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A Content Analysis of Minority Representation in a Selection of Current College and University Viewbooks

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A Content Analysis of Minority Representation in a
Selection of Current College and University Viewbooks

by

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Undergraduate honors thesis under the direction of

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Submitted to the LSU Honors College in partial fulfillment of
the Upper Division Honors Program.

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Louisiana State University
& Agricultural and Mechanical College
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my family for their unconditional support and encouragement. Thank you for instilling in me the mindset that I can do anything I set my mind to.

For Ivy, Joe and Alannie Broussard.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I offer my sincerest gratitude to my Honors Thesis committee members, Dr. Meghan Sanders, Dr. Hyojung Park and Dr. Kerry Sauley, for their patience, insight and guidance throughout this process. I would like to give a special thank you to my Honors Thesis adviser, Dr. Sanders. You pushed me, and I needed to be pushed. I am forever grateful for your advice, wealth of knowledge and commitment to this project. Thank you so much.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine how the college student is depicted overall in collegiate recruitment media such as viewbooks and more specifically how minority students are depicted in comparison to Caucasian students. This study assessed the visual prominence of images containing primarily Caucasian students and compared that prominence to images containing primarily minority students. This study also examined if colleges and universities were over representing, underrepresenting or accurately representing a diverse student body in their viewbooks in order to attract more students from ethnically diverse backgrounds.

A content analysis of 24 college and university viewbooks (12 liberal arts colleges and 12 universities) was conducted. A total of 1,512 viewbook images were coded. Results indicated that while college and university viewbooks are slightly over representing minorities, overall the institutions are doing a fairly good job of similarly depicting and picturing Caucasian and minority students. Theoretical and practical implications are discussed.

INTRODUCTION

“In today’s competitive drive to attract the most talented students, colleges must use a variety of assets as direct advertising tools. One of the most stable and viable assets to collegiate marketing strategy is the school’s image” (Timberlake, 1990, p. 62). Colleges and universities strive to distinguish themselves from one another as they seek to recruit the most desirable students. An example of a powerful collegiate recruitment piece is the viewbook. A viewbook is a promotional booklet with pictures that is published by a college or university and used especially for recruiting students (Viewbook, n.d.). Viewbooks are important because they often provide prospective students with a “first impression” of an institution. “In fact, an entire industry exists to aid institutions in the design and production of these publications and college and university admissions and public relations professionals spend a significant amount of time and money fashioning viewbooks in order to entice students to apply” (Hartley & Morpew, 2008, p. 671).

According to a 2015 U.S. Census Bureau survey, individuals with a bachelor’s degree earn 66 percent more than those with only a high school diploma. While it is impressive that the number of talented high school seniors applying to college in the United States has continued to rise each year, this means that the most desired schools are not able to accept everyone. Hence, competition among recent high school graduates to get accepted into college is rigorous. Likewise, competition among colleges and universities to attract top students is also intense (Peterson’s, 2013). Therefore, as colleges and universities work diligently to recruit students, recruitment material plays a significant role. Furthermore, as colleges and universities look to increase diversity, the institutions must examine their recruitment material to ensure the material appeals to all genders, races, ethnicities, etc.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2015), in fall 2013, the total undergraduate enrollment in degree-granting postsecondary institutions was 17.5 million students. Of the 17.5 million undergraduate students, 9.9 million were White, 2.9 million were Hispanic, 2.5 million were Black, 1.0 million were Asian, 0.1 million were American Indian/Alaska Native and 0.1 million were Pacific Islander (National, 2015). These statistics indicate the significant difference in the enrollment numbers of Caucasians compared to other ethnicities.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to determine how the college student is depicted overall in collegiate recruitment media such as viewbooks and more specifically how minority students are depicted in comparison to Caucasian students. This study will also assess the visual prominence of images containing primarily Caucasian students and compare that prominence to images containing primarily minority students. Furthermore, this study will examine if colleges and universities are over representing, underrepresenting or accurately representing a diverse student body in their viewbooks in order to attract more students from ethnically diverse backgrounds.

An example of why it is important to study the minority representation in viewbooks is the incident that occurred at the University of Wisconsin – Madison (UW) in 2000. The before picture is shown in Figure 1, and the after picture is shown in Figure 2.

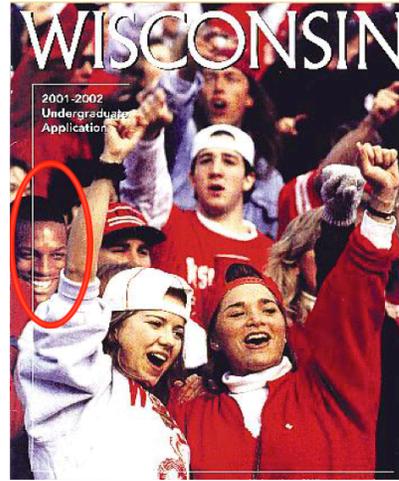
In the summer of 2000, UW made the decision to photoshop the face of African-American student Diallo Shabazz into a photo of White students at a UW football game (See Figure 2). However, Shabazz had never attended a UW football game, and he did not approve of the 100,000 admission booklets that went out that year using his face to give the illusion of diversity at the University of Wisconsin – Madison (Wade, 2009).

Figure 1



(Wade, 2009)

Figure 2



(Wade, 2009)

Shabazz sued UW, but instead of a settlement, Shabazz requested that UW set aside money for actual recruitment of minority students. Shabazz won his suit, and 10 million dollars was allocated to diversity initiatives across the UW system. Unfortunately, the Governor vetoed part of the allotted funds and many of the diversity initiatives were overlooked with turnover (Wade, 2009).

Therefore, it can be concluded that diverse representation is so important that some schools have gone to extreme measures to portray diversity such as the University of Wisconsin – Madison. UW’s incident of intentional misrepresentation of diversity and lack of effort to atone for the deception calls for researchers to explore how colleges and universities are truly marketing themselves in their recruitment material with regard to promoting diversity. However, surprisingly, there has been little research conducted on the minority representation depicted within the glossy pages of college and university viewbooks.

The most recent study conducted on viewbooks was in May 2014 by Frank DiMaria who found that institutions were significantly distorting diversity in their collegiate recruitment materials by publishing images of diversity to prospective students that were significantly different from the actual student body (DiMaria, 2014). Hence, this study will be able to provide an update on the progression or regression of how institutions are portraying diversity two years later.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Progression of College Recruiting

Higher education public relations tactics have transitioned from traditional print materials that “pushed” content to the audiences to the online sector where two-way communication strategies are more effective (Herbig & Hale, 1997). In the pre-Internet era, a university typically communicated with its audiences (i.e. students, alumni, faculty, general populace, etc.) through Q&A sessions, in-person visits and brochures (Charbonnet, 2012). In the late 1990s at the peak of the World Wide Web craze, colleges and universities began capitalizing on the Internet’s capabilities for a number of reasons. Given the technological habits of college-aged students, websites became the primary marketing tool for colleges and universities (Herbig & Hale, 1997). Higher learning institutions were determined to interact with the younger and more computer-literate audiences. Furthermore, in today’s world of diminishing academic budgets and enrollments, the Internet has enabled university public relations professionals to enjoy an innovative and competitive advantage (Charbonette, 2012).

The current generation of students is said to be one of the most connected yet hardest to reach audiences. However, this paradox is only true if colleges and universities fail to realize that prospective students have not stopped paying attention, they have simply transitioned their focus to the world of social networking. Therefore, the sooner colleges and universities understand how to effectively utilize this medium, the sooner they can be a part of that world – the student world (Barnes, 2010).

Social media comprises of activities that involve socializing and networking online through words, pictures and videos. Social media is redefining how society relates to one another

and how society relates to the organizations that serve them. Social media is all about dialog – two way discussions bringing people together to discover and share information (Solis, 2008).

Higher education public relations tactics continue to evolve from college websites to social media. In a study conducted by Rachel Reuben (2008), 148 colleges and universities responded to a survey answering what social media platforms they were using the most, how they were using the platforms to reach their target audiences, and which department(s) at the college were responsible for maintaining the social media accounts. Reuben found that of the 148 schools that were surveyed, the top social media platforms colleges and universities were utilizing were Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. Most institutions reported that they primarily used social media as a tool to communicate with current students, to reach out to alumni and for recruitment purposes. For every form of social media questioned in Reuben’s survey, respondents reported that one or more individuals in the marketing, communications or public relations department maintained the accounts (Reuben, 2008).

However, when colleges and universities pose the question of how their institution can stand out above the rest to attract prospective students, high school counselors advise institutions to reach out at a more personal level—not an e-mail, a generic packet in the mail or a generic social media post. For example, Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, La. recently sent out more than 10,000 genuine, hand-written notes to the most promising potential fall 2015 freshman. The LSU office of enrollment has reported that the feedback has been extremely positive as students have reached out to LSU after receiving the notes and have sent photos to LSU showing the hand-written letters displayed on their refrigerators at home. In fact, the feedback has been so good that the LSU office of enrollment has reported that the department

will be gearing up soon to start on the next 10,000 notes for potential 2016 freshmen (Ceppos, 2015).

Therefore, despite the progression of college recruitment from traditional print materials to the use of social media, viewbooks—the glossy multi-page brochures that colleges and universities send to tens of thousands of prospective students each year—are still an important medium by which institutions of higher learning entice students to matriculate (Hartley & Morphey, 2008). These traditional recruiting materials are still essential because in addition to recruiting students, colleges and universities must also recruit parents. The students' parents, guardians and family members all play a significant role in helping the students make their final college decision. Hence, a viewbook that contains information on financial aid, housing, tuition, room and board, fees, degree programs, majors, student organizations, activities, athletics, estimated costs of books, information on student life, and an application is a great resource for both students and parents (Dickerson, 2009). Therefore, well into the age of the Internet and the ease of interactive virtual college tours, students and parents report that college viewbooks continue to play an important role in the initial courtship between student and campus (Hartley & Morphey, 2008).

Institutions such as the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign are working hard to personalize their recruitment materials. For example, Illinois uses a customer relations management system that tracks every contact with prospective students and allows admissions counselors to personalize communications. In regard to the university's viewbooks, a student can actually customize his or her own copy of the electronic and/or print version of the viewbook. For example, Illinois' print viewbook is available with five different covers; however, if

prospective students prefer their own photos, they can customize their own covers (Forrest, 2008).

Therefore, once a student receives a viewbook, a hand-written letter, etc. that was specifically created and tailored to them, this is the first step to a more personalized form of recruiting for institutions. After getting the student's attention, institutions can then move toward a goal of getting the student on campus for a personal tour. Many institutions have expressed that they believe if they can get the student on campus for that personal tour, then they feel confident they can recruit that student (Dickerson, 2009). Therefore, personalized forms of recruiting are key, especially when institutions are focusing on recruiting more racially and ethnically diverse groups of students.

Diversity In Higher Education

Diversity is defined in the dictionary as the condition of being different. A crucial mistake many people make is to equate diversity with race and culture. While diversity does extend beyond ethnicity and race, for the purposes of this study, diversity is treated as such because this is the form of diversity that is visually apparent. However, diversity does extend far beyond race and culture to include a number of dimensions of differences (Barkman & Speaker, n.d.). Loden and Rosener (1991) describe two major dimensions of diversity: primary and secondary. Primary dimensions are aspects that one cannot change such as age, race, ethnicity, gender, physical qualities, and sexual orientation. Secondary dimensions include areas such as income, education, religious beliefs, military experience, geographic location, parental status, and marital status. People are usually less sensitive about the secondary dimensions because those are elements that one has some power to change (Loden & Rosener, 1991). This model vividly demonstrates that people are all similar and different on an infinite number of

dimensions. By positioning diversity as something that applies to everyone, diversity becomes something that everyone can care about and support (Rasmussen, 1996).

Valuing diversity recognizes differences between people and acknowledges that these differences are a valued asset, and multicultural education is an important component of valuing diversity. Thus, colleges and universities have recognized the importance of diversity and have placed diversity at the forefront of their agendas. Diversity in higher education allows for young adults to learn how to respect diversity while learning to become effective and participating members of a democracy. Students learn that valuing diversity emphasizes the contributions of the various groups (e.g. ethnic, gender, income, sexual orientation, etc.) that make up the population of the world. The students learn to respect individuality while still promoting respect for others. Young adults learn the importance of people sharing their stories and learning from the stories of others. Overall, valuing diversity in higher education seeks to increase diversity awareness, sensitivities and skills so that young adults are prepared to take positive action with their peers. By building positive peer influence, young adults begin to change negative attitudes, perceptions and behaviors about diversity (Barkman & Speaker, n.d.).

Research shows that “students educated in racially and ethnically diverse settings perform better academically and reap greater professional success than peers from more homogeneous learning environments” (Top, n.d., n.p.). Colleges and universities that value diversity foster a campus culture that promotes inclusion and adaptation. A diverse campus is not only about the value in representation, but in the value of active interaction and collaboration (Essenburg, Matchett & Pippert, n.d.). Those leaders who are prepared to engage with diverse individuals and groups and who rejoice in the beauty of differences while valuing human life will change the world (Top, n.d.).

Therefore, with the task of training and preparing the world's future leaders, colleges and universities must work to ensure its students understand and embrace the importance of diversity. Research shows that a diverse workforce within a company strengthens the business in all areas, including resilience, capacity to innovate and improved financial performance. Furthermore, a company's customers are often extremely diverse, so a workforce drawn from a similarly varied pool is more likely to better understand the needs of the company's customers (Royal, n.d.). Therefore, young adults need to be fully equipped with the knowledge and skills to work in diverse workforces once they graduate from college.

The Importance of Diverse Representations In Viewbooks

In order for colleges and universities to successfully teach its students how to excel in diverse workforces, the institutions must first ensure that its student body is diverse, and this begins with recruitment. The most recent study conducted on viewbooks was in May 2014 by Frank DiMaria. A total of 10,095 photographs from 165 four-year public and private colleges and universities in the United States were analyzed. The institutions were analyzed in an attempt "to determine the accuracy of the photographic portrayal of diversity in recruitment materials" (DiMaria, 2014, p. 28). The study found that college and university brochures actually distorted diversity. The findings indicated that the majority of institutions published images of diversity to prospective students that were significantly different from the actual student body. The study also found that "schools typically symbolized diversity by portraying African-American students at higher rates rather than presenting a more representative student body" (DiMaria, 2014, p. 29).

Another useful study conducted on viewbooks was by Hartley and Morpew (2008). Their study focused greatly on the importance of paying close attention to the words, images and symbols contained in viewbooks. It is those words, images and symbols contained in the

condensed space of a viewbook that constitute the basis on which institutions choose to begin forming a relationship with prospective students. “Furthermore, these words and symbols play a substantial role in shaping how students think about the college experience during the early ‘attentive search’ stage of the college choice process” (Hartley & Morpew, 2008, p. 682).

Hartley and Morpew’s (2008) study found that viewbooks paint a hopeful, idealized and somewhat unrealistic portrait of undergraduate life:

If prospective students were to define colleges and universities solely by what appears in viewbooks they would quickly conclude that campuses are idyllic havens. They are filled with happy and healthy students (in only a few instances were the presence of a health or counseling center mentioned). Undergraduates are a racially diverse and a generally attractive group—all are in their late teens or early twenties. There are no disabled, obese, or depressed students. Everyone belongs. There are unparalleled opportunities for students to participate in a range of stimulating (if not outright “fun”) activities inside the classroom (with smiling, attentive faculty members at hand) not to mention a myriad of co-curricular options. Happily, all colleges and universities have a range of financial aid options—especially scholarships—that render postsecondary education “affordable” (so much so that many viewbooks don’t need feel the need to trouble the reader with petty details such as how much tuition is).

This study will seek to update previous studies by examining how today’s viewbooks are depicting the college student and undergraduate life. Additionally, this study will examine how minority students are depicted in today’s viewbooks with hopes of informing public relations and

marketing practitioners of how to strategically tailor their recruitment materials to attract more racially and ethnically diverse groups of students.

Public Relations Strategies and Tactics as It Applies to Diverse Students

Research shows that the best way to reach minority students is through personalized recruitment efforts (Strategies, n.d.). For example, collegiate public relations and marketing professionals have found that when direct mail and follow-up phoning are tailored to provide a more personal focus to the minority students being recruited, these efforts have yielded greater success. In this strategy, the literature that describes the college reflects the ethnicity of students and highlights the special programs and activities available for that particular group. After the mailings are sent, special staff or student recruiters of the potential recruit's same ethnic background call them to answer questions and encourage them to visit the campus (Astone & Nunez-Wormack, n.d.).

Another successful personalized recruiting tactic for colleges to be more competitive in an already competitive market is to expand the concept of "college days" to a full weekend orientation, all expenses paid. Institutions can adapt this model to target the large portion of minority students who are unable for financial reasons to visit college campuses they are considering. These students frequently choose a college or university based on limited knowledge gleaned from the literature or information they receive from friends. Naturally, a positive experience is likely to result in successful recruitment for the college or university (Astone & Nunez-Wormack, n.d.).

Therefore, despite the progression of college recruitment from traditional print materials to the use of social media, when it comes to the recruitment of minority students, more traditional and personalized recruitment pieces such as viewbooks have proved to be more

successful. Though the use of the Internet and social media as recruitment tools has become increasingly important for universities (Gordona & Berhow, 2009; Hayes, Ruschman & Walker, 2009; Kang & Norton, 2006), the direct mailing of printed recruitment materials continues to be a critical part of the recruitment budget and process. In 2000, a national survey of undergraduate admissions policies, practices and procedures reported that 70 percent of all institutions make “very frequent use of direct mailings” as a means to market to prospective students (Breland, Maxey, & Cumming 2002, p. 131). Furthermore, the consulting firm Eduventures Inc. surveyed 7,867 high school juniors and seniors and found that 64 percent of the students used viewbooks, the same percent that cited campus visits, as a source of information about the institution (Ashburn, 2007). According to a CASE report, “print publications aren’t dead,” as they continue to be the largest category of marketing budgets at 26 percent, compared to 4 percent of the budget allocated to social media marketing and 11 percent to interactive/web marketing (Lipman Hearne, 2010, p. 7).

Given the literature reviewed on the progression of college recruiting, diversity in higher education, the importance of diverse representations in viewbooks, and public relations strategies and tactics as it applies to diverse students, this study proposed the following research questions:

RQ1: How are Caucasian college students depicted in collegiate recruitment media such as viewbooks in comparison to minority students?

RQ2: How does the visual prominence (i.e. size of image, location of image, emphasis of students) of images containing primarily Caucasian students compare to images containing primarily minority students?

RQ3: Are colleges and universities over representing, underrepresenting or accurately representing a diverse student body in their viewbooks?

METHODOLOGY

The collegiate recruitment media to be examined are college and university viewbooks. A content analysis of 24 college and university viewbooks was conducted. The colleges and universities were randomly selected from the U.S. News and World Report's 2015 National Universities Rankings and Liberal Arts Colleges Rankings.

The sampling method was simple random sampling. Using a random number generator website, 24 colleges and universities were selected from the U.S. News and World Report's 2015 National Universities Rankings and Liberal Arts Colleges Rankings (See Figure 3). Therefore, each institution had an equal chance of being selected for the study.

A random sample of national universities and liberal arts colleges was selected because these institutions share an incitement to recruit. These 24 randomly chosen colleges and universities also represent the four regions of the country (i.e. North, South, West and Midwest). There were 11 institutions represented from the North, six from the South, three from the West and four from the Midwest.

While each college and university strives to attract and appeal to a wide, diverse demographic of students, each institution also attempts to attract some of the same demographic of students nationally and internationally. Thus, by looking at these colleges and universities, it will be interesting to discover what similarities and differences emerge. Based on these similarities and differences, this will allow for one to identify a broad, overall definition of how the college student is depicted in college and university viewbooks.

“Because viewbooks are vehicles of communication that employ the use of language, images, and symbols, content analysis is methodology ideally suited to their analysis” (Hartley & Morphew, 2008, p. 675). Content analysis is an empirically grounded method of examining text

Figure 3

National Universities	National Liberal Arts Colleges
1. Yale University (Rank #3)	1. Davidson College (Rank #9)
2. Vanderbilt University (Rank #15)	2. Vassar College (Rank #12)
3. University of California – Irvine (Rank #39)	3. Smith College (Rank #14)
4. Syracuse University (Rank #61)	4. Dickinson College (Rank #40)
5. University of Maryland – College Park (Rank #57)	5. Virginia Military Institute (Rank #82)
6. SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry (Rank #89)	6. Reed College (Rank #93)
7. Michigan Technological University (Rank #123)	7. Thomas Aquinas College (Rank #82)
8. University of Maine (Rank #168)	8. Juniata College Rank (Rank #105)
9. Pace University (Rank #180)	9. Presbyterian College (Rank #127)
10. Ball State University (Rank #168)	10. Centenary College of Louisiana (Rank #148)
11. Immaculata University (Rank #161)	11. Carthage College (Rank #154)
12. Southern Illinois University – Carbondale (Rank #153)	12. Emory and Henry College (Rank #174)

and images in order to identify messages and meaning (Krippendorff, 2004). Berelson (1952) describes content analysis as “a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication” (p. 18). Content analysis involves not only describing what is said but involves drawing inferences about the meanings in the messages (Holsti, 1969).

For this study, the unit of analysis was the image. A content analysis was employed as a means of systematically identifying, classifying and tabulating the symbols, images and messages from the viewbooks of 24 nationally ranked universities and liberal arts colleges across the United States.

In preparation to conduct the content analysis, all 24 colleges and universities were contacted to ensure the most recent viewbooks were being utilized. Of the 24 colleges and universities contacted, only six failed to cooperate with the request and had to be replaced with additional institutions. These six institutions were

1. Cornell University,
2. Fordham University,
3. University of Dayton,
4. St. John's University,
5. Swarthmore College, and
6. Hartwick College.

The main reason these institutions had to be replaced was because these colleges and universities did not have digital versions of their viewbooks. And when contacted, the institutions either failed to respond to the request in a timely manner, or they chose not to pay to mail the print versions of their viewbooks. Therefore, the simple random sampling method of the institutions from the U.S. News and World Report's 2015 National Universities Rankings and Liberal Arts Colleges Rankings was repeated, and six new institutions were selected. These colleges and universities were

1. Yale University,
2. Syracuse University,
3. University of Maine,
4. Ball State University,
5. Davidson College, and
6. Smith College.

Once all 24 viewbooks were collected, preparations were made to conduct intercoder reliability among the three coders hired to assist with the content analysis. For intercoder reliability only, the unit of analysis was the page. Of all the pages that made up the 24 viewbooks, 10% of the pages were randomly selected to serve as a sample data set for the three coders.

After an initial training meeting with all three coders, the coders were instructed to individually complete the coding for all the images on the assigned 77 viewbook pages (10%). After receiving the results from the training, there were some discrepancies in the data, such as skipped images on multiple pages, that resulted in the data being unusable to conduct intercoder reliability. Therefore, a second sample data set was created that consisted of a total of 100 images that were numbered 1 to 100. By individually labeling all 100 images, the results of the second sample data set were usable to conduct intercoder reliability.

Scott's pi was the measure of agreement used to determine intercoder reliability. The intercoder reliability ranged from 0.58 – 0.82. For the sections that did not meet satisfactory intercoder agreement of at least .70, an in-depth conversation with the three coders was conducted to ensure the coders understood how to properly and accurately code for each section.

The three coders then proceeded to conduct the final analysis of all 24 college and university viewbooks. The 24 viewbooks were divided equally among the three coders. The coders followed the codebook (see Appendix A) and used an online Qualtrics code sheet (see Appendix B) to code for each viewbook image.

The codebook clearly outlined and defined the coding process for each variable. After completing the logistics of selecting the coder's name, selecting the name of the institution, selecting whether the institution was a national university or liberal arts college, and selecting

whether the institution was located in the North, South, Midwest or West region, each coder then began analyzing the images present on the page.

The coders were prompted to identify if the image was a single image or an image montage. They then identified the location and size of the image on the page. Coders were also asked to place each image into the category that best described the theme of the image. There were six categories identified for this study: Athletics, Social, Academics, Athletics + Social, Social + Academics, and Academics + Athletics. All of these variables were nominal in their level of measurement.

The coders then began analyzing the people present in each image on the page. If a human being was present, coders coded for male and female presence. These variables were nominal in their level of measurement. Coders were also asked to indicate how many males and/or females were present in the images being coded, when applicable. The level of measurement for these variables was interval scale.

The following variables are all nominal in their level of measurement. After identifying the presence of a human being in an image, coders were asked to specifically identify if an ethnic minority person was present. If so, then the coders had to code for if the ethnic minority person was pictured alone or with others in the image. If they were pictured with others, the coders indicated if the ethnic minority person was the only ethnic minority person present in the image or if there were other ethnic minority people present as well. Finally, if more than one ethnic minority person was present in an image, the coders were asked if the image contained only ethnic minorities with no Caucasian presence. Coders were also asked to identify if the ethnic minority person was emphasized in the forefront or background of the image being coded.

RESULTS

This section details the research findings from a content analysis conducted for the images in 24 college and university viewbooks. Results are presented according to the study's three research questions.

RQ1: How are Caucasian college students depicted in collegiate recruitment media such as viewbooks in comparison to minority students?

A total of 1,512 viewbook images were coded. Of the 1,512 images, 28.8% of the images featured ethnic minority individuals. In regard to the depiction of Caucasian students in comparison to minority students as defined by the categories identified for this study, overall the viewbooks depicted Caucasian and minority students rather similarly. A slightly larger percentage of Caucasian students (13.2%) than minority students (6.9%) were featured in athletic themed images, $\chi^2(DF = 12, N = 1,512) = 613.89, p < .001$. A slightly larger percentage of minority students (18.2%) than Caucasian students (15.5%) were featured in academic themed images, and a slightly larger percentage of minority students (13.1%) than Caucasian students (9.3%) were featured in social + academic themed images (See Figure 4).

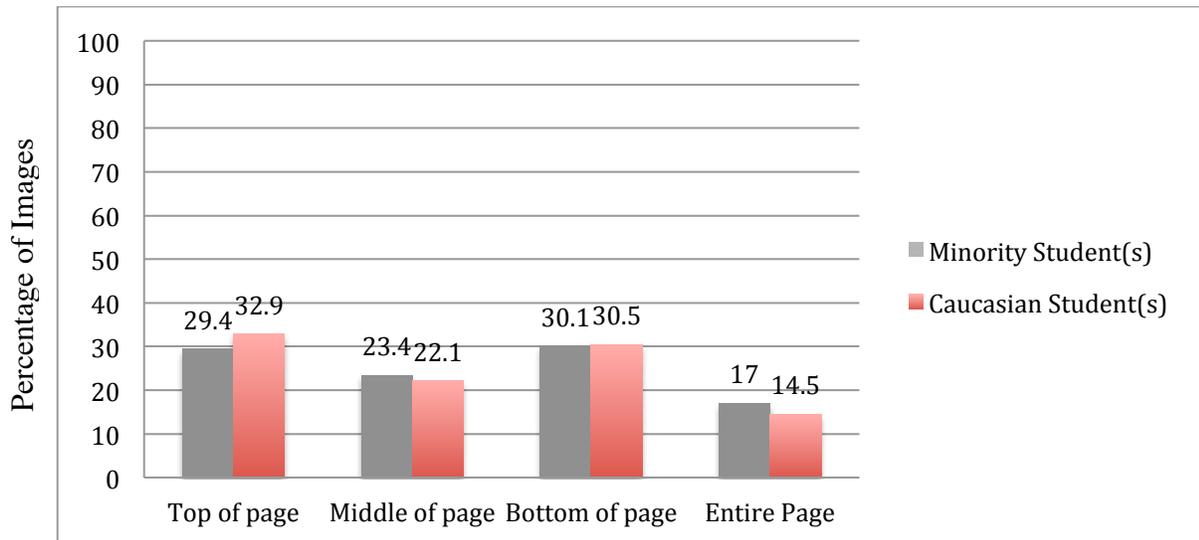
RQ2: How does the visual prominence (i.e. location of image, size of image, emphasis of students) of images containing primarily Caucasian students compare to images containing primarily minority students?

Overall, the viewbooks similarly pictured Caucasian and minority students in regard to the placement of the images on each page. There was a nice placement mix of images at the top, middle and bottom of the page as well as the entire page. Furthermore, there was a fairly equal representation of Caucasians and minorities in each image location on the page ($\chi^2(DF = 6, N = 1,512) = 5.46, p > .05$)(See Figure 5).

Figure 4

	Minority Student(s)	Caucasian Student(s)
Athletics	6.9%	13.2%
Social	48.3%	49.3%
Academics	18.2%	15.5%
Athletics + Social	1.8%	2.6%
Social + Academics	13.1%	9.3%
Academics + Athletics	0.2%	0.3%
Not Applicable	11.5%	9.7%

Figure 5



$$\chi^2(\text{DF} = 6, \underline{N} = 1,512) = 5.46, p > .05$$

The viewbooks also similarly pictured Caucasian and minority students in regard to the size of the images on each page. While there was no statistical difference in the sizes of the images that contained primarily Caucasian students compared to those that contained primarily minority students, the results indicated that the majority of the pictures featured in the viewbooks were less than a quarter page in size ($\chi^2(DF = 6, N = 1,512) = 11.08, p > .05$)(See Figure 6).

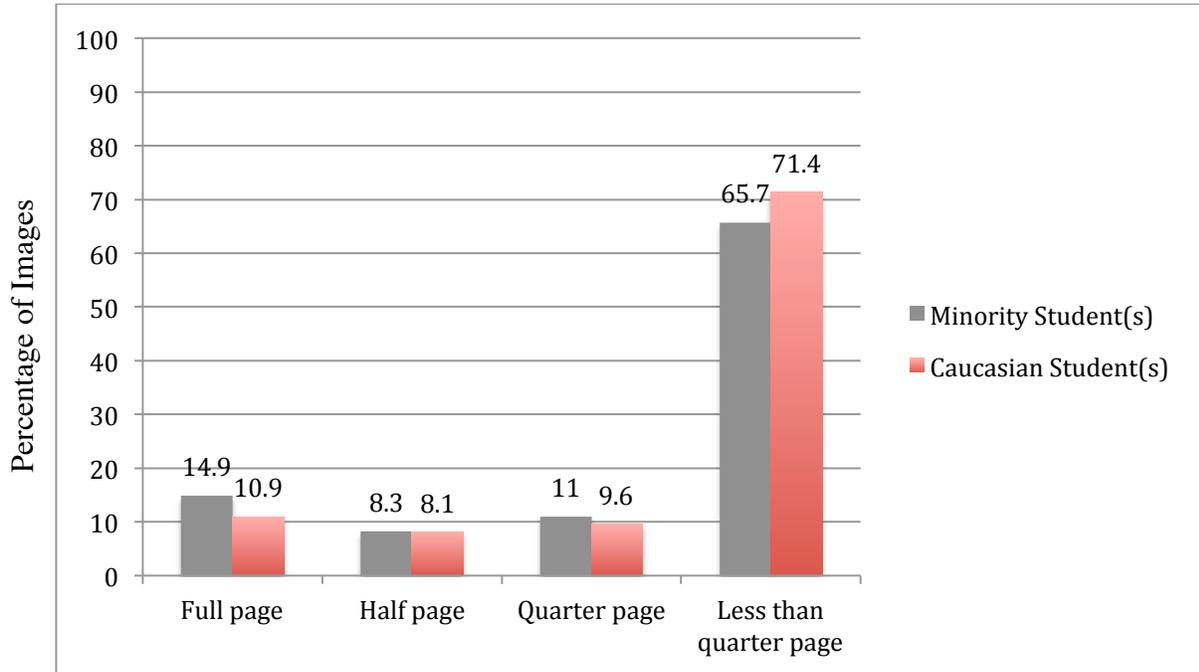
In regard to how minorities were emphasized in images, of the 28.8% of images that contained one or more ethnic minorities, minority students were emphasized significantly more in the forefront (23.4%) than in the background (5.2%) of the images (Figure 7).

RQ3: Are colleges and universities over representing, underrepresenting or accurately representing a diverse student body in their viewbooks?

In order to conduct the analysis for RQ3, a subset of the original data was taken to create a new dataset. From the original dataset, a contingency table was created to examine the overall percentage of how many ethnic minority individuals were present in the viewbooks for each of the 24 colleges and universities. Then, by going to the websites of each college and university, the actual minority enrollment numbers for each institution were pulled. Once both of these percentages were compiled, a t-test was conducted and the results were analyzed.

The results indicated that there was no significant difference between the minority representation in the institutions' viewbooks and the minority enrollment statistics featured on the institutions' websites. (Viewbooks: $M=27.18, SD=11.45$; Websites: $M=24.71, SD=14.43$). While the results did indicate that the viewbooks did slightly over represent minority presence (27.18%), the overrepresentation was not enough to result in a significant statistical difference ($t(23)=-.84, p > .05$)(See Figure 8).

Figure 6



$\chi^2(\text{DF} = 6, \underline{N} = 1,512) = 11.08, p > .05$

Figure 7

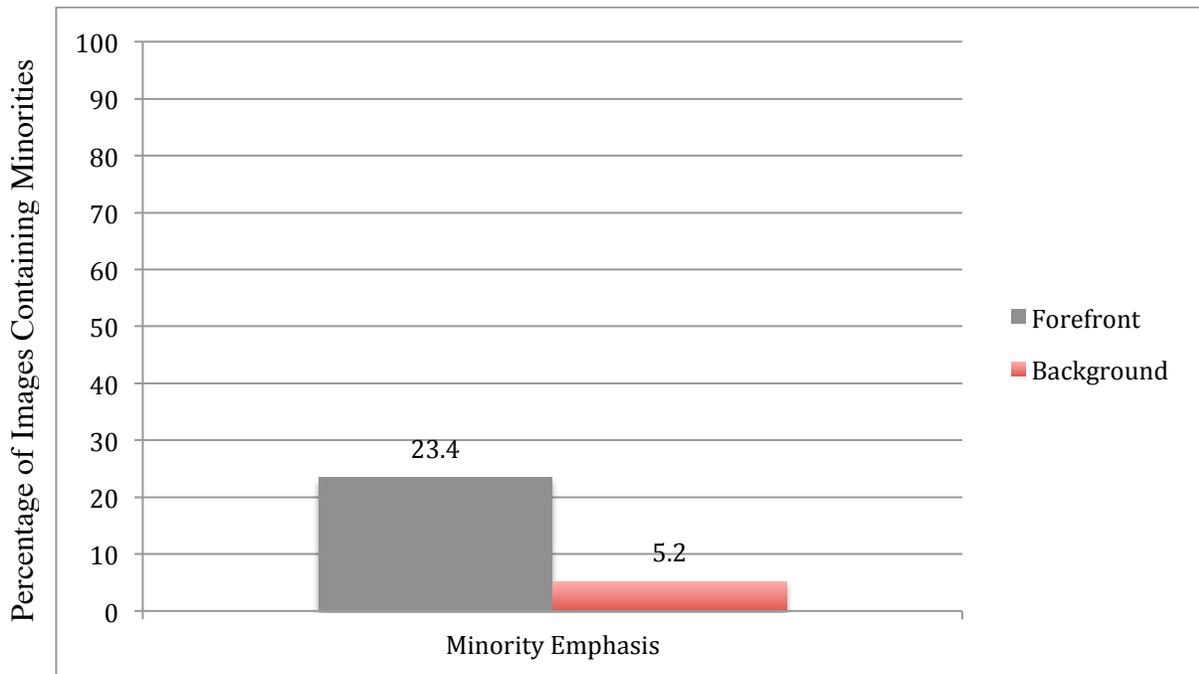
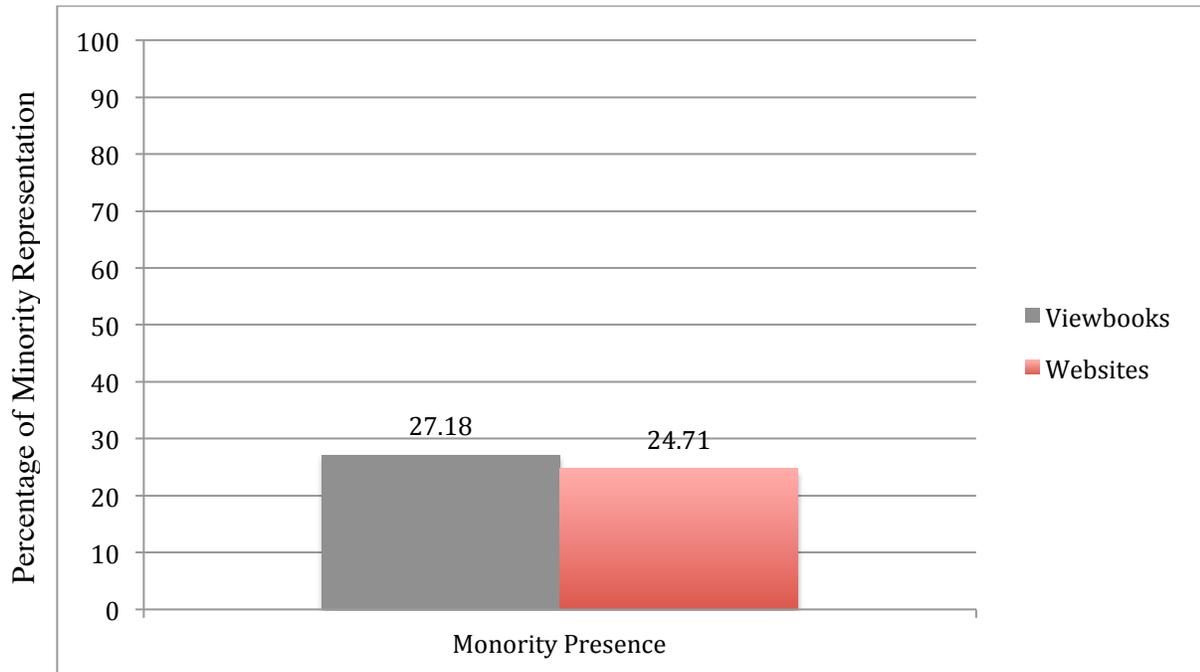


Figure 8



$t(23)=.84, p>.05$

DISCUSSION

The results of the content analysis of 1,512 images from 24 college and university viewbooks indicated that overall institutions are doing a fairly good job of similarly depicting and picturing Caucasian and minority students.

In regard to the depiction of minority and Caucasian students based on the categories identified for this study, the results indicated that the viewbooks similarly depicted the two. The category in which the majority of the images fell into was the social themed category (Images containing minority students = 48.3%, Images containing only Caucasian students = 49.3%). The second most popular category was the academic themed category (Images containing minority students = 18.2%, Images containing only Caucasian students = 15.5%). Therefore, the message that colleges and universities are sending to potential students through their images is that college is a primarily social sphere with an intellectual component. The results depict college as a social setting that enables students to develop intimate relationships among their peers and professors. While it is likely undergraduate students will greatly enjoy the social aspect of college, the intellectual aspect is still very important and needs to be depicted. Thus, college and university public relations and marketing professionals should consider portraying that a nice balance between one's social life and academic pursuit is feasible and more importantly that it is essential in order to have a successful college career.

When analyzing the visual prominence of images containing primarily Caucasian students to images containing primarily minority students, the results indicated that the viewbooks similarly pictured Caucasian and minority students in regard to the placement and the size of the images on each page. There was no favoritism shown toward Caucasians or minorities when it came to picturing them in a full page, half page, quarter page or less than quarter page

image. There was also no favoritism shown in which ethnicity was shown more at the top, middle or bottom of the page or on the entire page. This trend should definitely be continued in future viewbooks as it gives the implicit message of equality.

In regard to how minorities were emphasized in the images in which they were present, the results indicated that minority students were emphasized significantly more in the forefront than in the background of the images. Keeping in mind that of the 1,512 images coded for this study, only 28.8% of the images featured ethnic minority individuals. Of that 28.8%, 23.4% of those images emphasized the minorities in the forefront of the image. While these numbers are low, as college and university public relations and marketing professionals continue to work to increase diversity within their institutions, they should definitely continue to emphasize minorities in the forefront of viewbook images to convey the message that minorities are important and prominent.

The results of this study found that when compared to the minority enrollment numbers featured on the institutions' websites, the institutions were not significantly over representing diversity as the viewbooks were only slightly over representing minority presence by 2.5%. Therefore, over the course of two years, it can be concluded that colleges and universities have acknowledged their shortcomings and have taken the necessary steps to portray a more accurate representation of diversity in recruitment materials. However, this interpretation should be taken with caution as individuals pictured were not distinguished into faculty and student categories. Nor were persons counted individually in group photos.

Now, one may argue that viewbooks are considered a form of marketing and advertising, and if a college or university was lacking in their minority enrollment numbers, then the institution would want to over represent diversity in its viewbook to attract more racially diverse

students to apply in order to increase the minority enrollment numbers. Therefore, there is tension that exists between promotion for improvement and accuracy for ethics. Hence, the results of this study are open for interpretation depending on one's belief of the true purpose of college and university viewbooks. While over representing diversity can be viewed as a strategic business move, there is definitely a point in which the over representation can go too far, and this could result in an institution's reputation being affected. For these reasons, one cannot go wrong by telling the truth and being accurate. There should definitely be other aspects of the college or university that could be highlighted and showcased to entice minority students to apply, without having to rely on over representing diversity.

The overall implications of this research can be far reaching in terms of helping college and university public relations and marketing professionals increase diversity within their institutions. The results of this research indicate that colleges and universities are doing a fairly good job of similarly depicting Caucasian and minority students in their collegiate recruitment collateral such as viewbooks. It is important for public relations and marketing professionals to know how they are doing and to understand there are always ways to improve.

As previously discussed in the literature review, research shows that the best way to reach minority students is through personalized recruitment efforts. Hence, as public relations and marketing professionals work to continuously improve their collegiate recruitment collateral, they can take advantage of those personalized recruitment opportunities to receive direct feedback from minority students. By receiving this direct feedback, professionals will learn how their institutions can better tailor their viewbooks to appeal to prospective students of all races, genders and ethnicities.

Limitations and Further Research

The main limitation of this study was that there was no distinct way to distinguish between undergraduate students, graduate students, faculty and staff, etc. For this reason, all individuals present in an image were coded for. This limitation may have caused some discrepancies in the data that could have most directly affected the results of RQ3. This research question examined if colleges and universities were over representing, underrepresenting or accurately representing a diverse student body in their viewbooks. The identified percentage of minorities present in each viewbook was then compared to the actual percentage of minority enrollment at each institution as indicated on each institutions' website. Since the percentages on each institutions' website were specifically enrollment statistics, the results of the findings for RQ3 could vary as over representation or underrepresentation could become a factor once non-students are removed from the data. Therefore, further research should be conducted to discover a way to accurately distinguish students within the images in order to conduct more detailed analyses.

Another limitation of this study was how the overall percentage of minority student appearance in the viewbooks was calculated. Coders were asked to indicate if at least one ethnic minority person was present in the image, but they were not instructed to count the actual number of minorities in the image. Therefore, the interreality comparison is a bit limited for this reason.

Further research for this study could include conducting focus groups with high school seniors to examine if and how minority representation in viewbooks plays a role in determining if a senior will choose to apply to a specific college or university. Since the purpose of

viewbooks is to entice students to apply, research could be conducted to compare how many students receive a college or university's viewbook, how many of those students choose to apply, and if minority representation in the viewbooks plays any significant role. In regard to the argument that colleges and universities may want to over represent minority representation in their viewbooks, conducting a focus group with these high school seniors would be a good a way to see how the believability and credibility are affected when colleges and universities go too far in overrepresentation.

Future researchers could also choose to conduct interviews with representatives from the departments that are in charge of creating the viewbooks to examine the thought processes that go into designing the recruitment collateral and if and how minority representation plays a role in these decisions.

CONCLUSION

The goal of this study was to provide an update to previous studies and add to the existing literature by examining how today's viewbooks are depicting and picturing minority college students and undergraduate life. By identifying that colleges and universities are doing a fairly good job of similarly depicting and picturing minority and Caucasian students, this study has succeeded in informing public relations and marketing practitioners of their current progress and has provided suggestions on how to continue to work to improve recruitment materials in a way that will hopefully attract more racially and ethnically diverse groups of students.

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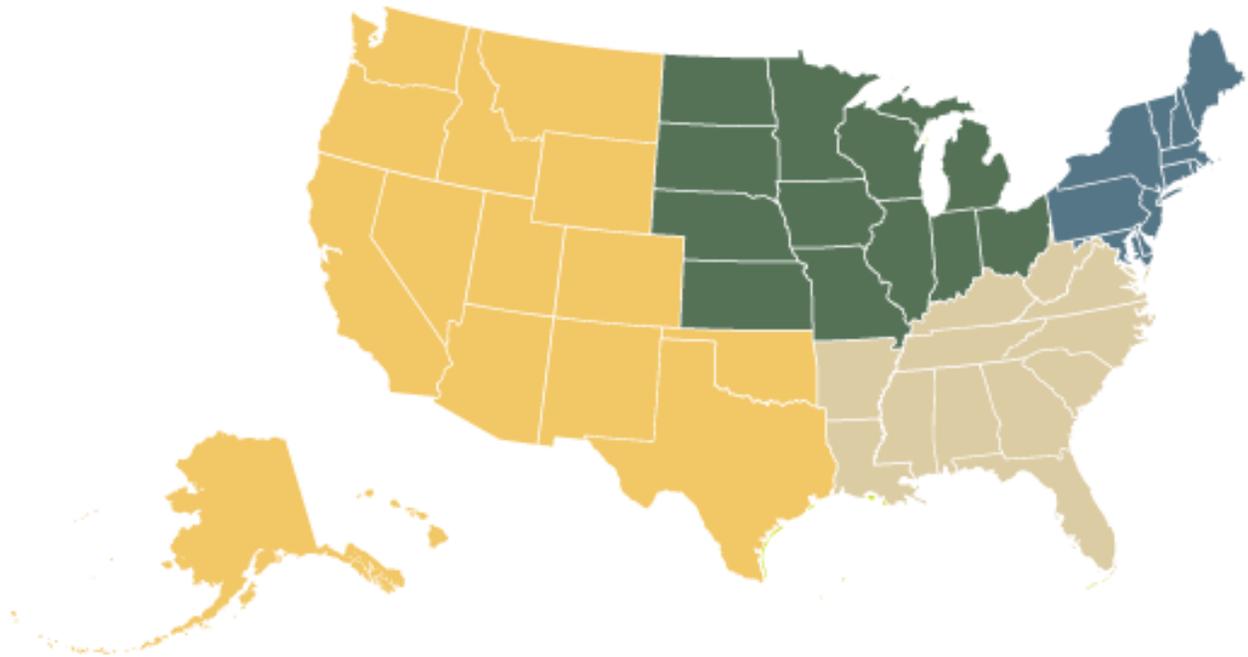
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APPENDIX A: CODE BOOK

Code Book

1. Name of institution
 - a. Select the name of institution being coded
2. Type of institution
 - a. Select whether the institution is a national university or a national liberal arts college
3. Region institution is located
 - a. Select whether the institution is located in the North (blue), South (tan), Midwest (green), or West (gold)



<http://static.usnews.com/images/ah/us-map-white.png>

4. Length of viewbook
 - a. Type in the number of pages that make up the viewbook

Visuals

The promotional material to be examined is the pictures colleges and universities use in their viewbooks. When present, the relationship between pictures, captions, and other information and graphics such as charts, statistics, etc., will also be noted.

1. Type of image
 - a. Select whether the image is a single image – yes (1) or no (2)
 - b. Select whether the image is an image montage – yes (1) or no (2)
 - i. If the image is a montage, one must then type in the number of images that make up the montage.
2. Page number of image/montage
 - a. Type in the page number of the image/montage being coded
3. Presence of caption
 - a. Select whether an image/montage caption is present (yes – 1) or not (no – 2)
4. Location of image/montage on page
 - a. Select whether the image/montage is located at the top (1), middle (2) or bottom (3) of the page
5. Size of image/montage
 - a. Select whether the image/montage is full page (1), half page (2), quarter page (3), or less than a quarter of a page (4)

Male Presence – Select yes (1) or no (2)

1. Select whether a male is present in the image being coded
2. Type in how many males are present in the image being coded

Female Presence – Select yes (1) or no (2)

1. Select whether a female is present in the image being coded

2. Type in how many females are present in the image being coded

Ethnic Minority Presence – Select yes (1) or no (2)

When analyzing the viewbook images, one must code for if an **ethnic** minority person is present in the image or not. A minority person can be defined as any non-Caucasian person (e.g., African American/Black, Asian/Asian American/Pacific Islander, Hispanic/Latino, Middle Eastern/Indian/Arabian, Native American/Alaskan Indian, Other). The non-Caucasian person will be identified based on skin hue.

- If an ethnic minority person is present, one must then code for if the ethnic minority person is pictured **alone** or **with others**.
 - **Alone (1)**
 - An ethnic minority person pictured alone would be defined as the person being the sole person in the image. No other people would be seen in the image with the ethnic minority person.
 - **With others (2)**
 - An ethnic minority person pictured with others would be defined as the person being photographed with one or more other individuals, even if those individuals are not the focal point of the photo (or if their facial features cannot be completely seen).
- If an ethnic minority person is present either alone or with others, one must then code for how the ethnic minority person is **emphasized** in the image.
 - **Forefront (1)**
 - An ethnic minority person being emphasized in the forefront of the image would be defined as being the visual focus of the image. This may look

like a person in a focused image who has been specifically chosen to pose alone or with a group for the picture.

- **Background (2)**

- An ethnic minority person being emphasized as part of the background of the image would be defined as not being the visual focus of the image. However, this person will still be able to be identified and recognized as an ethnic minority person present in the image. This may look like a person in an unfocused image who can be identified in the image, but he or she is clearly not aware that a picture has been taken.

Athletics (1)

Viewbook images that specifically showcase the college or universities' athletics (e.g., baseball, basketball, football, soccer, softball, volleyball, etc.) should be coded in the athletics category. For example, any image that shows students athletes actively participating in a sport and/or in uniform would be classified as athletics.

Social (2)

Viewbook images that specifically showcase the universities' sense of community amongst its students should be coded in the social category. For example, any image that shows students socially interacting with one another would be classified as social. These images are intended to convey to prospective students that there is a fun, social component to college.

Academics (3)

Viewbook images that specifically showcase the intellectual component of college should be coded in the academics category. For example, any image that shows students studying using a textbook, laptop or classroom would be classified as academics. Images that show students working in the field and laboratory and studying abroad would also be classified as academics.

This may also include classroom shots of multiple students; however, the image does not depict students working together. These images are intended to convey that the colleges and universities value education and offer various opportunities.

Athletics + Social (4)

Viewbook images that showcase both athletic and social (defined above) should be coded in the athletics + social category. For example, any image that shows a group of students and/or individuals gathered together to attend an athletic event would be classified as athletics + social. These individuals would be attending a baseball, basketball or football game and simply enjoying the presence of each other at the sporting event.

Social + Academics (5)

Viewbook images that showcase both social and academics (defined above) should be coded in the social + academics category. For example, any image that shows a group of students gathered together to study using textbooks and laptops or in a classroom or laboratory setting with or without a professor would be classified as social + academics.

Academics + Athletics (6)

Viewbook images that showcase both athletics and academics (defined above) should be coded in the athletics + academics category. For example, any image that shows a student athlete in uniform studying using a textbook or laptop or in a classroom or laboratory setting would be classified as athletics + academics.

Code Sheet

Name of coder

- Brenna Vial
- Loreal Johnson
- Pink Thamdorn

Name of institution

- Ball State University - National University - Midwest
- Carthage College - National Liberal Arts College - Midwest
- Centenary College of Louisiana - National Liberal Arts College - South
- Davidson College - National Liberal Arts College - South
- Dickinson College - National Liberal Arts College - North
- Emory and Henry College - National Liberal Arts College - South
- Immaculata University - National University - North
- Juniata College - National Liberal Arts College - North
- Michigan Technological University - National University - Midwest
- Pace University - National University - North
- Presbyterian College - National Liberal Arts College - South
- Reed College - National Liberal Arts College - West
- Smith College - National Liberal Arts College - North
- Southern Illinois University Carbondale - National University - Midwest
- State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry - National University - North
- Syracuse University - National University - North
- Thomas Aquinas College - National Liberal Arts College - West
- University of California Irvine - National University - West
- University of Maine - National University - North
- University of Maryland College Park - National University - North
- Vanderbilt University - National University - South
- Vassar College - National Liberal Arts College - North
- Virginia Military Institute - National Liberal Arts College - South
- Yale University - National University - North

Type of institution

- National University
- National Liberal Arts College

Region institution is located

- North
- South
- West
- Midwest

Length of viewbook

Image number

Is the image a single image?

- Yes
- No

Is the image an image montage?

- Yes
- No

If the image is a montage, please type the number of images that make up the montage.

Type the page number of the single image or image montage.

Is a caption for the individual image present?

- Yes
- No

Select the location of the individual image on the page.

- Top of the page
- Middle of the page

- Bottom of the page
- Entire page

Select the size of the individual image.

- Full page
- Half page
- Quarter page
- Less than quarter of a page

Identify the category of the image.

- Athletics
- Social
- Academics
- Athletics + Social
- Social + Academics
- Academics + Athletics
- Not Applicable

Are people present in the image to be coded?

- Yes
- No
- People are too small to accurately identify their genders and ethnicities.

Is a male present in the image being coded?

- Yes
- No

How many males are present in the image being coded?

Is a female present in the image being coded?

- Yes
- No

How many females are present in the image being coded?

Is an ethnic minority person present in the image being coded?

- Yes
- No

Is the ethnic minority person pictured alone or with others?

- Alone
- With others

Is the ethnic minority person the only minority present in the image with others?

- Yes
- No

Is the ethnic minority person present with other minorities in the image with others?

- Yes
- No

Does the image contain only ethnic minorities?

- Yes
- No

Is the ethnic minority person emphasized in the forefront or background of the image?

- Forefront
- Background

VITA

JoLena Broussard is a native of New Iberia, Louisiana. She is on track to graduate with College Honors and a 4.0 GPA from Louisiana State University in May 2016 with a Bachelor of Arts in mass communication and a minor in business administration. After graduation, JoLena will begin graduate school in fall 2016 at Louisiana State University to pursue her Master of Business Administration in the LSU Flores MBA Program. JoLena's ultimate goal is to own her own strategic communications agency.