inside and outside the Libraries. Graduate students made the following observations about the lack of signs at the Libraries and on campus overall.

Especially for the people who don't spend much time on campus, having some distinguishing features to the library would help some. A sign? [laughter].

Another agreed,

Almost none of the buildings have signs! Preferably not one small one engraved into the stone. I know because I've been here before but if you just moved here, there's no hope of finding the libraries.

One of the graduate students noted that this lack of signs can feel like a barrier to belonging on campus. They said the following:

Something that adds to that is the architecture of campus. Think about the reputation you have in your mind, this good old boy culture, and then you step onto west campus and there's no signs to get anywhere [laughter and agreement from others]. There's a sense of a barrier to entry: you aren't a member of this place. At first glance it can put you in a mindset of "I'm going to have this very particular type of experience," whether that's accurate or not.

The issue of signage related to not only knowing where things are physically located in the Libraries, but also to the services and resources available. In fact, in response to the Photovoice prompt "What makes you feel supported, safe, or like you belong in the Libraries?" an undergraduate student submitted a photo of the multicolored signs located in the Perkins-Bostock elevators that show the volume expectations of each floor.

Students in the discussion responded well to this picture and even made suggestions for other graphics the Libraries could have and where they could be placed. One student suggested:

Some kind of infographic or other accessible way for people to know what is available to them; a way for people to feel that the services are meant for them rather than for someone else, or they don't know about them period.

Another student in this discussion suggested putting information about textbook borrowing in the most high-traffic areas of the Libraries.

That ePrinting space – it's inevitable that most students will go there. So maybe have some type of advertising there. Like the Top Textbooks thing, that would be amazing.

Most people will only find out about it if they are looking online or if a professor says something. I actually found out through my professor. It was on the syllabus. You can scan this from the library [inaudible].

Another student suggested,

Flyers that say different services that the Libraries offers. Maybe even have them at the front desk. "Here's what we have at Perkins, or the Link."

An undergraduate student mentioned an event put on by the Libraries to help students learn about the Libraries and the resources that are available.

I like the beginning of the year scavenger hunt. It would be nice if it was on West Campus too. Because that actually helped me learn a lot about the library system last year. I already knew about the textbooks stuff, right away. But this is a much bigger library, and it would be helpful here too.

Such events throughout the year could potentially be both fun and helpful for helping both undergraduate and graduate students become more familiarized with the Libraries and the services they offer.

Students also overwhelmingly expressed a desire for vibrancy, greenery, light, and color in the Libraries, often comparing various spaces and floors to the Link, which is revered in the discussions, and other places on campus. Additionally, students suggested better and more organized seating options for studying and working in the Libraries. In the following passage, an undergraduate student in the focus group discussion lists what they love about the Rubenstein Library, which is where they do most of their studying.

I don't really do much of my studying in the library. I don't know, I guess I don't really like the space. Not because it's threatening or unwelcoming! [everyone chuckles], but when I do, I go to the third floor of Rubenstein library. They have green chairs, it's a great scenic view of the Chapel, the side of West Union and nature – it feels very rejuvenating to me even when I'm stressed out.

Here we see an important distinction between graduate and undergraduate students. Whereas undergraduate students use the Libraries more, often because it's one of the principal places on campus to study, graduate students are turned off by the Libraries and tend to study at home or within their program's library. One graduate student reported that the space seems more conducive to undergraduate students, especially the ways seating is organized:

The silent places are limited [agreement from one other student]. I don't like a lot of the seating arrangements; they seem kind of haphazard. It's more conducive to undergrads, I guess. Basically, I go home whenever possible to get work done because I have seating, natural light, and it's silent.

A graduate student described what they like about [one of the professional school libraries], which is where they do their studying.

I'm in the libraries all the time at [redacted]. It's surrounded by floor to ceiling windows, it's a great space. There's a forest view, and recliner chairs right next to these nice windows. It's hard for me to sit still in one location for a while, like to switch up spaces. But I can sit in that environment for a while: open floor plan, the way it's designed everything is kind of low so I can see everything in the library, which is helpful.

Another graduate student indicated a desire for greenery and green spaces inside the Libraries, indicating that they would rather look at fake trees than to keep having to look at blank walls.

Greenery in the study areas. Even if it's fake greenery. On the walls when there's those vines falling over the baskets. Fake trees between study tables. Something to look at while you're studying that's not just a blank wall.

The Link was repeatedly brought up as an ideal space in the Libraries.

Yeah, it's just *real* plain in here. Except when you get to the Link! The Link is real nice and bright, but every other floor is not. I don't know that this is necessary supposed to be like a "fun" library place all the time.

An undergraduate student submitted a photo of the study space on the fourth floor bridge that connects Perkins and Bostock.

The 4th Floor Bridge between Perkins and Bostock is a helpful space for independent study because it has comfortable chairs, natural light, and does not encounter as much foot traffic as other spots in the library.

Having the option of private spaces and more public spaces where students can study alone or in groups, as well as designated quiet zones in the Libraries, makes students feel like the Library is a space where they can go to study regardless of their individual needs. That being said, there are also mixed feelings about the use and configuration of the study spaces. For example, students pointed out that when a study room is not reserved, sometimes a single person will go in there and use it to study, taking up a large room for themselves. Students suggested a system where it can be clear that non-reserved study rooms can be open to more than one person at a time.

But in the library for some of the study rooms, sometimes there will be just one person in this giant room, and I want to study and it's not like I'm going to talk to them or anything but I just feel like, I don't want to go in there [laughter, all agree] ... Even West Union, like those big tabletop cafes, one person just sits there and [you don't want to join/ask to join] [all agreeing and talking over one another]

Moderator: Would it be helpful if there was guidance in the study room? A sign that says it's for multiple people?

That would be really helpful. Everyone knows that it doesn't belong to one person. But if there was a physical sign that said 'everyone can use a study rooms' [all agree].

It's kind of like the reservation system, where people intimidate you out of a room because of a reservation. It's like an authenticating body saying "no I'm also allowed in this space" ... "Study rooms are open to everyone. We discourage one person using it..."

Other students point to the fact that many of the study rooms are indeed meant for multiple people, and perhaps this issue would be mitigated if there were more spaces for individual studying. This was especially expressed by the undergraduate students in the focus group. Two students in this discussion said the following about liking the Link but wanting smaller spaces too.

Yeah, the Link is very nice. I just wish there were more smaller group study spaces. [It] feels like I'm taking up so much space when it's just two people in a room for ten, [we] waste space. But I don't want to sit in the hallway.

[It] would be cool to have individual study rooms too. If you're out and people are talking, and you want quiet. But I don't know where to go. A huge group study room, what if somebody needs it?

In essence, they feel like they take up space when they want to study on their own because the study rooms are large and meant for big groups, but they are really the only private, quiet spaces available.

In sum, the students value a variety of study spaces, but feel that the aesthetic of the Libraries make them feel less welcoming and less like spaces where they can study and be productive. They value spaces on campus where there is natural light, bright colors, and vibrancy. These features help mitigate stress and make spaces more welcoming and open to students.

In addition to improving the aesthetic and navigability of the Libraries and making the services and resources more visible, the students in the study suggested more clarity regarding the technological resources that the Libraries offer and provided suggestions about what else could be offered for students. Students really like and find the Link's technological offerings, ePrinting, the loaning of devices and chargers, self-checkout, and the library website most useful to them. However, they suggested making laptops available for checkout, the updating of the desktop computers in the Libraries, and the expansion of technological offerings to include things like calculators, which are not available. The undergraduate focus group had the following exchange, when one student was describing the struggles they faced when their laptop computer broke.

S1: Can you check out laptops here?

S2: No. Not unless you got it through Duke.

S1: Wow! Why?

S2: Something I think is very – 'cause like, mine broke last year and I asked if I could get another one, and they said 'did you get it through Duke?' I said 'no,' they said 'oh, well, no.'

S1: They don't have any type of loaner laptops?

S2: No loaners. They couldn't give me anything. I had – I had nothing. ... Yeah. Sorry I couldn't pay out the \$2,000 when y'all had your little Apple deal.

S1 – Yeah, they charge you more here! [laughter]

S2: And it's more expensive because you're on Duke's insurance or whatever. That's not inclusive at all. I don't have a car on campus, I don't have any referrals for where to fix this, I'm just trying to look up computer repair places, I can't wait until I get home in March because I gotta be down here every single day trying to do my work on this computer! It is not the reality of a college.

This exchange highlights several issues with the Libraries and with Duke as a whole. The first is that the realities of college require students to have a personal laptop computer. When those computers break, Duke will not fix them or provide tech support unless they were purchased through Duke, which is not possible for some students due to the prohibitive pricing. Because they can't get their computers fixed on campus and they can't get into Durham or to a store for repairs, they find themselves borrowing laptops from friends in order to be able to do their work. Neither the Libraries nor the University loan out laptops, which can be a barrier for many students who already lack the financial means to have one or fix one. As the students point out, their middle and high schools loaned out laptops, so it's odd that Duke or the Libraries have no such program.

Lastly, the students reported the lack of visible representation in the Libraries' collections and offered suggestions for making the Libraries a more welcoming space in this regard. A graduate student submitted a photo of the shelves in the third-floor stacks with the following caption.

Picture of the 3rd floor library bookcases. Walking around literature dedicated to Western European thought can be alienating. Sometimes an emphasis on monumental contributions from other places of the world (i.e. Africa) would come off as more inspiring.

To combat what they called the "centering of Western European thought," several students suggested centering the works of Black authors, either through a dedicated and visible section, or through special

events and partnerships with groups on campus. In the following quote, a student describes how a friend struggled to find *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, a classic piece of critical Black thought that would presumably be housed in a Black studies section in the Libraries.

My friend was trying to read Malcolm X's autobiography and she couldn't find it anywhere [in Duke University Libraries]. She had to go to the Div school library. That's one of the most iconic Black texts and it wasn't to be found anywhere. So maybe more attention to Black authors. Maybe they could just have a space in the library dedicated to Black culture – in my high school – our library had a book called the Woolworth room. It was named after the bench in Greensboro. All these books about African American authors were there.

Another interesting suggestion that was made was a special collaboration with Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) so that students at Duke can access their materials and collections, and vice versa, through a kind of interlibrary loan program. The ILL program that is already in place makes the students feel academically supported because they can get any book or paper they need from any institution, but such a partnership would allow Duke students access to Black scholarship at other institutions and at Duke, which breaks the norm of white, European thought. This extends to local resources that are available in Durham as well, as it has a rich Black history that could be tied more into campus history and academics. A graduate student in a Photovoice discussion brought up the potential connections to Durham.

Black original content told by Black authors. We're in Durham so you got Black Wall Street right here, Hayti right here. It's highly disappointing from the business school standpoint that none of my classmates know much about – they don't even know Black Wall Street, probably never uttered that term. ...you have Black Wall Street right here...But it should be a no brainer to have some of that content illuminated. It's a reflection of the Durham community!

Another student said the following about a potential institutional collaboration:

Something I think could be interesting in terms of widening the resources of research/scholarship by Black people would be – you know how they have the program where you borrow books from Chapel Hill & Central & Ivies – I would like to see more HBCUs included outside of Central included in that. Like Howard, I'm sure has phenomenal resources at their library. It would be nice to have access to that.

Beyond collaboration with external sources, the students also pointed to the potential for collaboration between the Libraries and other entities on campus, like the Black student groups on campus to put on events that cater to the interests and needs of Black students. A graduate student suggested the Libraries start with organizations like the Black Students Association and the Black graduate and Professional Students Association.

If the library – and they may do this – Collaborated with Black student organizations – undergrad and grad groups – to hold specific events on topics that may be relevant to us. What are we struggling with and maybe need more support from the libraries with, maybe having sessions on that, just opportunities to connect more?

Notetaker: What groups should they start with?

BGPSA, BSA, I don't know. Just kind of reaching out to see if there's more opportunities to collaborate or what opportunities there are to work together.

Another graduate student brought up the potential for a collaboration with the AAAS department to develop a curriculum concerning the history of Black students at Duke, much like the recent exhibit at the Libraries, but more permanent and always available to students, and which highlights both the good and bad about Black history at Duke.

[I'm] Surprised that there's not a library or something, for me that implies there's not even a Black studies curriculum in the undergrad program. That would be my first question, is that even –? After that, is the literature available for that, whether it is just generally about the diaspora but also, Duke-specific. Is there a history? Research and data on the experiences of African Americans, prominent figures who have gone through and contributed to Duke? How it was built is interesting. Does the Libraries take steps to understand the history and academia for that? Those would be questions I would look at. Because space-wise, on a practical level there's only so much you can do. But you can enrich the academia of it. ... so ideally librarians can guide a conversation on the resources and information and education we want to impart out. That's in the collection of resources and research, journals, that we are subscribed to, that we allow students to access... Do you foster that for students to be able to learn, provide the ground for them to leverage that kind of education? Or is it non-existent? If it's non-existent then you can't support students or educate them on the history [of African Americans] whether they are African American or at Duke and the history and context of African Americans here as well.

Collaborating with Black student organizations and spaces like the Mary Lou Williams Center or Center for Multicultural Affairs for programming or events could be a good way for the Libraries to make Black students feel more welcome and included.

Lastly, many students vocalized the need for a specific Black studies section in the Libraries. A graduate student mentioned in a focus group discussion that the Libraries should:

Create a space for Black studies. Meaning, create a space where this is information on Black studies – literature, journals, things of that nature. A space where it actually showcases Black studies or Black history. And maybe I'm just being spoiled because at

[prior university] I had a very close relationship with the Black Studies librarian – they helped me with my research – they were always putting stuff out in the open space for the 50th anniversary of the Panthers and MLK day, anniversaries of the Black studies department. There was always some sort of collaboration that I don't see here, and I don't think I'm going to see here. I'll just have to get used to that. I don't think they'll actually set up a separate space.

Many pointed to places like NC State and UNC – Chapel Hill have Black studies or African American libraries.

I'm new here so I'm not sure. UNC has an African American library. Where do I find African American authors or books here? Is it just in with everything else, or is it in a specific place? I feel like all cultures should be represented in a major library space like this.

Even beyond the need for a Black studies section, a graduate student reported that there should also be a general focus on other cultures from around the world.

If there could be a rotating yearly focus on cultures from different international students. I know that sometimes Rubenstein's entrance area [exhibit area] switches up and has different things but [not other areas of Perkins & Bostock Library].

Another mentioned,

It would be nice even if there weren't dedicated space for other cultures if there were maybe a Cultural display somewhere to the front that can be rotated? African American books, literature, and art, maybe Asian. That would be really nice and refreshing. [It] Would break up the feeling.

In summary, the students suggested that the physical spaces of the Libraries be improved to be more welcoming to students and more conducive to both studying and relaxation; that the technological offerings of the Libraries expand to include laptops and calculators; and that the Libraries increase the visibility of Black scholarship and explore connections with other institutions, as well as within Duke and with the broader Durham community.

5. What changes can the University make to ensure Black students feel supported and included? How can the University improve spaces, services, and programs to ensure Black students feel supported and included?

Thinking about Duke's History reminds me that the school was not intended for students like me.

A graduate student submitted the above caption to their Photovoice discussion with a picture of the Duke Chapel. The caption and photo were in response to the prompt “What makes you feel unsafe or unwelcome on campus?”

The question of what the University can do to ensure that Black students feel supported and included is a difficult question to answer because on the one hand, as the above quote signals, PWIs like Duke were not originally intended for Black students. It can be very difficult for students and universities to contend with this fact and get past this because no matter how much time has gone by and how many Black students are admitted, Duke and other institutions like it are white spaces, and this history continues to permeate and shape the culture of the campus. On the other hand, there are smaller scale changes that can be made to continue to support Black students and move toward a direction of true inclusivity. These smaller changes are both physical, material changes and cultural changes as well. The following suggestions are based purely on the student’s responses provided in this study.

First, given the overwhelming amount of positive comments for the Mary Lou Williams Center, the AAAS department, and programs like Black Convocation, it would be imperative for Duke to continue to support and expand these spaces and provide for the intellectual and social growth of these Black students. However, it is not enough to have these spaces available. Many of the students reported feeling welcome in places like the Mary Lou Williams Center, but not on the campus as a whole. Such spaces are a double-edged sword because on the one hand, they are there and they are usually created with Black students’ best intentions in mind. However, these spaces often exist hidden away somewhere on their campuses and feel separate from the rest of the buildings or spaces. Institutions of higher education in general need to work not just to have an African American Center or Multicultural Center, but to also have those spaces be an integral part of campus culture and life. As one student wrote in a photo caption, they go to the Mary Lou to “escape the white gaze” of the broader campus. Ideally, these spaces should not be seen as spaces to escape the campus experience, but rather as spaces that add to their campus experience.

Second, the students in the study reported feeling welcome and supported when there are events that bring Black speakers and faculty to campus. Increasing the visibility of Black art and scholarship makes Black students feel like Duke values the contributions of Black artists and thinkers. Such events would not only be good for Black students at Duke, but also potentially for the community as a whole. One student submitted a photo of a flier for an event by a Black speaker on the history of Black women’s voices in music. The following caption accompanied that photo:

This photo is a picture of an event flyer for a guest lecture on campus. The guest lecture will feature scholarship by a Black scholar about Black women’s voices. As a Black woman, this makes me feel supported on campus.

The student feels supported because there’s an event on campus that elevates, centers, and values voices like hers. Another student posted a sign from the “When they Hear Us” event that was hosted in the Fall of 2019 and featured members of the Exonerated Five. This photo was submitted in response to the prompt “What campus services, spaces, and programs do you use and find helpful?” and the following caption accompanied it.

Programs for students that focus on current events with learning lessons for all communities are needed.

As this student indicates, these events are good for the Duke community as a whole because they bring a variety of perspectives to campus. While these events are available, some students felt that they could be more visible, better advertised, and communicated better to the student body. One graduate student noted that they only got emails about such events because they went and signed up for emails from specific groups and organizations. This speaks to the question of what is being done to get information about these events and groups out to the broader campus as a whole.

Other than the GroupMe, the other Black things I've heard about have been very, like, first week orientation... we sign up, and then I occasionally get emails from them ... so the things I find out about are just because I went and signed up with those groups the very first days I was here. I'm happy for those things but ... it might be nice if there were... I hesitate to say but maybe an email like, "these are some events that might be of interest to Black students/students of color" ... I get emails about "these are all the seminars that might be even tangentially related to something you're interested in..."

The elevation of Black scholarship extends beyond the guest lectures and applies to the classroom as well. As previously mentioned, more efforts should be made to create a general curriculum that exposes everyone to a diversity of thought and scholarship. A graduate student made the following comment during a discussion.

I really like the first picture talking about diversity in scholarship presentation. That's a big deal in an academic setting...There's need to have diversity of scholarship, achievement, presentation. That can kind of trickle down... imagine if I were in that department. That could make me begin to think, "so does that mean that anything I do in this department as a student may not be seen as of value?" Because if they cannot see value in works of other Black people or people of other diverse cultures, are they going to value me as a student, place value on my work?

This quote ends with a powerful question. How can white and non-Black students more generally be expected to value the thoughts and contributions of their Black classmates when they aren't even taught and expected to value the thoughts and contributions of Black thinkers and scholars?

It is important for the University to consider what it can do to improve itself, its services, and its programs to support Black students without putting the burden on the students to be the ones educating their peers. One undergraduate student made the following observation about her campus living situation, indicating that she feels like she is forced to educate or entertain her roommates, which is something she doesn't want to do and should not be forced to do.

I also think with this whole random roommate situation they've implemented [A interjects "it's so awful!"], it's not good. Sure I get that you're trying to educate White people about minorities, but you're putting the burden on all people of color and I don't think they took into account how it was going to affect the Other in that situation. Really only thinking "this is great, they'll finally see their way of life and they'll learn stuff from them!" But I have nothing to learn from them. At the end of the day it's me having to be a forced teacher or I'm entertainment, or I'm just this bundle of surprise "learn from me!". But it doesn't take into account my feelings.

Third, and perhaps most generally, an effort needs to be made to recognize the diversity that exists within the Black community at Duke. As previously mentioned, there seems to be a pervasive association between Black students on campus and athletic programs. This leads to negative interactions where students are confronted with the idea that they only got into Duke because of sports when many of them don't even do sports. Ultimately, this is bad for both athletes and non-athletes because the idea behind this stereotype or microaggression is that they weren't good enough to get into Duke on their merits alone. This also means recognizing that within the Black community there are students who are Black but do not necessarily identify as African American. As an international undergraduate student pointed out,

I am Black and also [redacted, name of a country]-American. I have cultural aspects to my life. I came here thinking, "I don't have the right to be a spokesperson." Just because I don't have the same background as you, doesn't mean I'm not Black. [others agree].

In summary, Duke should continue to support existing spaces and programs on campus that support Black students but also think about ways to further integrate these spaces into the overall campus culture; continue to bring and support Black speakers and artists coming to campus to share their work; and recognize and celebrate the diversity that exists within the Black community.

6. What campus and community services, spaces, and programs do Black students use and find helpful?

Students mentioned several services, spaces, and programs that they use and find helpful at Duke, including the Wellness Center, Student Health and CAPS, the West Campus OASIS, the Women's Center, and the Writing Center.

Students report overwhelmingly positive experiences with the Wellness Center. Two different graduate students submitted a photo of the schedule of events at the Wellness Center with the following captions:

I love Duke Wellness Center, and I love that these programs exist, and I especially love that they are free! My favorite so far is the guided meditation, but I haven't tried them all yet. I plan to for sure. Also, love the zero gravity massage chairs in the Wellness Center!

Prioritized wellness is important to me and it is nice to see the amount of resources available but unfortunately class schedules make it difficult to take advantage of these resources.

An undergraduate student also brought up the Wellness Center in their focus group discussion.

The Wellness Center. It's not only that the services they offer there have been very helpful to me. I also find the environment to be very comfortable to sit in for solitary studying, or relaxing. Putting a piano in there was a really good decision. You can always play music. It's very relaxing to go in there. Any time during the week, it's very calming. And the open windows with natural light.

Another undergraduate student said,

I am a student health champion and advocate!!! I love student health. I was on my deathbed [once at Duke]. Slept 16 hours one day. When student health gave me a prescription I bounced back. Love that they have the pharmacy on campus. My doctor from home sent my prescriptions to the pharmacy at Duke. They also have Free STD testing, you can just walk in and do that. I highly recommend.

An upperclassman praised how much Student Health has changed since their first year at Duke.

I compare student health to what it was my freshman year. It was in the basement of the hospital. The services were terrible, and I compare it to what it is now. Wow, it's so much better.

Other students report having negative experiences in the Wellness Center and mention things that should be changed or fixed.

I hate student health. They never give me anything worthwhile, they just give me prescriptions. But if it gets too bad, which it usually does, I have to go. And since I have the student health plan, I don't have any other insurance – and they don't do the best.

Two undergraduate students had the following exchange about how Student Health can sometimes be unavailable to students. They also had privacy concerns related to the openness of the space.

S1: When this photo came up, I wrote down "student health hates students." [on their scratch paper]. So hard to schedule. The fact that they take an hour lunch break is ridiculous, that the whole thing closes down in the middle of the day. They need to stagger their lunches or something. Waiting room needs to be revamped. If everyone's sick and you just put everyone in a hotbed of yuck, nastiness. And it's very personal, you're saying what's wrong with you right in front of the line of people.

S2: And they will sometimes say it [back] really loud... your symptoms in front of everyone [everyone laughs and agrees]. "OH, YOU THINK YOU HAVE GONORREA?!" [laughter].

Another student made a similar reflection about CAPS, and the fact that the layout of the space is not conducive to student privacy.

It's important to talk things out and get your thoughts together. Some of its set up is kind of weird. I study upstairs a lot. But when you're coming in and coming out you can see everyone. The way it's set up is very open, which is not necessarily the best way for that [service].

The wellness-related services, spaces, and programs and the MLWC and multicultural spaces are the campus and community services, spaces, and programs that the students identified as being those which they use the most and find the most helpful.

7. What library services, spaces, instruction sessions or programs do Black students use and find helpful?

The library services, spaces, instruction sessions or programs that Black students use and find helpful include study rooms, the Link and the Edge, Inter-Library Loan, printing and scanning, technology loans, and textbook loans. Students also mentioned appreciation for data visualization workshops and when puppies are brought to the Libraries for stress-relief. These services and programs were mentioned throughout all of the transcripts, and the students identified them as being integral to their academic experiences at Duke. Many of these services and spaces have already been discussed to varying degrees in this report, though this section will highlight some that have not been discussed in full. For example, the students in the study raved about the textbook loaning program. The following quote from an undergraduate student in a focus group highlights the struggles around textbook purchases.

Textbooks should be the least of our worries when it comes to learning. Having to think "should I take this class because the textbook costs this much?"; That's a conversation for faculty to have and to understand what they are asking of their students. If it's a 100-person class, you want each of us to pay \$80 for this textbook, or each pay \$150 for this tuition code or that code... it's like, why? Why? That's a lot of money and I don't see the purpose of it. When they say, "you need this textbook, it's required, there's no way around it" you can't do anything about it but try to come up with the money.

Another undergraduate student reported that since recently finding out about the textbook program, they've been using the library more than they have since their first year. They've used the textbook loans for three of their classes this semester, which has helped save a lot of money.

Right before this semester began I found out about – I don't know if it's a new program but this thing that Duke has, the 100 most popular classes, in which they have the actual textbooks for those classes. The amount of money I saved this semester by just using that for 3 of my classes was super helpful. I just thought that was amazing. This is probably the most I've used the library since freshman year second semester.

Because textbooks are so expensive students are reluctant to buy them, especially considering that a lot can happen at the beginning of a semester, such as needing to drop a class. This next student, also an undergraduate, reports:

I think rental textbooks are really nice. First semester my parents were like “oh you’ve got to get ready for college, you’ve got to buy all your books for your registered classes!” knowing that if I change a class I don’t need to buy this book the first week and resell it for only 30%. If you’re paying for your own books, that’s not feasible. It’s very helpful, another stress coming into your freshman year of college. Thinking “oh no I have to buy this \$200 math book online. No, you can rent it from the library until you know whether you’re even supposed to be in that math class”. I know a lot of the classes you look at the book and it has a ... code. And once you use the code you can’t [return it]. what if I don’t end up taking this class? Knowing that I can get through the first part of the semester without having to worry about textbooks is big.

This student also reported being happy that they could get chargers and textbooks from the Libraries but found it odd that they could only get textbooks for three hours when you can get a phone or computer charger for four.

Moderator: Have any of you used the 3-hour textbook checkouts? How does that work?

Yes, I wish it were at least four [hours]. You can get a charger for four hours, but you can’t get a book for four, which to me is just backwards. It’s worked pretty well. It’s just that I don’t live on West, so I wish I didn’t have to return it on West. It’s worked pretty well though. Three hours is kind of short for me.

Another student shed light on how they came to learn about the textbook loan service. It seems from this comment and others that faculty play a large role in how students come to learn about the services, resources, and programming offered by the Libraries.

I appreciate that we have a lot more access to a lot more journals and articles than I did at my undergrad institution. It’s kind of crazy, I appreciate that. I’ve saved at least \$200 - \$300 on textbooks from having access online.

Moderator: How did you find out about the textbooks?

One of my professors last year had one of his books on reserve in the library. And it happened to be online. So, I decided to just start looking for all my books online at the library before I buy them.

This comment is reflective of a recurring theme in the transcripts and in these reports, which is that a lot of students don't know the full scope of the services that the Libraries offer until they are forced to go looking for them through a class or project. Other students reported not knowing that the Link had a computer lab or knowing that they also loaned out cameras until they were forced to use these services for a class. This perhaps supports the suggestion that the Libraries need to be more proactive in advertising their services and programs.

Among other services that the students reported as being helpful were the Libraries website, the Writing Center, and access to program-specific librarians. An undergraduate reported that the Writing Center has been very helpful to them so far.

I like the Writing Studio. I like the one-on-one help they offer. I'm not the strongest writer. It's good to have someone help me. It was really really helpful to me last year.

Another undergraduate student echoed these sentiments:

Used the writing center a lot during Writing 101 last year. And that's when someone from the library came in and talked about how to find things online, searching, how to make it more concise and effective. For the Writing Center I went to both the east and west locations; and it was really helpful to read work out loud and get someone else's opinions on it

Classroom visits by librarians is something that was mentioned several times, as well as the access students have to field-specific librarians. Regarding the field-specific librarians, one undergraduate Photovoice participant said:

I also appreciate the visits from a librarian to the classroom. I procrastinate a lot. I probably wouldn't go out of my way to go find a librarian. So, it's nice when Librarians come to the class and introduce themselves and give you their contact information, cause then it's just more likely I'll email them and ask them the questions.

Some students also commended the "Chat with a Librarian" feature of the Libraries website, which puts them in touch with resources even when they can't physically be in one of the Libraries.

I really also like the online chat with a Librarian. Sometimes I'll forget I had a reading and I don't want to go all the way to the library if it's not there – they'll even send me the link sometimes. I really appreciate that.

Notetaker: What else do you use chat for?

Just finding out about different resources, or if I have a question about my account, or trying to get a book that isn't at Duke, that's been super helpful as well.

In summary, students in this study use and find textbook loans, access to librarians, technological loans, and the multitude of study spaces helpful. Specifically, they seem to react positively to services and programs that ease the burdens they may face because of their financial situation or other such barriers. For example, one student said the following about economic barriers and what the Libraries can do to help:

I think the main thing – and it’s not the library’s fault, it’s just Duke and money; it’s classist. And every class, you need money to take this class. You need money once you’re in the class. You need to pay the \$80,000 to go here. Everything is just expensive. And so, if the library can help with textbooks and maybe longer reserves. If the library can loan out laptops and headphones and all that stuff, that would all be greatly appreciated. But the library in general I don’t feel like anyone is excluded to come in here, it feels open.

This student speaks to the fact that there is income disparity at Duke overall, so many of the hardship they face aren’t specifically due to anything that happens at the Libraries or because of the Libraries, though the Libraries can play a large role in helping to mitigate a lot of the barriers that they face.

8. What campus and library services, spaces, and programs help Black students feel welcome or supported?

The Mary Lou Williams Center for Black Culture was mentioned repeatedly as a space that the students find welcoming and supportive of their experiences as Black students at Duke. Additionally, campus events that bring in Black faculty or focus on Black culture make them feel like Black voices are being elevated at Duke. In the Photovoice discussions, students shared photos of the Mary Lou Williams Center, of event fliers and posters, and of Black Convocation programming. Faculty and staff were also mentioned frequently. Because the students have widely varying backgrounds, some found Black representation among faculty lacking, while others were surprised by how many Black faculty members there are at Duke.

The students identified the Mary Lou Williams Center (MLWC) as the campus space that is most conducive to their experiences as Black students at Duke. Students in Photovoice discussions submitted six different pictures of the MLWC and it was the most mentioned individual space on campus. Some of captions accompanying the pictures of the MLWC stated:

Having spaces such as the Mary Lou Williams Center for Black culture makes me feel more included on campus. This is because it highlights and celebrates what it means to be Black in the United States, which is usually not as prolific at Predominantly White Universities (PWI). (Graduate)

Many spaces for me are campus and off campus help me feel supported. The Mary Lou Williams Center is a space on campus that supports my culture. As a building that

encourages Black community, I go here to study and escape white gaze at times.
(Graduate)

Downstairs Mary Lou Center meeting space. I love EVERYTHING about the Mary Lou. No other space at Duke makes me feel more supported as a Black student. It's a wonderful space. From the library, to the study area, to this downstairs space with a kitchen and table... I was floored that this entire, beautiful, well-appointed space had been created for students like me. The Mary Lou means so much to me. (Graduate)

The MLWC gives Black students a space where they can go to be themselves and “escape the white gaze,” as one student put it. Even the students who don’t use the space frequently feel comforted knowing that it’s there and knowing that it’s a space that they can use at any time.

A new graduate student mentioned that even though they had only been at Duke for a month at the time of the study, the MLWC had played a large role in helping them feel welcome at Duke.

The Mary Lou Williams Center is very, very helpful in allowing me to feel welcome as a Black student. I Haven’t had any particular problems with faculty or even with other students, which is pretty remarkable given the size of some of the classes. Overall, I’ve only been here for a month, but in the month I have been here, I have felt comfortable being a Black student here.

A graduate student said the following about the MLWC.

I gush about the Mary Lou. I have been to other schools... it’ll usually be a room within the whole building. Amazing that’s it’s a multi-floor space for Black students. Didn’t expect it at a school like Duke. Would only expect it at a HBCU or a school with a really liberal reputation like Berkeley or something. There’s a library, a piano, a full kitchen. Great events, great catering. I love the space and when I walk into it, I feel like the institution is investing in making Black students feel comfortable. Dedicated staff – when I walk in the space, I know that the institution is investing in Black students.

Similarly, the Center for Multicultural Affairs (CMA) received positive reviews from students. An Undergraduate in a Photovoice discussion said,

I really appreciate the CMA. You can always go sit there, do homework. If I need help, I don’t want to go talk to someone – they do a really good job of just being there for you.

As this student indicates, the CMA and the MLWC, as well as their staff, are there for students in a way that other spaces aren’t on campus. These are places where the students can go to study, to find community, and to find support, which is not something that they feel they get universally on campus. Having these spaces makes them feel like Duke is investing in them and their well-being. Additionally, any services or programs available through Duke or the Libraries that helps Black students overcome the barriers they face at a place like Duke are seen as helpful and useful

to them. For example, the Libraries' textbook loans, access to technology, having dedicated librarians, and providing academic support through workshops and the Writing Center are all initiatives that the students in this study report using, and which they report as being helpful to their experiences as Black students at Duke.

III. Discussion

This report has attempted to use the data from the five focus group discussions with undergraduate and graduate students to answer the research questions posed at the beginning of the study. The data shows that overwhelmingly, the students find the Libraries to be helpful and supportive of their experiences as Black students at Duke. With a few exceptions, students identified a multitude of resources, services, spaces, and programs at the Libraries that have made their experiences better. For each resource, service, space, or program that was discussed in the data, I attempted to provide an account that reflects both the positive and the negative that the students presented, including their suggestions for improvement. While the Libraries were seen as largely supportive and welcoming, the campus overall was not seen as completely welcoming or inclusive of Black students and their experiences. Despite having a dedicated space for Black culture on campus, in addition to a multicultural center, the Black students in this study feel like the Duke that they experience outside of these spaces does not place the same value on their history or experiences. This goes for social spaces, academic spaces, and living spaces on campus.

Graduate students and undergraduate students have incredibly different experiences with the Libraries and on campus as well. Something the graduate students frequently discussed was the fact that the Libraries seem like they cater more to undergraduates, so they prefer to study at home or in the libraries or spaces that are specifically dedicated to their programs. As a result, there was only some overlap in what the graduate and undergraduate students discussed in their respective focus groups. The conceptual charts in Appendix B show the topics in which the graduate and undergraduate discussions overlapped and the thematic similarities and differences they shared. Each chart shows where the needs of each of these populations overlaps the most and where they diverge. It is a recurring theme in the data and in the analysis that the University and the Libraries could do a better job of catering to the diverse needs that exist within the Black community on campus, and this is potentially a place to start.

In higher education there is a paradox that has come out of the effort to make student bodies more diverse in the past several decades. As colleges and universities have increased efforts to make their campuses more racially and ethnically inclusive, students of color nevertheless perceive the campuses as hostile spaces to racial and ethnic minorities, often reporting more negative experiences during their college years than their white classmates (Rankin and Reason 2005). As the data from this study suggests, Duke is no exception to this paradox. Black students reported a multitude of experiences with bias and microaggressions, as well as physical and cultural characteristics of the campus that make them feel unwelcome or like they don't belong. Because PWIs like Duke have a long complex history of being exclusionary, white spaces, which often clashes with the presence of students from diverse communities

and backgrounds. Colleges remain white spaces because the traditions, language, activities, and cultural practices of institutions of higher education, in conjunction with the demographic dominance of whites in higher education, perpetuate white cultural ideologies (Soja 1989). On college campuses throughout the United States, there also remain vestiges of a time when education was traditionally reserved for elite white men, and campuses excluded women and students of color (Fullwood 2015). These emblems of whiteness constantly remind students of color that their institutions were not made for them, and that in another era they would have never been admitted.

It is clear from the data that Black students at Duke continue to contend with a campus culture that still largely reflects and centers white experiences, history, and values. They still experience microaggressions in almost every area of life at Duke and even when they're out in Durham. These instances of bias continuously reinforce the idea that they do not belong on campus, or that they had to have been special in some way (i.e., through athletics) in order to get in to Duke. That being said, there are spaces and resources on campus that students can turn to, like the Mary Lou Williams Center and the Center for Multicultural life. This data highlights what these spaces mean to Black students at Duke and how they improve their experiences here. It should be imperative to make the campus as a whole a welcoming place and not just a handful of places on campus where Black students feel like they need to go to escape. In short, the ideal would be a campus where there is nothing to escape. Hopefully this data highlights both what is working very well and what could be improved, so that Duke and the Libraries can continue to work toward the goal of total inclusion.

IV. References

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V. Appendices

Appendix I – Project Codebook Created in NVivo 12.

Note: "files" refers to items uploaded for analysis to NVivo. Each transcript and each photo with a caption represents a single file.

Name	Description	Files	References
Black in Durham	Students describe their experiences in Durham and any bias or micro aggressions they may have experienced being Black Duke students in Durham.	4	6
Black Section	Students express a desire for a Black studies section or space in the Libraries or in other spaces on campus.	5	11
Black Spokesperson	Students indicate that they feel like they have to be a spokesperson for the Black community at Duke.	1	2
Burden of Educating	Students refer to the burden of having to educate their peers about Black issues or about diversity on campus.	1	1
Campus Living	Students relay their experiences in dorms or in other campus living spaces.	2	2
Campus Services, Space, Programs	Students mention the campus services, spaces, and programs that they use, find helpful, don't find helpful. Must be mentioned by name to be included in sub-code.	13	14
Bryan-West Union	Comments related to the Bryan Center or West Union	6	12
CAPS	Comments related to CAPS	2	2
Chapel	Comments related to the Chapel	7	14
CMA	Comments related to the CMA	1	1
Mary Lou	Comments related to the MLWC.	10	18
Student Health	Comments related to Student Health	4	7
Wellness Center	Comments related to the Wellness Center	5	10
Women's Center	Comments related to the Women's Center	1	1
Different Black Students	Students talk about the diversity that exists within the Black community at Duke or the different kinds of Black students that are present on campus.	1	3

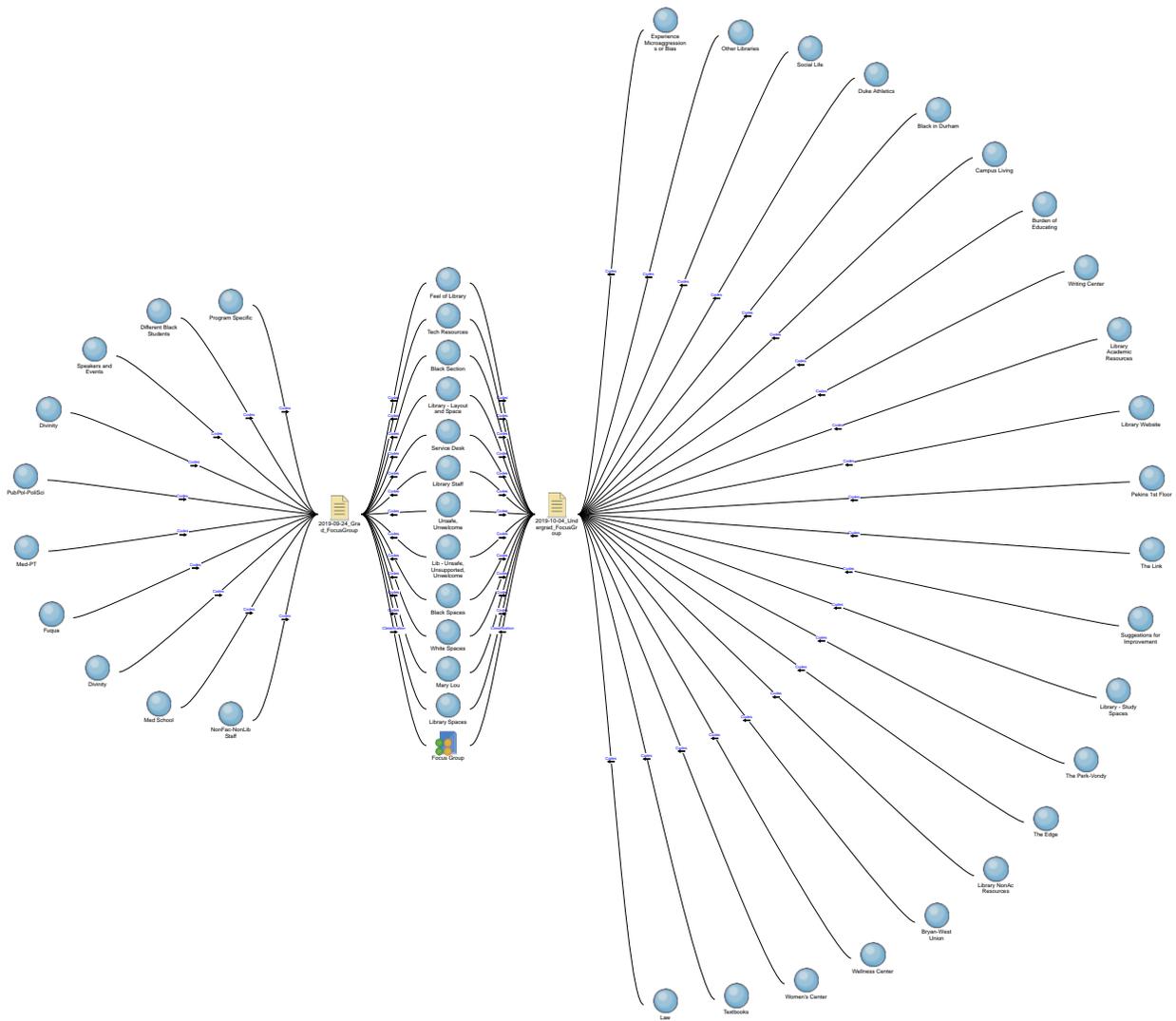
Duke Athletics	Students bring up Duke athletics and the role that the sports teams play in their experiences as Black students at Duke.	4	9
Experience Microaggressions or Bias	Students detail their experiences with micro aggressions or bias on campus and in the Libraries.	10	23
Feel of Library	Students allude to the “feel” of the Libraries or how they feel in Library spaces.	3	7
Lib - Safe, Supported, Welcome	Aspects of the library that make them feel safe, supported, welcome.	10	10
Lib - Services	Services that they use and find helpful or not helpful.	14	14
Lib - Unsafe, Unsupported, Unwelcome	Aspects of the libraries that make them feel unsafe, unsupported, or unwelcome.	13	18
Library - Layout and Space	Comments on the layout, organization, or aesthetics of library spaces.	8	24
Library - Study Spaces	Students comment on library study spaces.	14	20
Library Academic Resources	Describe academic resources they find most or least helpful.	5	9
Textbooks	Mention textbooks or the textbook loan program.	2	4
Library NonAc Resources	Comment on non-Academic library resources that they find most or least helpful.	2	5
Library Spaces	Students discuss different spaces within the Libraries. Must be specifically mentioned by name for sub-code.	17	47
Pekins 1st Floor		5	6
Service Desk		5	5
Stacks		2	2
The Edge		2	2
The Link		5	18
The Perk-Vondy		6	14

Library Staff	Students describe interactions and experiences with library staff.	5	13
Library Website	Describe experiences using the Libraries website.	4	7
NonFac-NonLib Staff	Students bring up Non-Library and Non-Faculty staff.	3	5
Other Libraries	Students bring up other libraries on campus, specifically associated with Grad programs or specific schools.	2	6
Divinity	Mention Divinity Library.	3	4
Fuqua	Mention business school library.	3	5
Law	Mention the Law Library	1	1
Med School	Mention medical school library.	5	6
Program Specific	Students bring up issues that are specific to the operations of their specific programs. Primarily grad students.	2	5
Divinity	Mention Divinity School	2	2
Med-PT	Mention medical school or PT program.	2	2
PubPol-PoliSci	Mention Political Science or public policy program.	1	1
Representation	Students bring up the issue of representation.	2	7
Safe, Supported, Belong	Students bring up things that make them safe, supported, and like they belong on campus. Not library specific.	23	23
Black Spaces	Students bring up “Black spaces” where they feel most safe and welcome and like they belong.	15	28
Safety and Security	Mention safety and security on campus.	4	5
Social Life	Mention things specific to social life at Duke	1	2
Speakers and Events	Students discuss speakers and events on campus	4	4
Suggestions for Improvement	Moments when students provide suggestions or things that can improve on campus and/or in the Libraries.	5	21

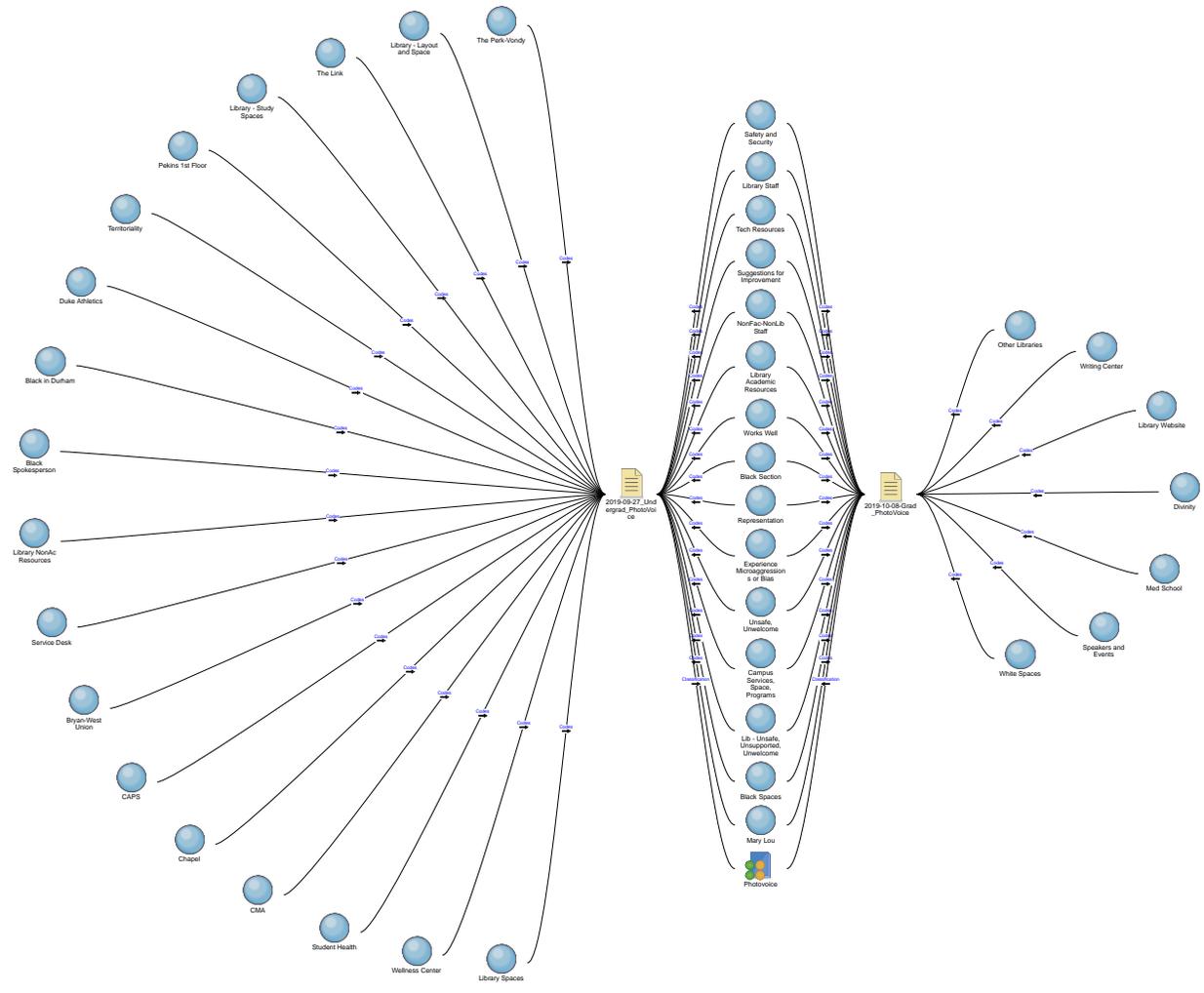
Tech Resources	Mention technological resources available on campus and in the Libraries.	11	23
Territoriality	Mention moments when they feel territoriality from other students or staff in the Libraries or on campus.	2	3
Unsafe, Unwelcome	Mention moments or spaces where they feel unsafe or unwelcome on campus.	14	30
White Spaces	Specifically bring up issues related to Duke as a PWI or white space	7	18
Works Well	Things that are working well on campus to welcome, include, and support Black students.	7	8
Writing Center	Mention the Writing center	2	2

Appendix II

1. Thematic comparison chart between graduate and undergraduate focus groups.



2. Comparison between undergraduate Photovoice and graduate Photovoice #1 (10/08/2019).



3. Comparison between undergraduate Photovoice and graduate Photovoice #2 (10/09/2019).

