A. Faculty Development Grant Summer 2022 Report

"Oneness," Disrupted: (Re)Mobilizing Ethnicity and Race as
Analytics for Examining Differences in Communication

<u>Awardee:</u>
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<u>Date of Report 1/31/23:</u>
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B. SU22 FDG GRANT DETAILS
I was awarded a faculty development grant for SU22 to travel to present at the 72nd Annual International Communication Association Conference (ICA), Paris, France, May 2022. The following goals and objectives were stated in my proposal:

1. International Communications Association Essay & Presentation, May 2022:
The aforementioned panel/project has been accepted for presentation (attached) at ICA in Paris May 26-30th, 2022. As the panel's chair and respondent of the panel, my role is to use my expertise and experience in race and ethnicity in international/intercultural communication to:

a) draft an essay to present to the audience which both assesses and recaps the important themes that thread throughout the essays,

b) present the panelists with critical questions about their essays,

c) lead the audience in a discussion with the panelists.

2. Edited Volume Proposal: The panel's essays, including my own, will be developed into a book proposal for an edited volume that will invite additional scholars as contributors.

3. Curriculum Development for COM300 Communication Theory and COM401 Research Methods:

Following the panel, I will create a lesson plans that include guest speakers, activities, assignments from the essays and my respondent essay for the two upper-level communications courses that I teach each semester, Communications Theory and Research Methods.

The lesson plans and activities will center on the following institutional learning outcomes: *ILO 3. Diversity Awareness and Cultural Awareness:* Diversity and Cultural awareness recognizes the lives, contributions, struggles, and lived experiences of people of African descent throughout history in addition to the cultural contributions of people from all backgrounds, including but not limited to those of different ages, ethnicities, races, national origins, abilities, genders, language preferences, religions, political beliefs, and sexual identities. Students will: Demonstrate an open-minded and inclusive worldview; Explain how social and cultural differences shape lived experience; Develop skills necessary for collaboration across culturally diverse groups; and *ILO 4. Social Responsibility and Civic Engagement:* Knowledge, skills, and values that promote making a difference in the civic life of a community. It encompasses actions

wherein individuals participate in activities of personal and public concern that are both individually life enriching and socially beneficial to the community. Students will: Demonstrate an open-minded and inclusive worldview; Explain how social and cultural differences shape lived experience; Develop skills necessary for collaboration across culturally diverse groups

C. SU22 FDG GRANT OUTCOMES
1. International Communications Association Essay & Presentation, May 2022:
Presentation Remarks:

Touching on the conference theme, this panel was grounded in ethnicity and race in communication with implications for the subfields of Intercultural Communication and Global Communication and Social Justice. While the first and fourth essays focused on underrepresented groups in the US, the second and third papers examined issues of pan-Latinidad and anti-Blackness in online spaces that challenge the borders. Despite their US affiliations, the panelists are diverse in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and, importantly, national origins. Thus, in both their research and lived experiences, the panelists indeed highlight that multidimensional identity and spatial politics such as transnationalism, diaspora, migration, citizenship, sexuality, gender, religion, and/or language always already play into constructions of ethnicity and race.

Dr. Upshaw presented on his COVID-19 prevention campaign using a cultural Varience framework. Health promotion campaigns are strategic tools to distribute information and other public engagement resources, especially prevention strategies like mitigating COVID-19. However, the rise of vaccine hesitancy and uncertainty remains a critical concern among Black and Hispanic/LatinX populations regarding COVID-19. The qualitative study explored how U.S. government-sponsored advertisement uses a cultural variance framework for marketing COVID prevention strategies to address vaccine hesitancy and uncertainty through advertising and infomercials, thereby centering the influence of ethnicity and race in persuasive messaging. The results showed cultural variance framework as a significant component for appealing and marketing culturally appropriate content in COVID advertisement development among Black-Hispanic/Latinx populations. Excitingly, this led to the production of advertisement materials for Black-Hispanic populations around Austin, demonstrating the value of doing research projects that are social justice focused with tangible outcomes.

Dr. Martinez Guillem looked Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez's Pan-latina linguistic performances to discuss the erasure of ethnicity and the racialization of ethnicity. Her paper connected race and ethnicity through an interrogation of language ideology as a fundamental axis of stratified differentiation. Its focus on the linguistic performances of US politician Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (AOC) highlighted the role that rhetorical constructions of 'language'—and in this case, of 'Spanish'—play in the erasure of ethnic specificity and in favor or a racialized Pan-Latinidad. Building on sociolinguistics' work on languages as inventions as well as "stranger fetischism," the different performances in/of Spanish by AOC relied on the strategic embracing of different (constructed as) 'latina' signifiers. Specifically, it signaled the reappropriation of 'Spanish' as a sign of authenticity that serves as a form of resistance to the normalization of the white gaze, just as it invests in normative uses of appropriateness and 'proper' speaking, ultimately putting 'Spanish' at the service of a palatable and homogeneous Latinidad.

Dr. Alaoui raised some critical and emerging questions about the pressing need to debias artificial intelligence, specifically with Blackness as a signifier. The implicit biases associated with algorithms and AI position them as one of the most technologically advanced vehicles of access, power, privilege, and discrimination. Black activists and technologists are increasingly raising the alarm about what one has called 'the new frontier of civil rights'—that is, growing concerns over inherent racism in AI and computer algorithm technologies. For instance, Detroit police had used a facial recognition system to unfairly accuse a Black man of a crime he didn't commit. This exemplifies how racial biases are inherent in the ever-changing technological landscape, and how AI discrimination is a real social problem with significant consequences. Using ethical communication practices and procedures is definitely an up and coming research area to disrupting the very real consequences of anti-Black biases inherent in AI and the tech industry.

Finally, Dr. Eguchi continues his work on moments of "queer transgressions" in film, examining the 2021 film *Boogie*, through queer of color critique. Emerging frameworks of futurity and racialization of spacialty in the discipline leave us as audiences both longing and hopeful. It is refreshing for audiences to see representative characters and settings in films, thus Boogies focus on an Asian American male high school basketball player Alfred "Boogie" Chin and his Taiwanese migrant family in Bronx drew audiences of color intrinsically. However, we learned how frameworks that deploy racialized sexual and gender minoritarian politics can complicate even the most diverse casts by using race and space, and therefore place. The protagonist's identity performance in New York as a "region," questions the assumption that urbanity equals futurity or possibility. This is a false equivalency that creates a narrative which loses attention to cishetero-whiteness as a position of unseen centrality despite *Boogie*'s attempt to decenter it. Ultimately, like so many films that feature people of color, it upholds the racialized ethnic triangulation of Taiwanese Americans vis-á-vis White and Black Americans. Ultimately, this paper pushed for future attention to "queer(er) pastures," or a centering of rural queer spaces as alternative sites rife with ways of (inter)relating.

2. Edited Volume Proposal:

A proposal for an edited volume has not yet been completed as the panelists and myself are all continuing the work presented as part of ongoing projects. Moreover, there has been a shift in our thoughts from the creation of an edited volume to compiling more broadly accessible outcomes to this work.

3. Curriculum Development for COM300 Communication Theory and COM401 Research Methods:

I am teaching COM401, Research Methods this semester, Sp2023. The four papers will be incorporated into my lesson plans and assigned readings. Dr. Upshaw's work on Covid-19 will be used to teach the module on Health Communication research, and he will Zoom with students to discuss his work. Dr. Guilliem's work on AOC will be used in the module on Rhetorical Analysis, and following two weeks of work on rhetoric, the students have a midterm paper where they interrogate race and ethnicity through rhetorical analysis. Dr. Eguchi's work on Boogie, as well as his other critical essays on media will be assigned and discussed in the module that focuses on critical analysis. Finally, Dr. Alaou's work on Blackness and AI will be used when we discuss organizational communication and applied

research, focusing on the research problem of state sanctioned violence in global policing of Black and Brown bodies.

D. CETL PRESENTATION

I have a CETL presentation scheduled for February 17th titled "Whiteness in Social Science Research" where I will discuss the urgency of diverse researchers, and procedural research intervention based on the work of my fellow panelists as well as other researchers of color in communication.