THE RESPONSIBLE ADVOCATE: TRACING THE STUDENT SUBJECT WITHIN UNIVERSITY OF LETHBRIDGE POLICIES

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Dedication

To Kim, who has been my greatest support and tireless companion from the beginning, and all my fellow students who are continually supportive.

Abstract

This thesis examines the student subject in institutional policies directed at undergraduate students at the University of Lethbridge. The central research questions are: Who is the student subject imagined and produced by such policies? What norms circulating within these policies fashion a particular kind of student subject? Universities are stratified workplaces, and policies directed towards students regulate and govern student behaviour, as well as their student experiences. Using a feminist post-structural discourse analytic, I examined the student subject in 17 University of Lethbridge policies that apply to undergraduate students. While the student subject is expected to follow a trajectory of success that includes specific modes of behaviour and performance, the student subject exercises agency. To illustrate student agency, a description of some activism initiatives led by students demonstrates how students challenge the ideal student narrative and forge a path towards more equity and accessibility for all university community members.

Territorial Acknowledgement

This research was conducted on Treaty 7 territory, and I acknowledge and honour the Blackfoot Confederacy as well as the Nakoda and Tsuut'ina whose land this is. This is also home to the Metis Nation of Alberta Region 3. Many Indigenous peoples make their home here as well, and I honour their presence and all those who have helped shape and strengthen the university.

Post-secondary institutions in Canada perpetuate the ongoing structure and processes of settler colonialism. Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2014) argues that oppositional discourses are often filtered out in favour of Western interests (61). Fortunately, this is something that has been well addressed in graduate classes but is certainly a continual process and still needs to be worked on. Until Indigenous and other knowledges originating in diverse, non-White settler societies are fully integrated within our education systems, true equitable education cannot be realized. Recognizing that my thesis research has been conducted on Treaty 7 land, my desire is that it can assist in helping create more equity at this and other institutions.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful for my supervisor, Dr. Suzanne Lenon, who has been a wonderful mentor, teacher, and example of compassion and intellectual work. Thank you for showing me how to stretch and learn as a scholar and for your ongoing support and patience with me. I cannot express enough how much your guidance means to me. I have learned so much over the years from you. You are truly a role model and will always remain so, for me. Thank you also to my committee—Dr. Carol Williams and Dr. Janay Nugent—for your unending guidance and mentorship through this thesis. Also, Dr. Williams, thank you for your support and mentorship while I have been a teaching assistant with you.

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Constant and always available support has come from Kim, my spouse and partner in everything. Thank you for always supporting and loving me unconditionally, for looking after me, for editing my writing, for taking over almost all of the housework, the majority of the parenting work that requires lots of driving, and for being such an incredible cook. I may fold the

laundry, but your refolded dish towels are beyond my abilities. Thank you for being the main financial support for our family and for looking after me when I am ill, too.

To our children—Sinéad and Fay (Sinéad's wonderful, affianced partner), Regan, Ash, Eve, Quillan, and Siobhán—I am so grateful. Your encouragement, your joy in life, your learning and growth, and your support is invaluable. I love you all.

To Brian, our neighbour, for being such a terrific, adopted grandparent for our two youngest, thank you. I get more writing done when it is quiet around here.

Naomi, my sister who has been a caregiver for our mother, thank you. Your dedication, sacrifice, and loving care for mum has helped me pursue this education. I am grateful for you.

Last, but not really least at all, is our healthcare system. I am grateful for a health care system I can access readily and that saved my life when I contracted appendicitis for the fourth time (unknowingly the first three times) and removed my "rip roaring" appendix within an hour of it being discovered (late night surgery for the win!). The wonderful doctor, surgeon, and nurses made it so I did not have to lose too much time working on my thesis. Recovering from surgery is much preferable to dealing with the two weeks of agony that accompanies undiagnosed appendicitis. I am here and able to finish this degree.

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Introduction

In this research, I explore how the student subject is produced through university policies directed to undergraduate students. Historically, a particular view of who the 'ideal' student subject is has been perpetuated through narratives and concepts based on assumptions of who is enrolling in higher education. According to much of the literature on higher education, the "normative student" is generally envisioned as one who devotes all efforts to studies with no outside responsibilities that influence or impair his education efforts (Moreau 2016; Pearson 2013). Even as the post-secondary student subject is also, materially, a mature student, and/or an international or domestic student with different types of backgrounds or life experiences, the student subject envisioned within universities is envisioned as a particular type of person or worker, who aligns with the expectations that emerge from university policies. This student is a "good" student, who is hard-working, dedicated to their education at the expense of all other responsibilities, and focused on gaining skills through their education or volunteering, which will help their education and future career trajectory (Sallee 2016, Leathwood and O'Connell 2003, Moreau 2016).

I approach this research from the perspective of an intersectional feminist and as a white, cisgender, married 50-year-old woman with several children, who began post-secondary study as a 41-year-old. Researching the student subject in university policies, I am positioned as an insider who has been a student at the University of Lethbridge for both my undergraduate degree and this master's programme. My experiences as a post-secondary student, particularly as a student parent, has influenced this research topic. Understanding the importance and value of all university community members, I feel particularly drawn to support students in their post-secondary educational journeys.

My interest in the topic of the student subject as defined by university policies arises from the Honours thesis I wrote during my undergraduate education. My undergraduate thesis outlined a series of recommendations for addressing student parent needs. One recommendation was to create policies that specifically address student parenting at the university; however, this was initially met with resistance, primarily from some stakeholders who suggested policy change could be onerous or create difficulties for instructors (Siever 2019). The university is addressing some of these recommendations, specifically by beginning to engage with student parents to discover their needs. Meeting with a senior administrator resulted in some action and a promise for that consultative process to continue. Another recommendation I advanced was to create a space for parents and their small children, where they could comfortably relax, study, and attend to family needs. While the space I envisioned is not yet in place, by the following semester, two parent rooms, designed for a parent and baby or small child, were created in the Students' Union Building and the Science Commons. This was a direct response to a need on campus, accompanied by the policy (analyzed in this thesis) that clearly outlines its accessibility.

As my Honours research on student parents suggests, student parenting is largely invisible within a post-secondary context. Given that the default university student is imagined as one without outside responsibilities—including dependent children—events and services at the University of Lethbridge are primarily, and have been historically, directed towards that student. Whether it is event times or specific types of events, student parents often cannot participate or are not interested, as it takes time away from their children and home responsibilities. This also extends to coursework and classrooms, where many instructors are unaware of or unwilling to extend support or understanding to the challenges student parents face with balancing their

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studies with childcare responsibilities. My Honours thesis made these findings quite evident. None of my participant parents engaged with on-campus events, and most found *some* support from staff or faculty but were very careful with whom they confided in or asked for assistance (Siever 2019, 41). As I maintain,

> Invisibility is where the neoliberal university and the student parent collide. With neoliberal imperatives that demand increased involvement and dedication to studies and educational or extra-curricular activities to demonstrate commitment to education, the student parent is left behind. The student parent, unable to fully participate in student life, is perceived as less committed to post-secondary study and is relegated to the periphery which renders them invisible (41–42).

As one demographic that faces inequity in the post-secondary institution, the question of inequity for student parents rises as a place of inquiry within institutional policies. However, understood from an intersectional perspective, the student parent incorporates other identities that may inform equity for them. My current analysis of undergraduate student policies at the University of Lethbridge, refines and explicates how the student subject is informed by enlisting a more comprehensive analysis of the student subject in these policies. In so doing, I demonstrate the characteristics of the student subject produced by the policies.

Background and Research Focus

Scholarly literature in sociological and higher education examines student experiences, within gender and student parenting research in North America and the United Kingdom. This research highlights that the assumptions held that normative student who attends post-secondary education is white, male, young, and unencumbered with outside responsibilities (Moreau 2016; Pearson 2013). The student who is the presumed subject of university policies, is often implicitly or explicitly expected to conform to this normative ideal: one who is exclusively focused on studying, as well as on volunteer work that contributes to their academic work. Undergraduate

student policies that centre this student subject may exclude those who do fit these norms, including student parents or students who have other responsibilities, such as caring for parents or siblings, as their opportunities to participate in volunteer or extracurricular activities may be limited (Sallee 2016; Cox and Sallee 2018). Despite the rising demographic of a diverse population of students within higher education, the myth of the ideal or normative student remains (Moreau 2016). I concur with the scholars who argue that these ideals inform university policies, and these policies, in turn, advise students how they should perform in a post-secondary context (Moreau 2016; Kelly, Fair, and Evans 2017; Wong and Chiu 2020).

My understanding of an "ideal" student is based on the scholarship of researchers who have previously examined the student subject. To better explain the way the scholarship critiques the concept of an "ideal" student, which underlines the imperatives of a "normative" student, it is necessary to understand that this does not refer to students who are the highest performing students. "Ideal" is a social construct centred on specific assumptions or expectations of performance; essentially, "the construction of ideals is integral in identity development, even if imagined" (Wong and Chiu 2020, 55). This conceptualization is not confined to a specific individual in the student body, but rather is a collection of expected student behaviours that define who a student *should* be (Wong and Chiu 2020; Moreau 2016). These expected behaviours generally centre around the students' availability for study and volunteering within the university context.

The student subject is both the target of and produced by university policies. This thesis assumes that the normative student is constituted and reproduced through university policies. Post-secondary institutional policies at the University of Lethbridge are created by different governing bodies and committees made up of staff, faculty, and students to define and guide

anyone who is part of the university community. As guiding documents, institutional policies outline the purpose of education, as well as responsibilities of students, faculty, and staff. The normative student is produced in and through policies directed towards expectations of student performance[1] and behaviour, whether that is in an academic or non-academic context.

One University of Lethbridge policy that sketches a portrait of the normative student, for example, is the *Principles of Student Citizenship*. This policy serves as a foundation for all student policies, focusing on a general outline of personal responsibility and behaviour. In this policy, the student subject is conceived as a generalized being, undefined, except for how they must conduct themself. Essentially, policies, in general, situate the student as one-dimensional and finite, yet made to represent all students. The divergent situations and lived experiences of the student are often ignored for the sake of the stereotypical, that is, normative presumptions. As the thesis will argue in Chapter 3, the impact of this generalized stereotypical is especially for racialized and Indigenous students.

When policy is generalized and based on norms then difference is neglected thereby reinforcing institutional inequities. Institutional inequities have been extensively theorized through the lens of diversity and racialization (Henry et al. 2017). While inequity is often raised in public institutional discourse, efforts to implement specific measures and carry out directives are minimal or nonexistent (Henry et al. 2017). Anti-racism policy development has been "a slow and contentious process" (171) and significantly, equity initiatives are "unevenly distributed in higher education" (203). Implementing equity policies presents as arduous and

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[1] As well as faculty performance and behaviours and the responsibilities of the University should these policies be ignored or transgressed.

prolonged, with noticeable gaps in implementation. When equity offices are created in post-secondary education, they primarily focus on faculty and staff; student concerns are less often included and if they are, they are consigned to student services and deans' offices (203). The University of Lethbridge provides supports and reporting for inequity through reporting procedures along with equity initiatives such as the creation of an Equity, Diversion, and Inclusion position. All community members, students, staff, and faculty are nominally able to find support and services through Student Services and Human Resources (*Harassment and Discrimination Policy* A5.1).

The University of Lethbridge has participated in equity initiatives, promoting awareness, education, and recognition of Indigeneity and Indigenous peoples on campus and in the community. The first Native Studies programme commenced in the spring 1975 semester and has grown and expanded over the years, with ongoing initiatives and actions that extend to the broader community (*Indigenous Initiatives*–University of Lethbridge, https://www.uleth.ca/president/indigenous-initiatives). These initiatives have largely been prompted by students and faculty, and initially motivated by Blackfoot elders, Dr. Leroy Littlebear, Elder Keith Chiefmoon, along with Roy Weasel Fat[2] (Roy Pogorzelski[3], Facebook messenger comment to author, 19 June/21) but also supported and sanctioned by the university president (Opinko 2020, n.p.). Indigenous scholars and activists have called for decolonization of post-secondary education, pointing to broader measures that include integrating Indigenous knowledges and cosmologies in curricula across all disciplines; additionally, hiring more

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[2] Roy Weasel Fat is the current president of Red Crow College (2013 to the present time).
[3] Roy Pogorzelski was the Director of Indigenous Student Affairs in the Iikaisskini (Low Horn) Gathering Place (named for Leroy Littebear and located at the U of L) at this time.

Indigenous professors, instructors, and leaders. Implementing Indigenous knowledge expansively, for example, is still a work in progress at the University of Lethbridge[4].

University undergraduate student policies that envision undergraduate students in normative ways discussed earlier fail to account for the diversity of student lives. For example, students with disabilities, student parents, many Indigenous students (to name but a few) challenge the normative student ideal as their needs and experiences can fall outside the conventional awareness of student activity. Policies that seek to accommodate these demographics may still fail to recognize these students as outside the normative sphere, and veritably render them invisible, or at least, obscure them. However, like all students, non-traditional students learn what is expected through "interactions with faculty and peers who transmit the disciplinary values and norms" (Sallee 2016, 54).

This thesis is based on an in-depth, feminist post-structural discourse analysis of 17 University of Lethbridge policies directed to undergraduate students. These policies originate in the Student Affairs, Health and Safety, and Facilities Management, Academic Operations, and Governance sections of university policies, found on the University of Lethbridge website. The policies address different modes of student conduct, whether academic or non-academic, along with different policies affecting their learning or housing. Other policies I analyze, also located through the U of L website, address the following: emergency financial needs, grade appeals, degrees, accommodations for disabled studies, and library access. I carefully read these policies multiple times, extracting themes that informed my analysis. To uncover counter narratives, I

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[4] The Iniskim Education Committee at the U of L follows the Blackfoot and Other Indigenous Peoples Protocol Handbook, following the GFC Bylaws, guide the university on Indigenous issues and information. https://www.ulethbridge.ca/first-nations-metis-inuit/iniskim-education-committee

consulted university publications. The *Meliorist*, a student-run publication, provides information on student activism that challenges the predominant view of the normative student subject seen and produced by university policies, and was a primary source for the counter narratives.

Initially, my research plan was to conduct an analysis of the student subject in the university policies, along with interviewing stakeholders at the University of Lethbridge, and conduct a mapping project. The mapping project would have involved leading student parents around the university to map spaces that were child-friendly, where parents felt comfortable bringing their babies and small children. The COVID-19 pandemic made the latter project impossible, as the university was largely shut down, and it was not prudent or safe to bring a large group of individuals to move around the university. While interviewing stakeholders was still possible, it would have been more arduous, and so this adjusted how I conducted my research for this thesis.

As I noted in my Honours thesis, more non-traditional students are attending post-secondary education, and the population of student parents have been increasing steadily at all levels of education (Siever 2019). Despite the shifts in student demographics, the increasing discursive creation of the student as a "learner" undermines the reality of students who fail to fit a normative ideal (Leathwood and O'Connell 2003, 599). Sociologists Carole Leathwood and Paul O'Connell (2003) maintain that "constructions of the 'student are changing [and there is] a shift away from the generally accepted, but one-dimensional, definitions of 'the student' and the university'" (598). Yet "the construction of a 'normal' student persists and is reinforced by the classification of others as 'non-traditional'" (599). This is where my research examines and illuminates the discourse of the student subject within institutional policies.

As I argued in my undergraduate thesis, "invisibility is where the neoliberal university and the student parent collide" (Siever 2019, 41). This perspective applies to all marginalized students yet in disparate ways. Inquiry into the production and effects of a normative student subject within post-secondary institutional practices and policies that address student behaviour and needs is a significant area of research. While student policies are meant to apply to all students, the question remains: Who is the student subject? As such, my central research question is: Who is the student subject imagined and produced by the policies that are directed at undergraduate students at the University of Lethbridge? The sub-questions are: What norms circulating within these policies fashion a particular kind of student subject? Where do those outside the normative construct of the student subject fit within the policies?

In this thesis, I focus on the undergraduate student population, although many of the same imperatives and assumptions apply to graduate students. At times, graduate students do appear in this thesis, and several of the policies are directly relevant to them, as well as undergraduate students. However, my decision to centre this thesis on undergraduate students was to streamline the analysis of the student subject within policies and ensure a sharpened analysis of the student in these particular University of Lethbridge policies.

Thesis Outline

In Chapter One: *Literature Review*, I discuss the scholarly conversations around the student-subject, post-secondary institutional inequalities that are highlighted in university policies, and the neoliberal university. I include a background discussion of neoliberalism and its effects. The central focus of this literature review is the neoliberal university and its effects.

In Chapter Two: *Theoretical Frameworks and Methodologies* I explain the feminist post-structural analytic that I employed to analyze the policies. This theoretical cum methodological

framework is useful for understanding and explaining power relations that circulate in the policies. Following this, I discuss the utility of a Foucauldian theory of power including concepts such as disciplinary power, subjectivity and agency, and discourse. For the methodology part of the chapter, I describe the policies used to analyze the student subject, listed in a chart; I created a template using a coding system to review the data. This coding system draws on qualitative coding methods, described by Johnny Saldaña (2012). Additionally, samples of the code and my final template are shown. Finally, I also consider student activism by examining student initiatives and reports of specific actions and activism students engaged in from the beginning of the University in 1967.

Chapter Three: *The Disciplined Student: Responsibility Through Advocacy* discusses my analytic findings. Here I examine the disciplinary subject with a focus on the "responsible" student. I also consider how equity is (or isn't) situated within policies. Additionally, I examine agency and the metaphorical cis-heteronormative nuclear family in relation to the university. I discuss how power and agency interconnect for the student subject, as well as how the student subject is situated in the policies in relation to the university. Through this analysis, it is my contention that there is a discernible view of the "responsible" student subject that is produced and reproduced in these University of Lethbridge policies.

Conclusion: The conclusion completes my thesis, summarizing the findings and reflecting on the research process. It also points to future possibilities as suggested by the findings.

Chapter One: Literature Review

Pre-existing literature on the neoliberal university and the student subject suggest a need to further explore the structures, power differentials, and possible barriers or supports that inform the student subject and their educational journey. This literature review outlines neoliberalism in a Canadian post-secondary context, and the following: neoliberalism and post-secondary education in Canada, neoliberalism and the student consumer, post-secondary equity initiatives, equity, racialization and the university, neoliberal university and equity work, and strategies for addressing inequity. These topics remain key components of discussions around equity initiatives at universities. The literature I retrieved to build my own analysis of the student subject in policies at the University of Lethbridge discusses institutional equity and the student subject and suggests further streams of inquiry. My literature review identifies literature gaps about who is missing within discussions about institutional inequity.

1.1 Neoliberalism and the Canadian University

1.1.1 Neoliberalism and Post-Secondary Education in Canada

Canada's post-secondary system is complex given that education in Canada "is a provincial responsibility, with each province and territory managing its own system of institutions, structures, and policies (Brownlee 2015, 6). Nonetheless, over the past several decades, funding to post-secondary institutions across the country has fallen significantly. For example, following the introduction in 1995 of the Canada and Health Transfer (CHST), the

proportion of federal monies going to post-secondary education dropped.[5] Alongside this federal retrenchment, provinces added their own spin. As Brownlee (2015) notes, Alberta reduced its spending on higher education by 21 percent over a three-year period beginning in 1994. "Perhaps more than any other province," he writes, "the reallocation of post-secondary resources by the Alberta government was designed to achieve a specific set of policy objectives", including prioritizing the role of higher education as a source of vocational training and "augmenting the amount of knowledge and technology transferred by universities to the private sector" (39).

As per capita education spending fell in all provinces, throughout the 1990s, universities began to make choices to compensate. One of these choices, as Brownlee (2015) maps out, has been a turn to the private sector and an increased reliance on corporate sponsorship, which has expanded and continues to rise as access to public funds becomes scarcer. Sociologists Sandra Acker and Anne Wagner (2017) argue that there is pressure "to secure external funding, combined with the need to satisfy funding bodies' preferences or supposed preferences" (70). Competition to secure funding is accompanied by unacknowledged work put into funding proposals. The work may fall on the shoulders of only one or two researchers, and other team members may have to move on to other work out of necessity. More emphasis is put on "output . . . [compromising quality" (69). Critical cultural theorist Henry Giroux (2014) concurs, suggesting that "the lure of . . . lucrative partnerships is all the more irresistible given the cumulative consequences of decades of ever-receding state financial support for higher education" (106).

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[5] The CHST (1996–2003) was a financing mechanism brought in by the federal Liberal party that reduced federal transfers to provinces and gave provinces more discretion over how funds were to be divided between health care, education, and other social programs (Brownlee 2015, 38). See also htts://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/programs/federal-transfers/hisoty-health-social-transfers.html

Post-secondary institutions are compelled to stay relevant and in existence, so they must find funding wherever possible. First, there is a high demand for university education, as it is increasingly difficult to acquire and maintain stable employment without such an education. Universities are also seen as a "public service [preparing] people to be citizens as well as to produce public knowledge" (Giroux 2014, 7). Substantially, universities are considered essential institutions, necessary "to informing public life and civic participation" (7). When corporations provide funding, the customary response is to enter into a mutually beneficial arms-length partnership that allows the institutions to continue offering degrees and research. Historically, while education has been idealized for a higher purpose— "an 'idea' . . . [with the ability] to explore the full range of human capacities and knowledge" (14), it has been publicly promoted "that education should be viewed primarily as a form of economic investment" (23). Giroux maintains that in North America, From the 1950s to the 1970s there was an increased emphasis on improving educational access, better wages and conditions for academics, and social action promoting higher education access (25). This changed, by the early 1970s with expanding "active corporate involvement in higher education [to] precipitate a new era of economic rationality, 'accountability' and market-based restructuring" (26). As Brownlee (2015) maintains, "increasingly . . .university education is regarded as a private rather than a public good, where higher learning is viewed less as a right of citizenship and more as a purchasable commodity" (27). With the introduction of corporate monies, corporate sponsors also wage influence on university policy, course development, and educational focus (Acker and Wagner 2017).

The University of Lethbridge has engaged with corporate partnerships over the years, beginning in the 1980s, and increasingly continues to benefit from financial sponsorship through

scholarships, bursaries, and endowments for specific facilities or programs (Tennant, n.d.). More recently, the Faculty of Management at the U of L has been renamed and transformed into the Dhillon School of Business in 2018 after a $10 million endowment made by Navjeet (Bob) Dhillon, CEO of Mainstreet Equity Corporation. While this was not the first corporate donation to the U of L, according to a university communication, it was the "largest donation in the institution's history" (Kenney 2018). Previously, in 2007, the 1st Choice Centre for Sport and Wellness facility opened with renovations and new construction of fitness and wellness rooms. This was possible through a City of Lethbridge, University of Lethbridge, and private funding[6] (O'Dea, n.d.).

The corporatization of Canadian universities is directly tied to the rise of neoliberalism as a form of capitalist accumulation. Neoliberalism is a transnational political and economic project that aims to remake the relationship between state, market, and citizenship. As Stephen Dillon (2018) explains, as an economic project, "neoliberalism claims to expand the individual liberty of a rational, self-interested actor through the governance of a free market" (10; see also Harvey 2005). It does this by dismantling unions; cutting or eliminating public funding or social services, including education; privatizing public resources; undoing environmental, labour, health, and safety regulations; deregulating the financial and banking industries, and expanding free trade through agreements such as NAFTA, the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas, and most recently the new Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement, created and implemented by Canadian, United States, and Mexican governments, which came into force on July 1, 2020.

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[6] An example of this is funding provided by 1st Choice Savings and Credit Union, a Southern Alberta financial institution.

Bronwyn Davies and Peter Bansel (2007) argue that "through discourses of inevitability and the installation of moral absolutes, democratic debate are obviated, rendering a kind of moral-economic totalitarianism" (251). Additionally, notions of individual freedom, choice, and autonomy appeal to the general population, with "the individualized subject of choice [finding] it difficult to imagine those choices as being shaped by anything other than [their] own naturalized desire or [their] rational calculations" (Davies and Bansel 2007, 251). Neoliberalism is a value system that ensures the success of the market, especially for corporations, through decreased state intervention and regulation of the labour market (Harvey 2005, 6). In short, neoliberalism centres economic, political, and social life around the prioritization of "the mobility and proliferation of capital at all costs" (Dillon 2018, 10). The value of neoliberalism, adopted by University administrators in the face of declined government support for education, directly affects the student subject in post-secondary education, informing their education choices and experiences.

As political theorist Wendy Brown (2019) states, "economic privatization remains the familiar face of neoliberalism and keeps more veiled the equally important force of privatization constituted by extending the reach of the 'personal, protected sphere'" (108). "Freedom" and individual responsibility, seen as inherent "rights", are understood as necessary and immovable values, superseding social responsibility. In other words, neoliberalism naturalizes itself through discourses of freedom, democracy, equality, and opportunity. As Dillon (2018) argues, these terms "became methodologies for making incarceration, imperialism, poverty, racism, heteropatriarchy, and capital accumulation synonymous with the collective good" (11). Under conditions of neoliberalism, one's experiences of homelessness, poverty, illness, or overwork are understood as the result of isolated, individual choices, rather than the outcome of privatization,

deregulation, the dismantling of social welfare, or increasing policing, and ever-expanding regimes of incarceration. Post-secondary education is not outside of neoliberal logics of privatization, corporatization and capital accumulation given universities increasing reliance on corporate endorsement and financial support as well as the corporatization of academic research. Under neoliberalism, public institutions, such as schools, are understood as part of the market, which can explain why industry influence is considered appropriate (Davies and Bansel 2007; Raddon and Harrison 2015).

Canadian post-secondary education is a prominent commodity globally, highly valued internationally (Bozheva 2020; Johnstone and Lee 2017; Stein and de Andreotti 2016). Similarly, Canada actively recruits international students (Bozheva 202; Johnstone and Lee 2017; Stein and de Andreotti 2016). Through dedicated efforts to recruit international students for Canadian post-secondary institutions, neoliberalism is positioned "as a natural evolution or a 'rational' decision-making at the individual, familial, institutional, and national level; [an] 'organic response' to fast-growing technology and the development of new knowledge-based economies" (Johnstone and Lee 2017, 1065). Recruitment efforts include engaging with family members of prospective international students, accentuating the benefits of a Canadian education for the family and the community as a whole (Johnstone and Lee 2017). Much discussion about the globalization of Canadian education and recruitment of international students centres around the supposition that there is a "skills shortage" nationwide (Goldberg 2006; Johnstone and Lee 2017). Likewise, providing an opportunity for international students to study in Canada is situated to assist them in building skills that will help them participate in a global economy (Johnstone and Lee 2017; Goldberg 2006). Western education is considered superior, "as a desirable product in the global higher education market, and it simultaneously underlies the racist reception of many

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international students by their faculty and peers" (Stein and de Andreotti 2016, 226). However, as Johnstone and Lee (2017) maintain, "the global rush to proactively recruit international students as knowledge workers creates an ever-increasing influx of migrants, which actually results in greater benefit to the receiving nations through migration, trade, and colonization than for those migrants in search of a better future" (1067). Globalization of post-secondary education through the recruitment of international students significantly benefit Canada, as international students financially contribute extensively to the GDP (Johnstone and Lee 2017; Stein and de Andreotti 2016; Beck 2012).

Recruiting international students is important to the University of Lethbridge. As "the University of Lethbridge attracts over 8,500 students annually, including more than 600 international students from over 80 different countries around the world" (U of L – International Recruitment 2021, n.p.), it is apparent that international students are important to the university particularly as a source of revenue as they pay higher tuition fees. Like all students, international students also contribute significantly to Lethbridge's local economy through home rental and purchase of goods and services (Greenfield 2021). In short, this thesis understands the effects of public retrenchment in the post-secondary education sector, as part and parcel of the logics of neoliberalism, and the impacts globalization of post-secondary education has had is crucial to help contextualize my analysis of the ideal student within University of Lethbridge policies.

1.1.2 Neoliberalism and the Student Consumer

Scholars insist that the increasing globalization and marketization of post-secondary education accompanies the ascension of conceptualizing students primarily as consumers (Scally 2016; Brownlee 2015). There are several ways students are positioned as consumers in post-secondary education. As previously mentioned, international students contribute significantly to

the GDP, through tuition and individual spending (Stein and de Andreotti 2016; Shields 2013). However, education as a whole is commodified and situated as a "product" with students "purchasing" it (Todd et. al 2017; Tomlinson 2017; Brownlee 2015). In a consumerist construct, students come to understand their education through a "co-productive" model (between the student and the instructor) that places demand on high grade expectations along with more student focused or student produced input into what their education provides (Todd et al. 2017, Des Roches 2019; Tomlinson 2017; Brooks et al. 2021).

Academic entitlement is another facet of the student consumer, characterized by lower engagement in education, but in higher expectations of outcome. Students strive for a "degree" over a learning experience (Silverio et. al 2021; Brooks et al. 2016; Todd et. al 2017). Fundamentally, the construction of the student consumer is underlined through institutional and government policies that are informed by fiscal imperatives (Brooks et. al 2016; Tomlinson 2017; Brooks et. al 2021).

A dominant feature of neoliberalism is the idea of "choice": that is, the idea that decisions in life, including the pursuit of post-secondary education, centre on privatized decision making. But this conceptualization fails to account for structural relations. Although individual circumstances may limit options when and individual decides where to attend post-secondary education and how to pay for it, the neoliberal student subject is still understood through a personal choice frame (Davies and Bansel 2007; Bozheva 2020; Shields 2013). Scholars suggest that student's "choice", however, is captured in a power dynamic, where students make educational decisions based on future career opportunities, as well as access to funding (Williams 2008; Brownlee 2015; Tomlinson 2017). Rising tuition. increased corporate funding and decreased public funding create a financially distraught situation for students that Jeffrey

Williams (2008) argues is an "indentured . . . financial services system" (75). Students who take out student loans are indebted for years, after their education is completed. This corresponds with Stephen Dillon's (2018) concept of the neoliberal-carceral state that "describes the intimacy between the possession of life itself by the market under neoliberal economics and the . . . systems of racialized capture and caging under law-and-order politics" (4). While student indebtedness is not the same as being incarcerated, student loans do keep students under a burden of debt and particularly target lower income students who lack alternative financial means (Williams 2008). Financial challenges are relevant to the student subject as constructed within University of Lethbridge policies.

When Ralph Klein was premier of Alberta (1992–2006), tuition fees increased exponentially. In response to that, the Alberta government, under Ed Stelmach after his election in 2006, created a tuition fee regulation limiting extensive increases beyond inflation rates (Kenney 2010, n.p.). Nonetheless, tuition currently continues to rise, and with budget cuts and reduced provincial funding support, the University of Lethbridge will see tuition increases ongoing. With tuition costs rising again in 2021, "the [U of L] is starting to worry about accessibility for post-secondary education in Alberta, and whether students will be able to afford the fees that come with advanced education" (Pearson 2021, n.p.).

Neoliberal imperatives are also embedded within university policies which discursively produce a post-secondary student-subject who is free of outside dependents or responsibility as a student and who is self-determining. As already discussed, one way the student subject is produced within the neoliberal university is as a consumer. Sociologist Jamie Brownlee (2015) suggests that neoliberal directives, assisted by rhetorical strategies, "transform students into educational consumers—or as customers purchasing a service or a private good—who are

encouraged to extract maximum 'value' for their tuition dollars" (75). Subsequently, the characterization of students as educational consumers "has changed the way universities relate to their 'students,' as well as the ways in which students view learning, knowledge production and their relationship to the university" (79). Post-secondary university neoliberal precepts are, therefore, inscribed and established in the post-secondary context, through policies created to govern and regulate student activity and behaviour.

1.2 Post-Secondary Equity Initiatives

Scholars argue that equity in post-secondary education is an ongoing issue. Dissension around the terms "equity" and "equality" leads to further misunderstandings and a lack of action on inequity (Al Shaibah 2014; Anderson 2018). Canadian post-secondary institutional anti-racist policies, for example, address inequity in broad ways, which sometimes render daily racialization invisible (Henry et. al 2017; Segeren 2018; Morley 2012). Institutions contribute to inequities when they focus on individual incidents of racism or discrimination rather than systemic institutional inequity (Rezai-Rashti et al 2016; Cook-Sather 2018). Institutional policies may replace action on inequity in institutions when they are not properly enacted (Ahmed 2012; Henry et. al 2017; al Shaibah 2014). When addressing inequity institutionally, widely circulating equity initiatives is important (Ahmed 2012; Kitchener 2017; Anderson 2018). Scholars argue that university equity initiatives are unevenly distributed, which impacts implementation, and uneven equity initiatives impact obscure experiences of discrimination (Henry et. al 2017; al Shaibah 2014; Ahmed 2012). At the University of Lethbridge, efforts are being made to address and reduce inequities through the hiring of an Executive Director of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion along with several other initiatives at the recommendation of the President's Advisory Committee. Some of these initiatives include updating existing relevant policies and creating a

strategy for promoting them (U of L – Report on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity 2019, 4). This will be further discussed in chapter two.

1.2.1 Equity, Racialization and the University

Frances Henry et al. (2017) look at several Canadian universities to examine institutional equity under neoliberal conditions. Particularly, the authors suggest that "neoliberal ideology did not invent racialization, but it has enabled forms of racialization that fit very well in today's universities" (298). Equity takes a particular kind of meaning within a neoliberal university. Although racialized and Indigenous scholars strive to combat inequity in the academy, they face barriers, as "neoliberalism is entrenched in the protection of Whiteness, or the dominant group, and uses competition, instrumentality, and productivity as tools to maintain the status quo" (300). Through an announcement made denouncing racism on the University of Lethbridge notice board, senior administration acknowledged that "Indigenous, Black, and other racialized students encounter prejudice and systemic barriers and oppression in their daily lives" (U of L – *Notice Board* 2020, n.p.). This statement was in a notice posted to the Notice Board, denouncing increasing racist incidents occurring across the world during the Spring of 2020, many connected to the COVID-19 pandemic. The letter also suggests ways to become involved in anti-racism actions, and the importance of challenging racist thinking and behaviour. It cites the *Harassment and Discrimination Policy*. Supports and resources are offered online and at the university, with access to counselling and resources such as support from Indigenous Elders and community resources specialists (U of L– *Notice Board* 2020, n.p.). This statement affirms the University's commitment to condemning racism and standing in solidarity with university community members who are affected by it. However, systemic racism and discrimination must also be named specifically in the policies, more clearly laid out with a process to eliminate racism.

Similar to Henry et al, Arig Al Shaibah (2014) suggests that governmentality[7], as a process of neoliberalism, impedes equitable practices within the university. Consequently, administrators who are responsible for ensuring equity "may be cast into roles predetermined by social and institutional expectations. Their awareness and agency of the scripts prescribed by social and institutional norms will depend on their critical consciousness and willingness to be active social and political agents" (326). The administrative commitment to equity is a key factor in increasing equity in the post-secondary institution. Al Shaibah's dissertation is an in-depth critical race and anti-racist feminist look at the barriers to achieving institutional equity in higher education in several Canadian universities She argues that despite the ongoing desire to have "an increasingly diversified body of students in post-secondary institutions" (1) equity is still largely out of reach. She suggests that

> discourses associated with hegemonic ideologies, which drive dominant political, social, and cultural norms in society and in organizations, tend to marginalize discourses associated with those ideologies rendered radical and subordinate in contrast to the perceived central and dominant ideologies (77).

She argues that these hegemonic ideologies—including the discourses of political correctness, multiculturalism, and anti-racism—fail to adequately address systemic institutional racism and thus sustain hegemonic practices and systems. She does conclude that "educational equity *is* a policy issue" (291, [italics in original]) but that this must be coupled with the "social and intellectual mission of the academy" (292). The campus climate must reflect the commitment of the institution in all aspects to properly address inequity at Canadian post-secondary

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[7] Al Shaibah invokes Foucault's notions of governmentality, "understood as a set of practices, mentalities, rationalities, techniques, and strategies by which subjects are governed in order to produce citizens befitting policies prescribed by a government" (Al Shaibah 2014, 70).

institutions. Equity is a significant issue when considering the student subject in University of Lethbridge policies.

1.2.2 Neoliberal University and Equity Work

Philosopher Allison Segeren (2017) theorizes equity in Ontario universities, through a context of neoliberal globalization that emphasizes market value, influencing university policymaking and, thus, inhibiting equity. In addition, "performative accountability" (186) shapes practices that further hinder equity practice. Education professor Alison Cook-Sather (2018) examines equity at Bryn Mawr and Haverford College in the United States, through a constant comparison–grounded theoretical lens that analyzes racialized, LGBTQIA+, and newcomer student experiences with equity policies and practices. These scholars maintain that there is a shared responsibility between institutions and students to provide greater likelihood of equity for all university community members. Segeren (2017) demonstrates how equity initiatives were successful when school leaders embodied dispositions of "arrogant humility, passionate visionary leadership, and a tenacious commitment to social justice [motivating other school community members] even when these initiatives or programs were unpopular amongst teaching staff" (182).

Philosopher Valmae H. Kitchener (2017) conceptualizes equity at the University of Tasmania in Australia, through social justice that "speaks to policy makers . . . [suggesting] new ways to understand, not solve, intractable problems [of equity]" (80). Central to equitable practices is the idea of human rights, wherein such endeavours are grounded (212). Philosopher Heather Syme Anderson (2018) theorizes gender equity in Manitoba administrative educational policy documents through a feminist analysis and suggests that "the predominant conceptualization of gender equity [is] feminist empiricist" (222). She maintains that equity

measures turn to a liberal feminist approach that focuses on "overcoming sex-role stereotyping and materials showing positive images of women" (223). These scholars concur that equity is an important concept to consider, helping to understand how policies address equity for students, and how equity/inequity affects students.

University equity work is often ambiguous and can become more about "saying the right things" (Ahmed 2012, 59). Additionally, when equity speech becomes official language, spoken by authorities, it gathers value and traction, indicating that others must carry that language forward (Ahmed 2012; Lane 2015; Al Shaibah 2014). When institutions engage with equity commitments, they must engage productively by carrying through and enacting the policies for equity to have meaning (Ahmed 2012). Also, despite an increase in institutional equity initiatives, they conceal racism and sustain neoliberalism within post-secondary institutions (Henry et. al 2017; Rezai-Rashti et. al 2017). This unexamined concealment of ongoing racism is likewise complicated when the pressure to promote diversity and equity is left only to the racialized and marginalized; it is work that needs broader support within the institutions.

International students face racism and equity concerns as well. Although discussions about racism faced by international students centre around individual experiences, education scholars Sharon Stein and Vanessa Oliviera de Andreotti (2016) argue that "race frames the concept of the international student more broadly within the West [and] that rationales for their recruitment [and how the student is perceived] are shaped by a dominant global imaginary grounded in Western supremacy" (228). Equity in higher education is highlighted through the acceptance of international students to post-secondary institutions in Canada, primarily through English language proficiency (Scally 2016; Goldberg 2006; Dobinson and Mercieca 2020). As well, recruitment of international students focuses on how international students are "sources of

income and intellectual capital that support the continued prosperity of the Western university and nation-state [and] unworthy or inferior participants in the contest for social mobility through educational and employment opportunities (i.e., as 'competition')" (Stein and de Andreotti 2016). This is where the international student, through the globalization of education, connects with the concept of the student consumer. While international students are not the only students positioned as consumers, within a neoliberal frame, they significantly participate as a consumer, and are understood as economic assets to every university in the budget-starved environment handed down provincially, and so fit within this notion.

1.2.3 Strategies for Addressing Inequity

Inclusion can be a fraught topic within discussions of equity, and yet scholars maintain that it is a crucially important aspect that needs addressing as "knowledge in the university is not complete, nor will it be, until all of the voices that have been silenced, marginalized, or excluded are heard and respected" (Monture 2010, 24). Marginalized voices are central to acknowledging and increasing equity in higher education (David 2010; Monture 2010; Ainscow 2021). Strategies and initiatives need to be adequately created and implemented with applicable actions that clearly address inclusiveness (Tilak 2007; Leach 2013; Salmi and Bassett 2014). Support by senior administration for equity initiatives are essential for long term success (Henry et. al 2017; Klonoski et. al 2017). Understanding the student subject in University of Lethbridge policies includes knowing how effective endeavours addressing equity in university policies is for students.

With increasing diversity of students in both undergraduate and graduate programmes, some scholars suggest that it is important to pursue more equitable initiatives in higher education (David 2012; Kolonoski et. al 2017; Ainscow 2021). According to University of Lethbridge

demographic data, the Indigenous student and international student populations are increasing steadily along with the recruitment campaigns targeting students within both these demographics (Croil 2020). The literature suggests that universities must commit to equity that extends beyond recruitment and strategic plans to create more retention and support for higher education achievement for students (Basit 2012; Leach 2013; Gale and Tranter 2012). Scholars maintain that to achieve equity for disadvantaged students, a more effective strategy is one that combines financial support with support to overcome other barriers to higher education that include a lack of "epistemological equity" in educational systems that prioritize Eurocentric knowledge (Salmi and Bassett 2014; Klonoski et. al 2017; Gale and Tranter 2012). The literature also suggests that increasing equity in higher education is paramount for future leadership on a global level (Koppell et. al 2021; David 2012). Using this scholarship as guidance I ask: Do the University of Lethbridge policies I consult suggest that diverse knowledges are available to the student subject?

In sum, as my literature review highlights, scholarship on higher education argues that neoliberalism, through tenets of globalization and student consumerism, informs higher education and influences the shape and content of institutional policies and procedures. Inequities in post-secondary education finds traction through neoliberal and neocolonial structures that prioritize and entrench Western knowledge formations. This is particularly applicable to my understanding of the student subject in 17 University of Lethbridge policies examined in my research. This thesis now turns to examining equity and the neoliberal production of a normative student subject, employing a feminist critical discourse analysis.

Chapter Two: Theoretical Frameworks and Methodology

My overarching research question is: Who is the student subject imagined and produced by University of Lethbridge policies directed at undergraduate students at the University of Lethbridge? Subtending this question are further inquiries: Who is the student envisioned within these policies? How is the student described or addressed within the text of the policies? Do the policies incorporate language or targeted form of address that would include or exclude the non-normative student? If not, what are the norms that shape access to services for students?

To answer these questions, I employ a feminist post-structural analytic. Feminist post-structural theory challenges essentialist meanings of experience (Weedon 1997, 33) and "is a mode of knowledge production which uses poststructuralist theories of language, subjectivity, social process and institutions to understand existing power relations and to identify areas and strategies for change through . . . discourse" (40). Poststructuralism focuses on the "discursive construction of subjectivity, with the role of social institutions and the heterogeneous forms of power governing social relations" (Weedon 1987, 74), which is a primary concern for feminism. Drawing on concepts of common sense and humanist discourse, critical culture theorist Chris Weedon brings attention to the fundamental problems with patriarchal ideology, particularly when it comes to language. Feminism suggests an alternate understanding that centres women and marginalized subjects in discourse (Baxter 2008, 3). Theoretical discourses that centre gender differences are "often. . . written from the perspectives that assume the white male to be the norm against which all others should be measured" (Weedon 1999, 6) and "continue to be implicated in relations of power which both assume and produce structural relations of privilege and disadvantage (for gendered and racialized individuals)" (13). Weedon (1987) maintains that "it is important to see subjectivity as always historically produced in specific discourses and

never as one single fixed structure" (90). Feminist post-structural discourse analysis (FPDA) allows for this process and is "committed . . . to the principles of difference and deferral, never [fixed on] meaning once and for all" (Weedon 1987, 99). Thus, FPDA is useful for analyzing the position of the student subject in University of Lethbridge policies that I chose for this research.

Sociolinguist Judith Baxter (2008) maintains that FPDA assists in unravelling the complexity of discourse that maintains "dramatic shifts of power" (3) within subject positioning. Importantly, FPDA "has a mandate to contest grand narratives" (8). With this goal, FPDA is positioned to bring critical discourse to a deeper level of analysis and facilitate clearer understanding of language produced through colonial patriarchy. As FPDA is positioned to challenge the dominant narratives that accentuate discursive power structures, it serves as a useful analytic tool to analyze the ideal student subject in university policies.

2.1 Feminist Post-Structural Analytic

Feminist post-structuralism (FPS) is based on the idea that theorizing gender does not only need patriarchal or essentialist lenses (Frost and Eliachaoff 2014, 43) and that "experience has no inherent essential meaning" (Weedon 1997, 33). FPS brings a feminist account to post-structural theorizing of power, discourse, and subjectivity. Patricia Hill Collins (2019) suggests that intersectionality draws from various theories, including post-structuralism (88), but that feminist post-structuralism also benefits from drawing on an intersectional analytical lens. Intersectionality, she explains "the social world, and a heuristic thinking provides an accessible route for people who utilize intersectionality to address specific social problems" (24). Feminist post-structuralism provides a forum for identifying the assumptions and implications of other feminist theories, while also helping theorists "understand power relations, class, gender and race in ways that enable change" (Weedon 1997, 180). Attending to class, gender, and race

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intersecting power relations that produce and inform student experiences is important to my analysis of the student subject in University of Lethbridge policies.

Linguist Michelle M. Lazar (2007) argues that there is a "need to claim and establish a feminist perspective in language and discourse studies, [as it] is part of what feminists in academia have for many years criticized" (142). Feminism, including feminist theory, is about social change; Lazar maintains that "a feminist political critique of gendered social practices and relations is aimed ultimately at effecting social transformation" (145). She also asserts that critical praxis frames feminist critical discourse analysis and that "critical praxis research also dissolves the dichotomization between theory and practice among feminists" (146). Lazar draws in relationships of power and suggests that "the discursive constitution of the social can be analyzed broadly in terms of representations, relationships, and identities" (150). Analysing the student subject in the University of Lethbridge policies through a critical feminist lens provides opportunity for deeper understanding of the student produced and the norms circulating within.

Gender and subjectivity are fluid and "implicated in power relations" (Weedon 1997, 171), and discourses can illuminate the concepts of power, equity, and agency. For discourses to gain meaning, they are subject to "the agency of the individuals whom they [discourses] constitute and govern in particular ways as embodied subjects" (108). Understanding subjectivity and agency in discourse is important to this research and which I will expand on further.

Philosopher Michel Foucault's historical criticism of power has strongly influenced post-structural theorizing. With his critical approach to the "free subject," he expands the understanding of power and how it "traverses and produces things" (Foucault 1977, 119). Power and subjectivity work with each other, drawing attention to the flexibility of the subject within the processes involved in power and subjectivity. Post-structural scholars assume "that the

subject is *already* a discursively constituted subject when [they encounter] the discursive

possibilities of postructuralism" (Davies 2000, 137 [italics in original]), but education scholar

Bronwyn Davies (2000) extends this concept by suggesting that the subject is "constantly in

process; it only exists as process; it is revised and (re)presented through images, metaphors,

storylines, and other features of language" (137). Subjectivity is then, not a set position; it

constantly adapts and changes. Weedon (1997) maintains that "post-structuralism's concern with

the discursive construction of subjectivity . . . is motivated by a primary concern with

understanding the position of the individual . . . in society and the ways in which they are both

governed by and resist specific forms of power" (71). Therefore, one question I bring to bear

upon my analysis is: how is the student situated within U of L policies?

  Discourse, in post-structuralist theory, is conceptualized as "ways of constituting

knowledge, together with the social practices, forms of subjectivity and power relations which

inhere in such knowledges and the relations between them" (105). It produces something through

the "systematicity of the ideas, opinions, concepts, ways of thinking and behaving which are

formed with a particular context and because of the effects of those ways of thinking and

behaving (Mills 2007, 15).

  Feminist theorizing seeks to ascertain the patriarchal structures that exist in societies.

These structures "exist in the institutions and social practices of our society" (Weedon 1997, 3).

Feminism "generates new theoretical perspectives from which the dominant can be criticized,

and new possibilities envisaged" (5). Feminism and post-structuralism meet at the point where

assumptions are made about questions addressed by different feminist theories, and their

connection makes "their political assumptions explicit" (20). Feminist post-structural theory also

locates the "types of discourse from which particular feminist questions come" (20) within social

and institutional structures. University policies draw questions of the student subject within the policies; therefore, the analysis of the student subject within the University of Lethbridge policies lends itself to a feminist post-structural discourse analysis.

2.1.1 Disciplinary Power

Michel Foucault's (1990) conceptualization of power is central to feminist post-structural analysis. He maintains that power is present in every situation and every instance, that it "is not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with" (93). Power "traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse" (Foucault 2010, 119). Rather than being primarily a negative force imposed on individuals or communities, power exists as a "productive network which runs through the whole social body" (119). While those who write university policies are situated in institutional hierarchies of power, via holding administration, faculty positions, and governance, the point Foucault draws our attention to is that power is not simply located "in "or "held" by those writing university student policies but rather that the policies themselves are discursive terrain that produces a myriad of student-subject positions, forms of knowledge, and hence power. In other words, the university policies I use for my analysis of the student subject, as an institutional example of social relations of power, are *productive*, that is, they have effects.

One of these effects is that student-oriented policies produce the figure of "the responsible student." I will trace the contours of this subjectivity later in the thesis, but I highlight it here as an example of Foucault's theorization of one form of power, that is, disciplinary power. While some student-oriented policies are in fact about 'discipline' as conventionally understood (for example, *Student Discipline Policy–Non-Academic Offences*), my interest is in the disciplinary power wielded by policies is that which "produces subjected and

practised, 'docile' bodies . . . [establishing in the body the constricting link between an increased aptitude and an increased domination" (Foucault 1995, 138). The individual, that is, the student-subject, is "an effect of [disciplinary power] rather than the raw material upon which it impinges" (Hoffman 2011, 28). In other words, the student is created or produced by disciplinary power. Disciplinary power works to "instill capacities and enhance the productivity of individuals while promoting docility (Ransom 1997, 31).

These "docile" bodies are formed and shaped to perform and function through a training process "neither with nor without their consent" (Ransom 1997, 37). A disciplinary subject as Foucault has described, operates under protocols and directions that are also "part of a multi-segmentary machine" (Foucault 1995, 164). Fundamentally, the individual disciplinary subject, as a "responsible student" benefits the larger body or institution and the self. Therefore, is this student subject produced within University of Lethbridge policies situated to benefit the institution and the self?

A Foucauldian approach to analyzing power potentially or actually involves resistance. The subject positions and modes of embodied subjectivity constituted for the individual within particular discourses allow for different degrees and types of agency both compliant and resistant" (Weedon 1999, 120). Foucault's analysis of power provides feminist scholars an avenue to analyze agency and subjectivity. Power relations contain possibilities and opportunities for multiple interpretations in various discourses. The "decentring of singular centralized notions of power" (174) is a primary concern (for Foucault), and feminist post-structural analysts find Foucault's idea of disciplinary power is a useful tool for theorizing patriarchal power.

2.1.2 Subjectivity and Agency

      Post-structuralism considers subjectivity as "a discursive effect [that is] constituted and transformed over time" (Flax 1993, 96). Jane Flax (1993) maintains that "concepts of subjectivity operate as regulative ideals within historically delimited contexts [that] can never be neutral or universally true and binding" (96). Subjectivity is produced through "complex knowledge/power networks" (96). Weedon (1999) suggests that subjectivity is "an effect of culture which produces . . . a fragmented, contradictory [and multiple identity] subjectivity" (3). Notably, "the individual is never a fully coherent intentional subject . . . [but rather is] the site for competing and often contradictory modes of subjectivity" (104). A discursive subject is informed by different culturally constructed identities and power relations. Following this theorizing, I centre the "student subject", one who is produced through university policies and who may challenge the normative ideals produced in university policies.

      Agency is a complex notion within post-structuralist theorizations of subjectivity, where "the subject's positioning within particular discourses makes the 'chosen' line of action the only possible action, not because there are no other lines of action but because one has been subjectively constituted through one's placement within that discourse to *want* [italics in original] that line of action" (Davies 2000, 60). Bronwyn Davies (2000) further states that "agency is spoken into existence at any one moment. It is fragmented, transitory, a discursive position that can be occupied within one discourse simultaneously with its non-occupation in another" (68). While analyzing the student subject in the policies, I argue that the idea of student agency is fluid, informed by the policies and students can subvert discourses at various moments. Also, I argue that the student understands imperatives of behaviour in ways that challenge the normative construction of the student subject. Additionally, I maintain that students are

recognized as part of the university community. While I am interrogating the student-subject who emerges within policies, this does not negate the lived student experience, where students resist discursive constructions created within policies or elsewhere, defining themselves with agency.

Feminist post-structural analysis is uniquely situated to aid our critical understanding and to explicate subjectivity and agency of actors within a society. Weedon (1997) asserts that "poststructuralism's concern with the discursive construction of subjectivity . . . is motivated by a primary concern with understanding the position of [individuals] in society and the ways in which they are both governed by and resist specific forms of power" (71). Language is the location where "differences acquire meaning for the individual [and we] learn how to differentiate . . . and [give] meaning to assertive and compliant behaviour" (73). FPDA does not determine where a subject position resides, rather it delineates how individuals locate subjectivity or agency within power. Therefore, FPDA helps me discern how students are not only produced within U of L policies, but also how they are agents, and how and where they navigate subjectivity.

Weedon (1997) further maintains that "the meaning of experience is perhaps the most crucial site of political struggle over meaning, since it involves personal, psychic, and emotional investments on the part of the individual" (76). Thus, the individual is poised to assert agency, in addition to being acted upon. In a feminist post-structural analytic, the potentiality of resistance is part of the process. This concept is particularly useful for me as I strive to understand the subjectivity and agency of the student in student policies.

2.1.3 Discourse

Drawing on Foucault's analysis of power, Chris Weedon (1997) maintains that power is "exercised within discourses in the ways in which they constitute and govern individual subjects" (110). As well, it organizes connections between subjects through various discourses (110). She further argues that "power also structures relations between different subjects within or across discourses" (110), suggesting that university policies may disclose various power relations that exist between faculty, administration, and students. Sara Mills (2007) asserts that "discourses are not fixed but are the site of constant contestation of meaning" (14), which expands the possibility of multiple interpretations of discourses. She alleges that we must "consider the factors of truth, power, and knowledge [in discourse,] since it is because of these elements that discourse has effects" (16). Power is a "key element in discussions of discourse" (17) and, therefore—considering the power relations that inform and sustain discipline in the student subject—helps elucidate meanings within the policy discourse. Weedon (1999) affirms that post-structural feminism "sets out to show how foundationalist categories such as the body, nature, and the normal are discursively produced and are effects of power" (116). Understanding where power is activated in university policies facilitates an awareness of how to analyze its various manifestations and understand the formation of the student-subject produced, or challenged, in the policies.

Michel Foucault's theorizing has been central to the various discourse theories emerging in scholarly work. Discourse is not a solitary concept within his work, rather it remains a necessary element for understanding power. Beyond the words and texts written, discourses are created from "practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak" (Foucault 2010, 49). Discourses, in this sense, are productive. As linguist Sara Mills (2007) explains, "a

discursive structure can be detected because of the systematicity of the ideas, opinions, concepts, ways of thinking and behaving which are formed within a particular context, and because of the effects of those ways of thinking and behaving" (49). Foucault is interested in the materiality and power of discourse, and he emphasizes "that discourse is both that which constrains *and enables* [italics in original] writing, speaking, thinking" (Hook 2001, 523). University policies have the potential to suggest how the student is constrained or enabled, and Foucault's conceptualization of power is specifically useful to trace the student subject in policies. Additionally, Foucault accentuates the importance of "institutions, structures, and practices that limit and constrict the free flow of discourse, that both reinforce and renew it" (524). Such discursive structures, then, suggest a "will to truth", which is how "knowledge is put to work, valorized, [and] distributed" (Hook 2001, 524).

Securing "truth" is not the goal of discourse analysis; however, truths are expected within the discourse, and Foucault considers that "truth-conditions are extremely stable and secure, as situated in a highly specific and idiosyncratic matrix of historical and socio-political circumstances" (525). What remains important is "what *governs* [italics in original] statements, and the way in which they *govern* each other, so as to constitute a set of propositions which are scientifically acceptable" (Foucault 2010, 112). Attending to the workings of power is an important element to ascertain truth claims. Further, Foucault suggests there are exclusions working "internally to discourse—predominant amongst these are the discipline, the author, and the commentary" (Hook 2001, 526). These exclusionary systems raise the possibility of limits to what the discourse conveys and are the "products of repetition, discursive 'recirculation'" (526), and, according to Foucault, we must consider these exclusionary functions and "search for the scarcity of meaning, with what *cannot* [italics in original] be said, with what is impossible or

unreasonable within certain discursive locations" (527). Meaning is found in what is present in discourse, as well as what is absent. For example, and I will discuss this further, some identities are briefly referred to in policies, without further dissemination, such as Indigeneity. Other racialized subject positions are missing entirely or homogenized, for example, when referencing where students may be marginalized. While Indigeneity is referenced, other racialized categories are collapsed into "national or ethnic origin [and] immigration status" (U of L – *Harassment and Discrimination Policy* 1.3)

Feminist post-structuralist analysis addresses the notion of subjectivity within discourse to consider the constructions of meaning, inter-discursivity, and deconstruction of binary power relations, including the male–female, public–private, and objective–subjective (Baxter 2008, 244). Weedon (1997) iterates that "discourses are more than the ways of thinking and producing meaning. They constitute the 'nature' of the body, unconscious and conscious mind, and emotional life of the subjects which they [the discourses] seek to govern" (105). Importantly, "discourses do not exist in simple 'bipolar' relations of power and powerlessness" (107). Discourses create power in their expression. Feminist post-structural analysis queries these relations of power that emerge through discourse, unearthing the meanings that exhibit power relations. Mills (2007) claims that "feminist theory has . . . significantly modified the notion of discourse by setting it more clearly in its social context and by examining the possibilities of negotiating with these discursive structures" (92). Subject-positions imposed on individuals are more readily visible when a feminist post-structural discourse lens is applied to analysis.

What remains possible, with a feminist post-structural discourse analysis, is the discovery of paths for transformation. Baxter (2008) suggests that FPDA gives "space to marginalised or silenced voices" (3), while Weedon (1997) maintains that "discourse transmits and produces

power; it reinforces it but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile, and makes it possible to thwart it" (107). Power and subjectivity are important elements of analysis for analyzing U of L policies, and FPDA's effectiveness in querying power relations allows me to consider the student more expansively, in the policies. Therefore, I apply a feminist post-structural analytic to the student subject in University of Lethbridge policies.

I reviewed 17 University of Lethbridge policies to examine the systems of power that produce the subject category called "normative student" in the post-secondary context. Discourse is used in ways to "design . . . sentences and texts in ways that communicate their perspectives on reality, carry out various social activities, and allow them to enact different social identities" (Gee 2005, 5). Understanding documents that focus on student experience and expectations in the post-secondary institution provides insight about the normative student and how power is exhibited in the policies.

2.2 Research Methodology

In 2021, roughly 9000 undergraduate and graduate students attend the University of Lethbridge, located on traditional territory of the Siksika, Piikani, and Kainai, nations of the Blackfoot Confederacy. The university "is committed to the individual student as a person of ultimate work" (U of L Strategic Plan 2018, 3). Among the many services and programs offered to students, support and social opportunities are claimed by administrative statements to be high priority (University of Lethbridge—Services for Students 2020). Various organizations and centres within the university provide academic support and encourage innovation and creativity (University of Lethbridge—Academic Support 2020).

University policies, as with any institutional or organizational policies, are meant to provide a framework for governance and expectation of behaviour for anyone who is part of a

university community. Of particular interest to researchers like myself who study the student subject in institutional policy formation and language is how institutional policies promote equity, specifically gender, ability, or racial equity. As governing documents, these policies guide departments and individuals on procedure and practices and then to enact or enforce proceedings if required. As Henry et al. (2017) maintain, however, individual voices and concerns may be hidden in policies that uses ambiguous or broad, rather than precise, language.

Although these policies are individually meant to support various aspects of the student experience, they often sustain one another and intersect with each other, providing a contextual possibility for deeper understanding of the individual policy. As valuable and necessary documents within the university context, policies serve to provide a framework of understanding various aspects of the university. Additionally, university policies guide faculty and administration in procedure when conducting their work responsibilities. For my analysis, I consider how policies provide a framework for the student subject and also conceptualize the expected, or desired, student experience. Designed and functioning as "analytical frames [they are] performative artefacts through which actors attempt to order their world" (Cannizzo 2015, 203–204). The policies are essential, discursive documents that students, along with other university community members, depend on to structure and inform their conduct within the university setting. Accordingly, considering the student subject in University of Lethbridge policies is appropriate. The remainder of this chapter covers the methods I used to conduct this research.

2.2.1 Policy Data Retrieval and Data Description

The University of Lethbridge policies I use to analyze the student subject in this thesis were retrieved by accessing the university website under "Resources". Most policies are

available online in PDF formats. I searched specifically for policies that are directed at undergraduate students or those that refer to student behaviour on campus, including behaviours within the classroom as well as policies or guidelines for scholarships and bursaries available to undergraduate students.

Methodologically, I conducted a discourse analysis of the student subject in 17 policies from the University of Lethbridge. These student policies are found under the Student Affairs section (uleth.ca/policy/policy-category/student-affairs) of the institutional policies on the university website, and other policies found in Governance (uleth.ca/policy/policy-category/governance), Academic Operations (uleth.ca/policy/policy-category/academic-operations), Facilities Management (uleth.ca/policy/policy-category/facilities-management), and Health and Safety (uleth.ca/policy/policy-category/health-and-safety). Additionally, I analyzed the student in a policy located in the undergraduate student calendar, that explains the criteria for students who apply for and/or receive scholarships and bursaries. These policies are listed in Figure 1, below:

Figure 1. Policy Titles and Type Categories

University Policies	Category
Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities	Student Affairs
Appeal of Application Policy Other Than Grade or Student Discipline – Undergraduate Students	Student Affairs
Assessment of Student Learning Policy and Procedures – Undergraduate Student	Student Affairs
Awards and Scholarships	Undergraduate Calendar
Caveat–Authority to Rescind Registration Privileges/Prohibit Access to University Property	Student Affairs

Emergency Student Loan Fund	Student Affairs
Final Grade Appeal Procedure – Undergraduate and Graduate students	Student Affairs
Harassment and Discrimination	Health and Safety
Library Access	Academic Operations
Parent Rooms Use Principles	Facilities Management
Principles of Student Citizenship	Student Affairs
Revoking Degrees	Student Affairs
Student Discipline – Academic Offences Undergraduate	Student Affairs
Sexual Violence	Health and Safety
Student Discipline – non-Academic Offences Undergraduate and Graduate	Student Affairs
Student Housing	Student Affairs
Statement on Free Expression	Governance
Surveillance of Public Areas	Health and Safety

I chose these particular policies as they directly refer to—or affect—undergraduate students on the University of Lethbridge campus. Some apply to all university community members, but each of them is applicable to students, and as such provide a significant understanding of the student subject.

Although the policies pay cursory attention to racialization, nothing points specifically to what addressing discrimination towards racialized students looks like. Minimal attention to racialization in policies is "one of the greatest barriers to achieving educational equity" (Al Shaibah 2014, 2). Section 3.4 of the *Harassment and Discrimination Policy* states

> 'discrimination' means differential treatment of individuals or groups on the basis of protected grounds (race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religious beliefs, gender, gender identity, gender expression, age, physical disability, mental disability, marital

status, family status, source of income and sexual orientation) under the *Alberta Human Rights Act*. Discrimination occurs where differential treatment results in unfavourable, adverse or preferential treatment of individuals or group of individuals, on the basis of protected grounds (*Harassment and Discrimination Policy* 3.4)

This description within the *Harassment and Discrimination Policy* suggests a broad understanding of who in the University might experience discrimination. But the same section further describes what harassment entails by covering different ways an individual might face harassment and abuse. Sometimes harassment or violence appears in the policies in less obvious ways (microaggressions), however, where insinuating comments or minor acts are "designed to make racialized and Indigenous [individuals] feel unwelcome, unrepresented, and often invisible" (Henry and Kobayashi 2017, 116). Examples of everyday racism, which are often unseen by those who do not regularly experience it, are also unaddressed in this key equity policy and thus fall from the purview of those charged with enforcement. At times, equity work in the university is primarily played out in institutional policies in ways that "having a policy becomes a substitute for action" (Ahmed 2012, 11). Equity takes substantive work not only in policy development, but also in attention to addressing university cultural attitudes and actions. If policies contain directives that are regularly reviewed and action points that are executed, equity may be realized.

There are initiatives and social justice actions taken by university community members, including students and faculty. In 2018, the University of Lethbridge committed to a continuous support and implementation of diversity, equity, and inclusion at all levels of the university.[8] The University governance page announcing this initiative states, "the University of Lethbridge

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[8] It should be noted that the University of Lethbridge Faculty Association (ULFA) has a Gender, Equity, and Diversity Caucus.

recognizes that our success is dependent on how well we include, value, and engage a diversity of students, faculty, administrator and alumni to achieve desired outcomes" (*Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion* 2021, n.p. uleth.ca/president/equity-diversity-and-inclusion). Following direction from the university president Mike Mahon in 2018, the President's Advisory Committee on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion made several recommendations for both immediate and long-term action. While this initiative is in the early stages[9], it will be successful as long as it creates and maintains "mechanisms to ensure open, democratic, accountable, and transparent institutional policies and practices" (Henry et. al. 2017, 316).

One University of Lethbridge policy I do not directly address[10] in this research is that concerned with Indigenous education. The *Aboriginal Education Policy* indicates a commitment "to address equitable access and participation of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people in all faculties, programs, and services associated with the University of Lethbridge" (*Aboriginal Education Policy* 2013, 1). This policy came into effect in 2013 to guide the implementation of education and support services specifically for Indigenous students. Important objectives include efforts to increase recruitment and retention for Indigenous students and creating spaces for Indigenous students, faculty, staff, and community members. This "affirmative action" policy has been instrumental in the promotion and application of several initiatives designed to support and engage with Indigenous university community members. The more current Iniskim

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[9] Several recommendations, such as implicit bias training, updating plans and policies and developing plans to promote them, and creating an equity office are planned.
https://www.ulethbridge.ca/sites/default/files/2019/03/presidents_advisory_committee_on_diversity_equity_and_inclusion_public_report.pdf
[10] To ensure I had enough time to properly analyze the student subject in the policies, I selected a maximum number of policies to examine, focusing on some general policies. In hindsight, it would have been useful to add the *Aboriginal Education Policy* to the policies used to analyze the student subject.

Education Committee are working on an Indigenous strategic plan—this committee which includes Indigenous faculty and an elder work under the umbrella of University General Faculties Council (https://www.ulethbridge.ca/governance/iniskim-education-commitee).

2.2.2 Student Activism

I have considered important historical markers that acknowledge diversity of student demographics on the University of Lethbridge campus. Historical markers include the creation of the Campus Women's centre (now the Campus Collective Centre), creation of an on-campus daycare, and activism in which students have participated since the university opened in 1967. To this end, I have consulted university publications, particularly, the archives of the student-run newspaper, *The Meliorist,* which has been in publication since the inception of the university in 1967 and continues to the present day.[11]

In the following chapter, my objective is to place the student subject in university policies in conversation with historical and contemporary student initiatives that seek to address equity and diversity on the university campus. While the same analysis of the student subject conducted on the policies was not used for these initiatives, my analysis of this data set provides valuable insight into how equity has been sought and achieved through advocacy on campus.

2.2.3 Method: Template Analysis

I analyzed the aforementioned University of Lethbridge policies primarily directed to undergraduate students in order to map the ways in which these policies, as an ensemble, work to

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[11] These online archives of *The Meliorist* are digitally accessible in the University of Lethbridge Library, linked under the heading of "University of Lethbridge Publications" linked here: https://digitallibrary.uleth.ca/digital/collection/publications.

produce and reproduce norms that construct a normative student subject. To do so, I employed a method called template analysis.

Template analysis is a type of thematic analysis involving coding for analyzing textual data but allows for flexibility to assist the study requirements. I created a coding template, based on the data, and used it in my analysis of the policies (Brooks et al. 2015). To conduct a template analysis, I undertook the following steps:

1. Study and engage with the documents by reading through them several times.

2. Initial coding which involves highlighting anything in the texts that may assist the research. I identified some *a priori* themes[12] to assist in the analysis of the material.

3. Organizing the themes into separate sections and discovering how they relate to and intersect. This involved creating more precise themes, and lateral relationships across the collections.

4. Identify an initial coding template based on a subset of the data.

5. Application of the initial template to ongoing data analysis and adjust as needed, as newer data was examined. If existing themes did not suit the new data being uncovered, I adapted the template to suit the additional data. Revision did not occur after each analysis, but after reading several times through the material I was able to modify the initial template to suit my needs.

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[12] *a priori* themes are noted in the final template in Figure 1.

6. Finalizing the template and applying it to all the data. Although there may be more adjustments ongoing, a final template is important as a basis for data analysis. (Brooks et al. 2015, 203–205)

My process for analyzing the student subject in these policies was iterative. I read all the policies once, then went through them several times again, looking for repetitive phrases and themes. I did this manually, as I found that I understand better with the printed word in front of me. Many themes and concepts arose that prompted further investigation. I created an initial template, which is below, presented in Figure 2. With this template, I continued analyzing the data using those themes. When deciding on codes, I considered how the various terms or phrases related to the student subject. As well, using NVivo 1.0 software, I extracted specific words that appeared very frequently, but also noted infrequent words, particularly those related to the student subject.

Figure 2. Final Template

1. **Behaviour Regulation**
    1.1. *Discipline*
        1.1.1. From instructors or faculties, etc. through denial of access to spaces, including classrooms, or lower grades, failure, etc.
    1.2. *Expectation*
        1.2.1. Student behaviour and adherence to rules and guidelines
    1.3. *Reputation*
        1.3.1. The student reflects the university
        1.3.2. Student benefits from the university reputation
    1.4. *Obligation*
        1.4.1. Of the university to the student
    1.5. *Free Expression*
        1.5.1. University committed to free expression with certain caveats
    1.6. *Responsibility*
        1.6.1. Respect, integrity, honesty (general expectation)
        1.6.2. Individual

   1.6.3. Obligation of student to university

2. **Agency (a priori)**
  2.1. *Challenging* (appeals of grades)
  2.2. *Consent* (mainly in reference to sexual consent)
  2.3. *Access to support* (personal or through services)
   2.3.1. Mainly in reference to response to discipline, but also to support services at the university
  2.4. *Access to information*
  2.5. *Rights* (of the student)

3. **Equity (a priori)**
  3.1. *Authority* (who has authority, particularly ultimate authority)
  3.2. *Power differentials between students/academy*
  3.3. *Shared responsibility* (between all members of university community)
  3.4. *Access/lack of access for student* (academic, physical, etc.)
  3.5. *Free expression* (for all in the university community members, with caveats)

4. **Paternalism**
  4.1. *Personal growth and development of the student*
  4.2. *Expectations*
  4.3. *Responsibility*
  4.4. *Obligation* (of the university to student)
  4.5. *Student reflects the university and the future trajectory*

5. **Power (a priori)**
  5.1. *Authority* (university)
  5.2. *Discipline*
  5.3. *Decision making*
   5.3.1. "Final and binding" government committee, etc., making decisions on disciplinary actions after appeals
  5.4. *Access* (for students)
  5.5. *Rights* (of the student)
  5.6. *Provisions and fairness*
  5.7. *Appeals* (from the student)

  The initial coding I conducted was used to look closely at the data and as a comparative tool to see what was similar and different, so I could "reflect deeply on the contents and nuances

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. . . to begin to take ownership of them" (Saldaña 2009, 81). Fundamentally, this approach

allowed me to understand these policies more distinctly, helping me connect various phrases that

arose and inform the findings clearly. I began with a Holistic Coding approach, as described by

Johnny Saldaña (2009), which is defined as "an attempt to [view the data as a whole] rather than

by analyzing them line by line" (118). This was suitable to assist me in the next process, which

involved Pattern Coding to identify developing "major themes from the data" (152). In Figure 3,

I show a sample of the coding I created. I separated the coding data into the different policies, so

here, I show three phrases from one policy I analyzed.

Figure 3. Coding Sample

Appeal of Application of Policy Other Than Grade or Student Discipline – Undergraduate Students	
Students dissatisfied with the application of an academic policy or regulation to their own status, other than grade or student discipline are entitled to a review by the Dean of the Faculty or School in which they are registered to. (p. 1)	*Agency* (implies students have access to appeal any discipline) *Rights* (of the student are upheld)
If still dissatisfied after this review, the student may address a written appeal to the Dean who renders the final decision on behalf of the Faculty or School. A student may appeal a decision. (p. 1)	*Agency* (the student may challenge discipline if not satisfied with the initial result) *Power* (the student may access some power, although the Dean has ultimate authority)
Students shall have one year from the date of application of an academic policy or regulation other than grade or student discipline to appeal. (p. 1)	*Power* (there is a parameter of dates and deadlines set for when students can appeal)

These codes and template provided a suitable base for analyzing the student subject in the polices comprehensively. The emerging themes provided a useful frame for conceptualization of the student subject in my selection of these University of Lethbridge policies. In the next chapter, I discuss the themes of the responsible student, and the university 'family' applying a disciplinary lens and how the student advocates for the self and others.

Chapter Three: The Disciplinary Student: Responsibility Through Advocacy

This chapter discusses the themes that surfaced from my analysis of the student subject in 17 University of Lethbridge policies. A deep analysis of the language about the student subject suggested several concepts. The various concepts discussed in this chapter signify the student subject embedded in U of L policies are "discipline," "responsibility," "equity," "agency," and "the cis heteronormative nuclear family." Specific phrases, word combinations, repetitions of phrases and terms produce a definitive idealization who the student subject and how they are imagined into the aggregate university community.

The first section in this chapter examines disciplinary power, looking closely at the responsible student citizen, responsibility for others and the self, and responsible student productivity. Following this section, I consider the theme of the university 'family' articulated through concepts of student personal growth and development, self-sufficiency, and "child" discipline.

Interwoven in my analysis of the student subject as expressed in these policies are examples of student advocacy that recommend an expanded view of the student, as well as an understanding of how the student recognizes themselves. The policies produce a particular kind of student subject where the student is created, informed, and defined. And yet, actual examples of student advocacy support the possibility that a reconstitution of the norms that constitute the normative student subject may exist, one that allows for reimagining and reconstructing the student subject. The conclusion completes this chapter.

The discursive production of a particular kind of student-subject is not broadly understood by all university community members, but the one that emerges in these policies does

bear a resemblance to the "engaged student ideal" described by education scholars Paul Kelly, Nic Fair, and Carol Evans (2017, 107). As previously discussed, the concept of the "ideal student" is grounded in the belief that the student is "always available and working" (Sallee 2016) and has little, if any, outside responsibilities, such as long work hours, childcare, or other caregiving roles. The University of Lethbridge policies explored in this thesis span different years, but the student subject constituted by the policies remains clear: as a disciplined subject who nonetheless exercises agency for self-definition. The student pushes back against norms to reconstitute the subject position through choices, actions, and exerting agency when they challenge normative ideas and advocate for equitable treatment.

3.1 Disciplinary Power

3.1.1 The Disciplinary Subject

The student subject who is disciplined is produced through the U of L policies in different ways. As Foucault's "docile bodies" suggest, the student subject is first, an "object and target of power" (Foucault 1995, 136) where policies can enact and inform the student of the behaviour expected by the University. The student subject who desires to be the "good" student, understands what that ambition requires and willingly adheres to expectations and mandates to fulfill necessary injunctions. Thus, as I argue, policies work as a disciplinary framework for students in the university. By so doing , the policies show the consequences for students who fail to conform to these expectations and behaviours. In this way, any punishment "must have its most intense effects" (95) as a deterrent for unacceptable behaviour.

A primary policy that informs other student-directed policies is the University of Lethbridge *Principles of Student Citizenship*. Several other policies reference the *Principles of*

Student Citizenship when reinforcing the importance of behaviour. Particularly, academic

integrity is paramount; this policy highlights certain values:

> 1. Students honour the following basic values of academic integrity:
>
>> a) *Honesty* in learning, teaching, research, and service.
>> b) *Respect* of a wide range of thoughts, opinions and ideas; of colleagues,
>> instructors, and administration; and of the work of others.
>> c) *Responsibility* for upholding the integrity of scholarship and research (*Principles
>> of Student Citizenship* 1 [italics added])

This value of academic integrity is the basis of expected behaviour according to this policy.

Designed to instill these values in the student subject so students will behave in ways acceptable

to the institution, these values are repeated in multiple policy documents. The policy conveys

specific examples of value measures, such as "students abide by the policies, regulations, rules,

and procedures of the University of Lethbridge and its academic administrative units" (2). With

these guidelines the student has a base for understanding how to be a respectable citizen on

campus and therefore, the student subject in the policies is interpellated into acceptable

behaviour. The policy functions in a way that points the student "in the desired direction within

coercion" (Ransom 1997, 29). A student aware of the university values might consciously strive

to adhere to them, or students already understand the values. Many students do not read the

university policies regularly or at all, but these values can be implicit when used to shape

university communications, including in course syllabi. Shaped by the expectations expressed in

formal policy, the ideal student, then, both self-disciplines so as to become this exemplary

individual described in the policies and self-governs so as to be the meritorious student,

deserving of a place at the university.

Two student policies at the U of L more explicitly cover disciplinary or punitive

measures in the event misbehaviour should occur: the *Student Discipline Policy—Academic*

Offenses and the *Student Discipline Policy—Non-Academic Offenses* highlight the importance of university "integrity" that depends "upon Student conduct which upholds the *Principles of Student Citizenship* (linked to the policy earlier discussed)" (*Student Discipline Policy—Non-Academic* 2019, 1.1). Honesty, respect, and responsibility are words that impress these imperatives and that underline the importance of student self-discipline. The policies further outline various offence, defining what is objectionable. With these descriptions, the student is subject to their own "'conscience' who 'knows' what it *means* to be a good student" (Grant 1997, 104 [italics in original]). While the assumption is made that the student should already have the "right" behaviour qualities, when expectations and punitive consequences are laid out, discipline is imposed on the student. Moreover, the student is expected to self-regulate. These expectations are expressed in a manner that corresponds with Foucault's notion of docile bodies as a "disciplinary power that has as its correlative an individuality that is not only analytical and 'cellular', but also natural and 'organic'" (Foucault 1991, 156). In this way, using formal tools of policy, the University of Lethbridge clearly dictates the norm of the disciplinary subject in two ways: first by using policy directives and, second by creating regular reports of students who demonstrate what a successful student looks like. As such, the policies are presented as part of the normal process and ordinary expectations of student behaviour. It is anticipated that the student, already 'disciplined' as a compliant student, strives to achieve similar high status by embodying a work and personal ethic that situates them among the "ideal" meritorious student: self-disciplined and self-governing. The assertions made in policy support my argument that the student is formed as a disciplinary subject in the policies.

3.2 The Responsible Student

3.2.1 Citizenship and responsibility

The terms *responsibility*, *responsibilities*, and *responsible* appear 94 times in the 17

University of Lethbridge policies that I examined. Used in various contexts, these terms apply

specifically to the student, to the university administration, or to faculty or staff who interact

with students. University students are expected to "accept the responsibility to abide by the

University of Lethbridge Principles of Student Citizenship" *(Principles of Student Citizenship*

n.d., 2). This policy clearly lays out the necessary imperatives that describes the characteristics of

a "responsible" student. Respect and diligent adherence to "reasonable oral or written

instructions given by University of Lethbridge personnel" (2.9), along with "[maintaining]

collegial relationships" (2), "[abiding] by the policies, regulations, rules, and procedures of the

University of Lethbridge and its academic and administrative units" (2.8), and "[treating] with

consideration the buildings, grounds, facilities, and equipment of the University of Lethbridge"

(2.6) produce the ideal student subject as a conscientious individual. This student is expected to

maintain "citizenship" within the university through a concerted effort to a governance mandate

as directed not only by the policies, but also by subscribing (consciously or not) to a Foucauldian

notion of self-governance (Rabinow and Rose 1994, 233).

Feminist understandings of citizenship centre around the importance of "inclusion in the

citizenship body and becoming entitled to the different kinds of citizenship rights" (Yuval-Davis

2011, 76). Associated with the concept of citizenship is the aspect of "belonging" which can be

critical to individual mental and emotional well-being (100). Student citizenship, as defined in

the administrative policies, is about the right to belong to the university community. To claim

belonging as a citizen within the university, the student is encouraged to recognize the

importance of responsibilities attending such citizenship and as a result becomes a "responsible student."

Citizenship is also understood as belonging to a community that works with and for each other to achieve equity. Students engage in the advocacy for social justice to realize this. For example, in response to national activism about sexual violence on post-secondary campuses, students and staff at the University of Lethbridge, and involved with the Camp[us Women's Centre in 2015/2016, began to lobby the university administration to implement a specific policy that would meaningfully and substantively address sexual, gender, and racialized violence on campus. Petitions, meetings, and letter writing propelled action on this issue with students, faculty and community members[13] taking the lead (R.J. Fallon, email to author, 21 May 2021). The Associate Vice President of Human Resources and the Associate Vice President (Students) began to respond, and subsequently act, using the authority of their offices to implement workshops, and training for the university community and developing a policy directly focusing on raising awareness about sexual violence on campus. At present date in 2021, current and upcoming initiatives, lectures, resources, and workshops are posted on the university website (https://www.uleth.ca/sexual-violence/education-initiatives). The *Sexual Violence Policy* was finalized on April 21, 2016 and became effective in 2019. As I argue, this example shows how the 'responsible' student subject recognizes and participates in social activism to improve life for others.

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[13] Kristine Cassie, Director of the Lethbridge YWCA at the time was one community member significantly involved.

While university policies produce the ideal student subject through the expectations that they subject themselves to disciplinary power exercised by policies, students, individually and collectively, materially speak back to such power. This can include speaking out on a variety of issues that affect anyone who experiences injustice. Post-secondary students are often known for their activism in response to inequities that they feel need addressing (Roy 2020, 776). Whether it is self-advocacy or advocacy for others, students are often eager to speak up. Psychologist Renée Roy (2020) suggests that "political and social advocacy efforts . . . are crucial in developing a more just, less traumatic world" (775) and this may drive reason students to advocacy: a desire to right wrongs or create supportive and just atmospheres for the marginalized and vulnerable. As per my contention, the student subject understands the 'responsible' student directive as one that includes advocacy for social justice.

Students who engage in advocacy work are often community-focused, passionate, persistent, and caring. They engage in causes they consider important (Robinson et al. 2016, 4). I argue that these attributes help them in other ways as well, including in their post-secondary studies, helping them to be engaged and passionate about what they are learning. It also informs their involvement with volunteer and campus organizations, as well as activism. University of Lethbridge students have a long history of activism dating to the community-driven inception of the university prior to 1967 (Tagg 2021).

While the University of Lethbridge was originally housed within Lethbridge College (Tagg 2021), given continued student population growth, a new location was sought. In 1967, the west side of Lethbridge was a sparsely populated area, mostly containing farms and ranches. Students and other university community members felt this was the best location for the university and embarked on a campaign to convince the provincial government to build there.

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The provincial government was originally insistent on building the university elsewhere. The student and faculty- and community-led activism garnered support from the media and local municipal government. Only after intense debate were the activists, including many student, successful. Historian and faculty member Dr. Jim Tagg declared, this inception "marked the first clear example of a U of L legacy for stubborn independence" (Tagg 2021). A student demonstrates "free inquiry and expression [and] equal opportunity for participation" (*Principles of Student Citizenship* 1), when advocating for an acceptable place to pursue their education. This history of community and student driven origins of the university supports my argument that students advocate for their needs and rights as students, to ensure proper access to their education.

The University of Lethbridge has continued to exhibit growing pains, with gender equity an uphill battle for the last several decades. During the 1970s and into the 1980s. some faculty, including Drs Dayna Daniels and Shelley Wismath[14] were instrumental in addressing gender equity for staff, faculty, and students. Only in the later 2000s would a Women and Gender Studies Program be formally approved by the University's Board of Governors as a department, with a full slate (5) of tenure track faculty and with its scholarship and teaching covering a comprehensive range of topics (https://www.ulethbridge.ca/artsci/women-gender-studies). The addition of Gender as a designative departmental title was consistent with other Women Studies department name changes across the country so as to affirm that content of the coursework and

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[14] Dayna Daniels and Shelly Wismath (faculty at the University of Lethbridge) in discussion with Diane McKenzie March 2016. University of Lethbridge First Generation Oral History Project, https://digitallibrary.uleth.ca/digital/collection/oralhistory/search/searchterm/faculty/field/all/mode/all/conn/and/order/subjec/ad/asc, Lethbridge, Alberta.

research conducted in the discipline stretched well beyond the limits of conventional gender binary. The WGST department headed by faculty with research committed to social justice has been instrumental in supporting student activism and engaging with students in understanding important issues locally and globally.[15] Courses such as those offered by the WGST underline student advocacy, positioning the student subject as one who responds to inequity and oppression in ways that raise the critical consciousness of student, to widen their understanding of social justice issues and concerns globally and locally to afford students an understanding of why it is important to act to generate change. This raised awareness informs student how they can be 'responsible' in ways using their education for social justice advocacy.

3.2.2 The Student Subject as a Reasoning Agent

While students are compelled to meet academic guidelines, instructors understand "that teaching excellence requires a degree of flexibility and responsiveness to both students' needs and emergent circumstances, [that] adjustments to the course outline may sometimes be necessary, provided that no student is disadvantaged by the change" (*Assessment of Student Learning Policy and Procedures Undergraduate Students* 2019, 1.2.10). Here, the student is produced as an individual with needs outside of university studies, one who, although not "outside social structure and process, . . . [has] the capacity to change the discourses . . . through which [they are] being constituted" (Davies 2000, 67). This recognition is realized through an awareness of the realities that inform the lived experiences of each individual student. Suggesting instructors must be flexible and responsive suggests a broader view of the student

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[15] The WGST currently has 4 full-time faculty and often bring in sessional instructors and faculty from other departments to teach classes.

and creates a better understanding of students' lived realities. In this regard, the *Assessment of Student Learning Policy and Procedures* is an amendment of the idealized student conception.

The University of Lethbridge has a general mandate is to ensure that integrity is an integral part of the student behaviour and that the purpose of the university is an "obligation to provide an environment in which freedom of inquiry and freedom of expression are prerequisite requirements in all aspects of its operation" (*Statement on Free Expression* 2019, 1). The *Statement on Free Expression* further ensures that "the University of Lethbridge is committed to free and open critical inquiry in and on all matters. All members of the University community are guaranteed the broadest possible latitude to speak, write, listen, challenge, and learn" (1). Here, counter to some of the student subject constructions I have already discussed, the student is produced as a critical, reasoning agent who can express and examine ideas and theories, but as above, the student is not outside the discursive terrain that produces them as disciplinary subjects. While mutual respect and tolerance are expected, this policy about free expression facilitates student agency, suggesting the student may challenge normative narratives and opinions. Therefore, students exert a power to "structure the field of other possible actions" (Rabinow and Rose 1994, 140). In other words, the student possesses the power to act in ways that disrupt standard concepts or theories enabling alternative ideas or modes of action. The student is produced as an intellectual contributor in their educational process.

An important aspect of delivering education is assuring that the student is afforded proper access to course work relevant to their degree program. The student must be able to "make timely and informed decisions about registration, add/drop, and the allocation of their time during the term" (*Assessment of Student Learning Policy and Procedures* 2019, 1.1). An adequate and well-designed course outline, along with proper, fair, and appropriate learning

assessments is provided by individual faculty and instructors; these materials are essential contracts between student learner and teacher. In this, the university, specifically the instructor, is obligated to contractual agreement with each student. Here, the student might also be understood, under terms of neoliberalism as a consumer, as they engage in "a passive commercial transaction, rather than an active process of mutual engagement between student and professor . . . refashioned as a service encounter" (Brownlee 2015, 81). As for the responsibilities the faculty extend to the student learners, the university (and by extension, faculty) affirm commitment to "providing a fair and accurate assessment of student learning" *(Assessment of Student Learning Policy and Procedures* 2019, 1)*, ensuring that the student recognizes their rights as a student, and that their education is part of this transaction. Fundamentally, this formulation of student as consumer rests on the assumption that the student is guaranteed the opportunity to choose the education they want and are in possession of the consumer right to insist on applicable delivery and assessment. Along with this accord is the presumption that instructors and faculty inhabit the role of "seller." Students who understand their education as a credential may see faculty and teachers providing a service the student pays for. This compels the faculty and teachers to "provide a learning environment that is conducive to customer satisfaction" (Brownlee 2015, 82).

Agency is a multifaceted concept, which often arises in unique and unexpected ways. While the student–instructor dynamic may initially appear as a power imbalance, if we reconceive the student as a consumer who deserves a set of rights in a competitive marketplace, the student expects a type of service delivery corresponding to the money they, or their guardians pay for education. This student consumer conception is the effect of neoliberalism in the university. However, also within a university mandate, the opportunity to appeal any grievance

regarding learning contracts and to express opinions and ideas establish student agency and student, as a response to dissatisfaction, is a possibility. The concept and reality of student activism has existed at the University of Lethbridge, as discussed in concert within this analysis of the ideal student within the policies.

3.2.3 Responsibility for Others and the Self

The responsible student is also constituted in the *Student Discipline Policy–Non-Academic Offences* as one who understands "the freedoms of other members of the university community including freedom of thought, beliefs, opinion, expression, peaceful assembly and association" (*Student Discipline Policy–Non-Academic Offences* 2019, 11). While Foucault maintains that disciplinary power creates an individuality that "rests on the division of individuals from others" (Hoffman 2011, 29), a student, the *Student Discipline Policy–Non-Academic Offences* implies, must also have consideration for others in order to sustain their status of responsible disciplined student. The value of "respect" outlined in *Principles of Student Citizenship* becomes the marker of consideration for other university community members and establishes a relationship with others that reinforces mutuality and individual responsibility. This policy focuses on the responsibility students have for one another, for the university community as a whole, and each mandate reminds the student they are a member of the university community, while stressing the importance of the individual internalizing these values. The "respect" value states, "*respect* of a wide range of thoughts, opinions, and ideas; of colleagues, instructors, and administration; and the work of others" (*Principles of Student Citizenship* n.d., 1 [italics in original]). While this policy phrase outlines how this is in relationship with other community members, its placement as a 'fundamental' principle of student citizenship, with a preamble under the 'application' heading confirms that it applies "to all students at the

University of Lethbridge" (1). The student holds a status as a 'citizen' in relation with others at the university. However, even when responsibility towards others is expected, the policy suggests that the student is primarily responsible for the self, as the policy accentuates expected modes of behaviour along with respect. The policy delineates student behaviour expectations, including imperatives to "strive to maintain collegial relationships with fellow students, peers, faculty, staff, and administration . . . abide by policies, regulations, rules, and procedures [and] abide by reasonable, oral or written instruction" (2). These collaborative or community values are particularly emphasized in *Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities*.

Intended to affirm the University of Lethbridge commitment to supporting students with disabilities, the *Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities* policy provides a guide for the University's Accommodated Learning Centre (ALC)[16] and, by extension, to any student with disabilities who needs academic support. Of note in the policy is the importance placed on the "shared responsibility and . . . collaborative process" (*Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities* 2016, 5.1) that underline the policy. This "shared responsibility" is dispersed between three parties: the student, the Accommodated Learning Centre, and the instructor or programme involved in teaching the student. The student who self identifies as needing accommodation is responsible for the following: providing requisite information; following procedures; meeting academic program requirements; notifying the other parties of needs; understanding procedures; and understanding general University policies, such as classroom policies and the *Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities*. Although

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[16] The Accommodated Learning Centre (ALC) provides supports for students who identify as having disabilities. These supports include assistive technologies, such as exam accommodations, parking accessibility, priority in registration, guides to other community resources and help accessing other university personnel (https://www.uleth.ca/future-student/accommodated-learning-centre).

the Accommodated Learning Centre is designed to support students with disabilities, the student imagined by the *Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities* is someone compelled to "become a legitimate disabled subject or risk being excluded altogether . . . morally assessed by [their] capacity for 'self-care' (Fritsch 2019, 41). The student with disabilities, while "historically cast as dependent" (41) is reconfigured in a dichotomy of "debility and capacity, remade at once both normal and abnormal" (53). In a neoliberal institution, those students who identify as having a disability, become productive and responsible for their own accommodation when they

> follow academic accommodation procedures; [meet] the essential requirements of a course/program; [discuss] . . . any concerns [they] may have about whether [their] ability to meet the essential requirements of a course/program prior to enrolling in a course/program (*Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities* 2016, 4)

This excerpt illustrates how the student must perform and be "capable" in a manner that fits into the university's self-conception. Certainly, students with disabilities can participate in capable and autonomous ways, but a question remains which disabilities are recognizable. Critical disability theorist Danielle Peers (2012) argues that "classifiers exercise power not only through interrogating the disabled subject, but also through surveying the disabled body. . . enabling the subject to be . . .thoroughly judged, documented, diagnosed, objectified, classified, and as a result, disciplined, treated, and normalised" (Peers 2012, 181–182). While the *Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities* is not a diagnostic tool, nor does it purport to be one, it acts as a normalizing tool, deciding which students with disabilities are 'responsible' students based on their level of ability. Emphasis is placed on personal ability. This emphasis on personal ability substantiates my argument that the student subject in University of Lethbridge

policies is positioned as a normative student previously outlined. The next section discusses

policies that accentuate personal responsibility through academic and non-academic behaviour.

3.2.4 The Productive Responsible Student

According to the *Assessment of Student Learning Policy*, a responsible student engages

in their own education in effective and progressive ways. To achieve this status the student

applies,

> what has been taught . . . to new situations, to analyze different examples, or to
> synthesize original responses to questions that remain within the realm of fairness
> [although] particular applications, examples, or circumstances may not have been
> explicitly addressed in course lectures or readings (*Assessment of Student Learning
> Policy* 2019, 3).

This statement shows how the disciplinary subject is productive, taking their education to

generative levels that demonstrate responsibility and commitment to their education. A

collaborative relationship of learning merges the student and instructor in a joint effort meant for

the long-term benefit of the student. The student applies learning to other life experiences and

events for their personal development. In fact, as philosopher Edward McGushin (2011) argues,

"discipline focuses attention [on the individual] as an object of both control and knowledge [and

discipline is] a form of power that carefully watches, examines, records, and measures . . . to

help [the individual] reach [their] full, productive potential" (133). Does the policy suggest that

the responsible and disciplined student take this opportunity of learning to expand and develop in

ways for personal growth? The language in this policy points to the concept of personal growth,

where the student is innovative and self-directed.

Another way the student may achieve personal and communal growth and development is

by being vocal about political decisions that affect them and others. Since the 1970s, U of L

students have regularly campaigned in protest about government funding cuts, and resulting

tuition increases, in several ways. In 1978, for example, students across Alberta demonstrated at the provincial legislature "to demand that the government alleviate the financial pressure that has led to tuition increases and cutbacks in services which have eroded the quality of education" (Young 1978, n.p.). This type of action has been repeated over the years. In 1987, University of Lethbridge students confronted the Provincial Minister of Advanced Education about the government's intention to not increase funding to post-secondary education. They challenged him to explain his reasoning, maintaining their stance and queries, even when he was dismissive (Oxley 1987, n.p.). Students at the University of Lethbridge later invited him to stay in the U of L residence, in response to his assertion that he would be willing to visit and stay on the university campus. The invitation was for a 24-hour period, and 650 university students signed this letter. One interviewed student insisted that they were "not going to stop lobbying the government until we see an increase in funding" (Zappone 1987, 1). Activism around funding cuts seemed to have escalated during the 1990s, with regular protests and petitions happening during the first five years. In 1990, the Minister of Advanced Education, John Gogo, expressed possible admiration for students: "'If students didn't protest, they wouldn't be students'" (Russell 1990, 1). While Gogo's words may seem congratulatory, he may also have been dismissive of student activism. Students across the province continued advocating for post-secondary funding in 1992, with student union representatives gathering comparative data from various post-secondary institutions "to increase awareness about [the] economic impact [of post-secondary education]" (Jensen 1993, 1). The following year saw University of Lethbridge students joining community members to protest government cuts to all sectors, including post-secondary education (Elder 1994, 3). In 1995, students used the National Day of Action on January 25 to protest further federal cutbacks, specifically to transfer payments that would

impact provincial funding to post-secondary education. (MacDonald 1995, 1). Students were relentless in their activism around education funding, but the following decade did not see a cessation of student protest funding cuts, as these government cuts and funding reduction continued. As discussed in the literature review in chapter one, these ongoing government cuts and reductions impact the neoliberal approach and framework of post-secondary education. Rising tuition and decreased funding leads to students paying more for fees and tuition; as Brownlee (2015) argues, most students . . . will continue to pay more as the costs of higher education are privatized" (89). The increasing financial demands on students created by university's subscription to neoliberalism can create hardships and barriers to education; this could mean using student loans or delaying and reducing post-secondary study.

In 2001, U of L's Student Union executive (ULSU) lobbied the Provincial government directly, allying with student leaders from other post-secondary institutions. These students spent four days meeting with MLAs, finally meeting with then Conservative premier, Ralph Klein and the Alberta Learning minister, Lyle Oberg (Christensen 2001, 3). Student activists engaged with government officials to encourage them to prioritize and support post-secondary education by making "adjustments to the current student loan system [and changing the system to] an income-contingent load remission program based on the Australian model" (3). This model, the student argued, allowed students to defer loan payments until they might better afford them. Here, students were considering the long term, understanding how current education and financial needs impacts their future. Four years later, in 2005, students challenged tuition increases, petitioning the University of Lethbridge Board of Governors to lower tuition costs (Sharpe 2005, 9). In 2006, student activists directly targeted Premier Ralph Klein, calling for his resignation, citing his policies that "damaged . . . public education" (Bota 2006, 5).

Tuition is not only a concern for domestic students. International students pay substantially more than domestic students. In 1977, domestic and international students lobbied the government in Edmonton, asserting that substantially higher fees for international students were discriminatory and "'a racist disease'" (*Meliorist* 1977, n.p.). Increasing differential tuition for international students that became common in the 1990s galvanized students to petition the government to not increase tuition. Although the petition was started by international students, it gained traction broadly, with "more than 800 signatures" (Webking 1990, 1). As I argue, although policies recognize a responsible student as one who fits an 'ideal' definition, students may challenge the normative narrative by confronting oppressive structures, such as excessively high tuition. Even when issues do not directly affect them, students often come together to collectively advocate for their fellow students and thus expand the definition of a 'responsible' student.

Student activists on the U of L campus have long been concerned not only with tuition and funding concerns but a multiplicity of other issues, including cafeteria food quality, student and recreation fees, access to affordable local childcare, grading and course requirements, the *Meliorist* publication itself, and racism. Feminist activism in Southern Alberta and especially at the University of Lethbridge has a long history. Historian Karissa Patton (2015) suggests that despite little national attention being paid to activism in Southern Alberta, activists have engaged with many social justice issues and "have a documented history of activism" (79). The social and political conservative climate in Southern Alberta makes progressive activism more challenging, however, as Patton (2015) asserts, "the same conservatism represented in the media . . . was a driving force for stimulating activism in Southern Alberta . . . strengthening the resolve of activists" (79). Rose M. Cole and Walter F. Heinecke (2020) argue that "student activism in not

just an exercise in critique; rather, it reflects a vision forged in a praxis of ideas and action, a solution to the effects of neoliberalism, reinforced by higher education, that transforms individuals into isolated consumers who see themselves as powerless" (91). The Thus, the student subject, as an agent, creates an alternate vision of who the student can be, one that is a dedicated student in the classroom, but who also uses that education to confront inequities.

3.4 The University Family

The concept of a self-disciplined student achieving their full potential is where 'personal growth' can also be analyzed through the construct of the cis-heteronormative nuclear family. A dominant component of patriarchal colonization depends on the ideal of the nuclear, cis-heteronormative, patriarchal-headed family with the unwaged mother supporting the wage-earning primary provider (husband). Each individual in this family construct has essentialized, gendered roles meant to "complement" one another and to preserve and elevate the family. In such a patriarchal ideal, the "father" is not only assumed to be the primary wage earner but creates the rules and relies on other family members to uphold his mandates. The 'mother' whose wage-earning capacity is secondary to her role as caregiver sustains these dictates, while providing a nurturing centre for the child(ren). At the centre of this unit is the 'child', who is meant to represent the family name, grow and develop in a way that honours the family, particularly the 'father,' and becomes a productive member of society (Zimmerman 1972). Further, the gender binary of male/female in the child where the male child is expected to follow the example of the father and the female child is to model the mother in their growth and development. There is little or no space for the queer child in this construct; the queer child often challenges this binary as "certain linguistic markers for its queerness arrive only after it exist its childhood, after it is shown not to be straight" (Stockton 2009, 6). Sociologist Patricia Hill

Collins (1998) suggests that "the power of this traditional family ideal lies in its dual function as an ideological construction and as a fundamental principle of social organization" (63). Essentially, many social institutions, including universities, rely on the ideal of the family as a basis for understanding their social structures. The findings in this analysis establish that the University of Lethbridge's social structure upholds the 'family' construct.

The university administrative structure performs in ways that emphasizes the university 'family unit.' Upper-level management, for example, correlates with the roles assumed by the 'father.' As patriarch, the father/upper management sets rules and guidelines and expects certain behaviours from the other family members. The 'mother' is represented by those administrators, many of whom are women, in university middle management, in the service, and faculty sectors of the university. These individuals are feminized as they nurture and care for the child and 'family' more generally including by enforcing or sanctioning the 'father's' instructions. At the base of this hierarchical unit is the 'child' who, in the university social structure, is the student. The student, as I have argued, is expected to behave and progress, not only for their own sake, but also to uphold and honour the cis normative 'family', which in this context is the university. The faculty also assumes gender appropriate tasks with women faculty and instructors commonly assuming a disproportionate percentage of reproductive labour as represented by student mentorship and University community service (committee work) compared to male faculty whose research is prioritized and compensated more richly as a result.

Some families disrupt the cis heteronormative family construct, creating alternative forms of family inclusive of same-sex parental relationships and non-traditional modes of kinship. Sociologists Karin Sardadvar and Katharina Miko (2014) suggest that "postmodern and feminist approaches have deconstructed allegedly constitutive aspects of 'the family', revealing

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underlying patriarchal structures and contesting the status of the bourgeois nuclear family as the norm" (150). They further argue that historical research demonstrates "the diversity of past family life" (150–151). Queering the notion of family poses questions of possibility and potentially allows for a reimagining of the family unit and its understanding of relationship and responsibility to each other. If the cis heteronormative nuclear family unit can be challenged, it opens up possibilities for the institutions modeled after this patriarchal construct. These possibilities exist for the university/family as well. In what follows, I elaborate this argument to suggest how the patriarchal family/university construct reinforces notions of personal growth and development.

3.4.1 The University Community

Throughout these policies, the idea of the "university community" emerges frequently to emphasize how people within the university are connected. The phrase occurs repeatedly in the *Sexual Violence Policy*, *Harassment and Discrimination Policy*, and the *Library Access Policy*. The latter, *Library Access Policy* defines students, faculty, staff, or anyone who has borrowing privileges as "University Community members" but affirms the library is "open to any person with an interest in using its facilities, furnishings, or equipment" (*Library Access Policy* 2020, 3.1). Markedly, the university library recognizes any user, particularly those part of the university community, more equitably. While reserving a right to determine how the library is used, the University Library places the student subject on relative equal standing to any other library patron. The *Library Access Policy* suggests that those who enter the library are part of a smaller community within (and external to —i.e., Part of the Chinook Library System) the larger university community. This is how the library invokes the malleability of community, as a "flexible organizational principle of multiple levels of the social world, and not simply a passive

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backdrop for it" (Hill Collins 2020, 68). The student subject, as a library user, no longer is confined to being a "child-like figure" but instead assumes an identity as a rather self-determining self-agent within the structure of the library and its confines.

Although, as I have earlier stressed, the university more generally is centred on a 'family' model that presents as fully benign and supportive, such a prevailing structure can accentuate inequalities and contribute to anti-diversity (Gardiner and Fulfer 2017, Hill Collins 1998). Feminist researcher Rita Gardiner and feminist philosopher Katy Fulfer (2017) maintain that the "family as an organizational ideology may manifest as paternalism and hierarchy" (506). Close to 80 times, the phrase 'final and binding' or the word 'final' appear within the following policies: *Final Grade Appeal Procedure*, *Harassment and Discrimination Policy*, *Student Discipline Policy–Non-Academic*, *Student Discipline Policy–Academic*, *Sexual Violence Policy*, *Revoking Degrees Policy*, and the *Student Housing Policy*. These policies refer to decisions about disciplinary measures related to the student. While different committees or departments are empowered with the authority to make that ultimate judgment on student discipline, all defer to the President's office or the Deans' offices of the university. As in the family unit, there is a hierarchical order, and the student subject in these policies resides at the base level of this hierarchy, produced (and infantilized) as a beneficiary of education and guidance. This conceptualization of the student as a beneficiary confirms my assumption that the student subject is a correctable individual who deserves guidance and support.

However, even as a recipient of education and guidance, the student is positioned as a contributing member of this family/community. Community implies supporting each other, and this has been demonstrated in student and faculty advocacy for daycare access on campus. Such activism has only been a starting point and student advocacy continues to the present day. While

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a campus daycare existed from 1972 to 1992, located originally in the Student Union Building (during the week it was a daycare and was transformed into a pub on the weekend), it had to be shut down due to structure issues.[17] Nearly two decades passed before another daycare was built on the University of Lethbridge campus (*U of L– Daycare Feasibility Study* 2005, 4). The new daycare opened in 2010, but only after many years of activism and "is a result of students, faculty, and community working together and sharing the costs, and the University administration eventually responding to community demands" (Davies 2009, 15). Starting in 2005, the Daycare Action Committee engaged in ongoing advocacy with staff and administrators at the University of Lethbridge in response to a lack of affordable, accessible daycare service on campus. A petition, a student and faculty-led demonstration, continual lobbying, letter writing, and ad campaigns eventually resulted in success (Davies 2009, 15). Poignantly, "the success of winning the childcare fight at the U of L shows that student movements don't have to be continually servile or obsequious to university administrators in order to have their demands met" (Davies 2009, 15). This observation by a *Meliorist* (University of Lethbridge student weekly paper) student journalist validates student self-determination, and how student activism is well within the confines of 'proper' student behaviour. The student subject, produced as a 'responsible' student in the policies is accentuating that responsible behaviour to support the entire university community.

There are also designated spaces within the University of Lethbridge that provide the opportunity for gathering and fostering community. Community organizations such as the

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[17] There were many structural issues with the building that required extensive work to restore, and the decision was made to tear it down and rebuild. The daycare was not reinstalled when the new building was completed.

Campus Women's Centre (CWC), now renamed (as of May 2021) The Campus Community

Centre, are communal places meant to bring students together for mutual support. This centre

was implemented after extensive lobbying by students. The CWC was opened in 1998 and has

remained a stable and supportive student run organization on campus, encouraging and engaging

with students in regular activism and awareness projects and events.

3.4.2 Personal Growth and Development

A driving concept in the cis heteronormative nuclear family/university construct is the

personal development or character improvement of the child/student. As I suggested above, the

student is idealized by university policies that conceives the student as the child of the patriarchal

University 'family' unit. The *Student Housing Policy's* philosophy exemplifies my equation

when it states, "The university is concerned not only with the physical environment within

student housing, but also with activities which will provide an educational experience aimed at

aiding the *personal growth* of each resident" (*Student Housing Policy* 2008, 1.1 [italics added]).

Further,

> Our motto, Fiat Lux ("Let There be Light"), and our founding principle of liberal
> education, continue to define and inspire us. We are committed to being the
> comprehensive academic and research university in Alberta that empowers individuals
> with broader knowledge that *prepares them to think critically and creatively,*
> *communicate clearly, solve complex problems, and contribute fully to society. We give*
> *people more than an education: we give them a life trajectory and the tools to make a*
> *difference* (*Statement of Free Expression* 2019, 1, [italics added]).

These statements position the student subject as a beneficiary of guidance and support beyond

education. Therefore, observing and adhering to the guidelines the student not only develops but

becomes obedient and tractable so as to become a "useful individual" (Hoffman 2011, 28). This

supports my hypothesis that the university is committed to the student's future success. The

obedient and tractable student is still evident when the student seeks more support, for example, if they experience a financial crisis.

3.4.3 Assuming the Self-Supporting Student

The University of Lethbridge provides services meant to assist students in times of need, whether that be mental health, academic, or financial exigencies. The *Emergency Student Loans Policy* lays out how students may apply to access temporary financial relief (*Emergency Student Loans* 2011, 1). The university, in effect, assumes a parental role by providing a supportive and meaningful structure for the student in the same way that "a well-functioning family protects and balances the interests of all its members—the strong care for the weak, and everyone contributes to and benefits from family membership in proportion to [their] capacities" (Hill Collins 1998, 64). In this way, the student subject is produced as a member of the university "family", and the university expresses a mandate to care for and nurture this student, the "child" in the family unit. However, the concrete criteria for receiving an emergency loan requires students to account for all their income and expenses and to demonstrated they are in good academic standing. These expectations understand the student subject to be a dependent child figure needing careful monitoring and management in order to qualify for a guaranteed loan from the university via the financial need policy (in this case, $500). Moreover, the student must show "written proof of their ability to repay the emergency loan" (*Emergency Student Loans* 2011, 2). This care and consideration comes with guidelines for students to demonstrate their worthiness (reliability)to be supported financially.

Kathryn Stockton (2009) describes the historical construction of the child as one who needs protection from the self, as they are unable to be "self-propelling *and* self-sustaining" (41). This parallels the case of the university student who seeks financial help; they likewise must

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demonstrate an 'inability to be self-sustaining' parallel to a child figure who 'needs' to be protected and guided through life. The university as the supportive paternal figure in the student's life, protects and guides that student to a better outcome.

3.4.4 Disciplining the Student

In my analogy, the student stands as the 'child' within the university 'family' who in a case of 'misbehaviour' or non-conformity needs correction. As previously discussed, specific University of Lethbridge policies outline ways the student be disciplined if they fail to comply. The *Student Discipline Policy–Non-Academic Offences*, for example, states that "disciplinary action . . . will be progressive, aimed at correcting inappropriate behaviour" (5). Yet, while the threat of discipline is always present, the student subject is a valuable member of the university 'family' who can learn and grow, even if or when they make mistakes, just as a child is seen as correctable in progressive ways. The university will continue to recognize the student as a redeemable individual who deserves guidance. The student as part of the family is formally recognized, part of the 'university community'; as such, they deserve support in becoming a productive member of the university community, "entitled to guidance and support" (Zimmerman 1972, 110). This understanding of the student as a developing productive community member proves my argument that the student's productivity is beneficial to the university.

Discipline is not predominantly about punishment, but rather "operates in the process of training and correction" (Foucault 2005, 180) and the student is meant to benefit, and to gain from any disciplinary measures employed by the University, rather than be disregarded and removed without appeal or recourse. In corrective discipline, the student appears as "a reality

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fabricated by [the] technology of power . . . called discipline" (194). The student is formed and elevated in discipline.

3.4.5 The Student as Representative of the University's Values

In certain policies, the student subject consistently surfaces as an active and necessary member of the university community. However, the student is also understood in policy language to embody one primary or dominant purpose: a positive reflection of the university's values. Such 'productivity' of the student may be understood as part of the Foucauldian contract. The integrity of the university is invoked several times in specific policies. Its dependence on "the honesty and soundness of" (*Student Discipline Policy – Academic Offences* 2019, 1) are evoked to university community members, and often to the student in particular. The *Revoking Degrees* policy particularly illustrates the notion that the university's reputation must prevail and must be upheld by the student. This policy states,

> "In Fall 2010, GFC Executive directed the Associate Vice President/Registrar to develop a policy which would govern the revocation of degrees granted by the University of Lethbridge. *Ideally, the University would never be in a position where this policy would be required*" (*Revoking Degrees* 2011, 1, [italics added]).

In this statement, the university shows itself to be fully cognizant of the importance of a good reputation, and the reliance on the "ideal" student subject. In this instance, a former student who may have their degree revoked, reflects the university. The possibility of a degree being revoked is alarming to the university as such a punitive measure would reflect poorly on the university's credibility in awarding degrees to deserving candidates. The student also benefits from the positive university image; the student's association with a reputable institution has long term effects that resonate for a student's future career aspirations. But foremost, the university relies on student conduct to reinforce its integrity, as previously suggested (*Student Discipline*

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Policy—Non-Academic 2019, 1.2). Such dependency on student behaviour is accentuated when the university celebrates alumni accomplishments, that are commonly emphasised in public communication even if it has been several years since former students have been enrolled at the University of Lethbridge. The accomplished student alumni is also part of communication strategies about fundraising within a context of neoliberal demands of entrepreneurship and corporatization. These values are expressed in *UWeekly*, a university publication, dating from 2009, that highlights many accomplishments and events at the university. *UWeekly* consistently features the achievements of alumni. These promotional modes of honouring alumni achievements also figure in physical architecture of the University. For example, the long entrance hall, titled the Hall of Honour, leading from the bus loop to the library is a visual representation of the importance of successful alumni. Plaques highlighting successful individuals, including faculty and support staff, connected with the university's growth and success line the hallway. This form of spatial communication showcases outstanding alumni as a reflection of the history of the university's impact. Therefore, the well-behaved, responsible, successful, and disciplined student subject (in this case alumna) are those who contribute to the university beyond their degree program. Their achievements during their program and after productively compound the university image and in turn, the recipient of this praise can expect to benefit from the sustained positive image of the university.

Although the student subject exists under specific directives and expectations that require obligatory (and reciprocal as noted above) behaviour, it is also within these directives that the student claims the opportunity to shift the terrain of the normative student subject; to strategize in individual and self-determining ways. The next section discusses equity but additionally reviews how students have actively created, and engaged with, equity initiatives that suggest an

alternative meaning to the idea of "responsibility", one that counters the more passive construct of the student sketched in policy and one that is more inclusive. This is the mode by with students act to dismantle oppressive structures they and others face in the university.

3.5 Equity

While policies are designed as broad guidelines for reference, the invisibility of some student demographics within the descriptive language of the policies potentially creates more barriers for equity in practice. Occasionally within these policies—particularly in the *Harassment and Discrimination* and *Sexual Violence* policies—the University of Lethbridge affirms its commitment to promoting equity. For example,

> The University will take the following into account . . . individuals' experiences can be affected by factors such as their access to power and privilege, historically relevant considerations such as settler colonialism, their sex, sexual identity, gender identity, gender expression, racialization, age, family status, religion, faith, ability, disability, national or ethnic origin, indigeneity, immigration status, socio-economic status, class, and language (*Sexual Violence Policy* 2019, 1.3).

This paragraph at the opening of the policy underlines the university's commitment to equitable treatment of all university members and voices this commitment using an intersectional approach. Another policy, the *Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities,* states that, "The University is committed to ensuring that all students are afforded an academic environment based on principles of equal and equitable access, respect for individual differences, and academic integrity" (1.1). Within these policy statements, equity is framed as an important and vital value of the university. However, reference to marginalized or racialized subjects are largely absent within these and other policies. Nonetheless, the category of "Indigeneity" appears four times within the 17 policies. The terms "equitable" and equity" appear only six times.

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3.5.1 Agency in Appeals and Free Expression

One word that appears regularly in the equity-based policies the most is the word "appeal." *Appeal(s)* emerges in the equity policies 149 times, more frequently than *discipline*, *responsibilities*, or *behaviour*. The *Student Discipline Policy*, for example, recognizes that "students may appeal either the charge of an offence or the penalty imposed or proposed" (B.4), as well as any academic offence charges that occur. Here, the student subject is understood to possess rights that accompany responsibilities. They have the opportunity to assert their voice in accusations of cheating, plagiarism, or forgery, and if, or when, penalties are inflicted.

The *Statement on Free Expression* emphasizes the University of Lethbridge's commitment to "provide an environment in which freedom of inquiry and freedom of expression are prerequisite requirements in all aspects of its operation" (*Statement of Free Expression* 2019, 1). The student subject appears in this policy as a critical agent with the skills to navigate post-secondary education and the institution itself, expressing their personal opinions and ideas in a welcome and supportive atmosphere that indicates an openness to critical inquiry. As Bronwyn Davies (2000) suggests, "an agent could be well defined as someone who [can] speak with *author*ity" (67 [italics in original]). Even while the student subject is required to adhere to directives as a contributing member of the university community, they have agency and voice.

When the University of Lethbridge first opened, there were few student services, and only a cafeteria to provide food options for staff and students. Therefore, the quality and accessibility of that food was rather important. In 1974, at the beginning of the fall semester, students were already disenchanted with food quality in the cafeteria, and two student activists gathered an alleged 800 signatures. Their persistence paid off, and there were "a few minor changes to the menu, [the] Student's Union passed a resolution in support of the petition and

some member of the residence council [were prepared to] back them" (*Meliorist* 1974, 1). These improvements and support happened despite initial pushback from a cafeteria employee and student, who disagreed, and the food services and housing manager, who delivered a letter of reprimand to one of the petition organizers (1).

In 1970, university students petitioned Student Council, expressing dissatisfaction with the *Meliorist;* they garnered 177 signatures from registered students. Again, in 1991, university students protested the *Meliorist,* by gathering student signatures for a petition. Their petition argued against the demand for students financially supporting the publication, stating "'We, the undersigned, demand the right to a choice as to whether we will financially support the *Meliorist* through the payment of our student fees'" (Bond 1991, 1). However, students have also taken issue with other proposed fees. In 1978, students and faculty sent a letter to the student's union president, arguing that "compulsory fees are being handled by a 'non-representative' student's council [and that] channeling of funds through the SU first 'is tantamount to control by a vested interest of what should be an independent forum'" *(Meliorist* 1978, 1). One year later, students again protested proposed compulsory fees, this time a new athletics/recreation fee. Objecting to a Board of Governor's motion to approve this fee (with the only dissenting voice in the meeting being the undergraduate student representative on council), students circulated a petition calling for a referendum (*Meliorist* 1979, 6). In 1986, students again petitioned the Student Union over several concerns, including the CKUL (university radio station) budget, a lawsuit involving the student union, and other items that directly affected students (Millar 1986, 1). During a Town Hall held to address the petition, students voiced those concerns and expressed a desire for more discussion on matters (1).

The student subject who advocates on issues that are important for them as the examples discussed reveal, is one who sees the responsible student construct within university policies as a broad idea. In reality, this student believes advocacy is an important aspect of their education process; one that will benefit all students currently and in the future.

Financial burdens are not the only issues that have concerned University of Lethbridge students. Courses and grading issues have also been challenged by students. In 1972, a student set up a spot close to the library with a petition "to support the option of a shortened degree program" (*Meliorist* 1972, 2). He suggested this was not a personally invested action, but one designed to support future students, as he was finishing his degree at the end of the semester (2). The petition was signed by 140 students. Almost two decades later, in 1990, University of Lethbridge Education students petitioned the Education faculty in protest of grading practices that were "substantially more difficult than Arts and Science grading [with a] standard . . . about 10% tougher than in Arts and Science courses" (Russell 1990, 1).

Student activists also engage in broader equity issues, such as the exposure of structural systems of sexism and racism. In 1976, letter writers to the *Meliorist* supported protesters who opposed a racist pro-Apartheid speaker on campus, alleging that the protesters had engaged in "necessary action which has awakened some minds concerning the injustices in the world" (Clement 1976, 5). In 1985, student activists circulated petitions and leaflets regarding objections to the proposed visit of an Alberta teacher, who had been previously charged with hate speech. Students and faculty vehemently opposed the neo-Nazi anti-Semitism advocated by the invited speaker (Giesbrecht 1985, 1). The activism successfully led to the cancellation of the speaker. This type of action was a precursor for continuing anti-racist student activism. In 1998, University of Lethbridge students participated in a day-long event that included a rally against

racism (Broadhead and Jenkins 1998, 8). This event was meant to bring more awareness to the visible reality of racism, locally and around the world. Students continue to advocate when they perceive injustices which is evidence of their growing conception of the university and human community.

All these actions suggest how the student subject is not confined to a finite definition of being responsible. Students see their mandate as generative, using their education and position as university students to critically comment on issues of inequity. Where student activists see injustice, they may feel obliged, because of their student status, to work for change, which underscores their "duty" as a responsible student.

The University of Lethbridge student policies state that students must have integrity in their academic career, as well as in their personal conduct; this is accentuated by ideas of responsibility, community, citizenship, and self-determination. The idea of the student consumer adds an additional element to the student subject, where the "normative expectations, rights, and obligations of students are different from those of traditional customers" (Brownlee 2015, 84). All of these concepts inform the student subject and how they are produced through the policies. With the University of Lethbridge organized in a familial/community structure where students can cultivate important values and qualities that will assist their growth and future direction, the student subject is a meaningful and essential member of this family/university community.

The 17 University of Lethbridge student policies examined reveal a relatively homogeneous student subject with cursory mention of some marginalized demographics and while others are essentially invisible. Equity is an unfinished project with the university; however, equity is also an area where students exercise voice and agency, confronting inequity in its various forms, and demanding change. The living student meets the student subject in

University of Lethbridge policies at a point that is flexible and amenable to definitions of responsibility and citizenship.

Conclusion

For this research, I analyzed a selection of University of Lethbridge policies to discover who the student subject is within them. As well, I examined University of Lethbridge publications, mainly the *Meliorist,* to explore actions and initiatives that U of L students have engaged with over the last several decades. My research questions were: Who is the student subject that is imagined and produced by the policies that are directed at undergraduate students at the University of Lethbridge? Who is the student envisioned within these policies? How is the student described or addressed within the text of the policies? Do the policies incorporate language or a targeted form of address that impacts a, potentially, non-normative student? If not, what are the norms that shape access to services for students? Additionally, how is the student situated and flexible within U of L policies?

The student subject that emerged in these 17 University of Lethbridge policies is produced through values and concepts that define an 'ideal' subject who, on the surface, seems straightforward and uncomplicated, but proves to be amenable and nuanced. The themes that emerged in my coding template—discipline, responsibility, equity, and agency—suggested delineations that broaden the picture of how the student subject is produced and informed by the policies. Additionally, these policies suggest that university policies are informed by a familial structure, and this hierarchy of authority contributes to the notion that the student is being guided and corrected through disciplinary measures that allow the student to develop and become

successful after they graduate. Alumni, therefore, are also assumed to reflect the university well, and in turn, alumni benefit from the university's good reputation.

The student, aspiring to be that 'good' student, expands the view of the responsible student in the policies. The University policies expects that student to develop and grow as a productive member of society. However, as I have argued, students with carework responsibilities demographically challenge the normative student ideal. Students who parent or care for others during their education process navigate their caring and studying responsibilities in ways that suggest an alternative understanding of the 'good' student. Students, bringing their lived experiences to the education they receive at the university, inform our conceptual recognition of how to be responsible, productive agents in university and in life. The student, informed and produced by the policies, emerges with a nuanced notion of self: one whose obligation as a student encompasses the broader view of a world citizen.

Although I began this research with what I believed to be a fairly clear understanding of the "ideal" student in post-secondary education, a closer analysis of policies at the University of Lethbridge revealed some interesting—and surprising—results. Certainly, the student subject exists under imperatives outlined by the university, but as indicated, this student still retains agency (should they choose to act). While policies are designed as broad guidelines for reference, the invisibility of some student demographics within the descriptive, yet imprecise, language of the policies potentially creates and in practise more barriers than equity.

It is my contention that within the institutional family unity that University policies generate, the student subject occupies the role of the child. Determined as infantile and in need of discipline in the policies, this framework of the family unity also clarifies that the student, like many children, act in order to resist the narrow definition. That student activism continues and

rises when needed illustrates to the expected parameters of student agency. Despite the wide spectrum of variability of student experience, backgrounds, identities, and desires at the university, the student subject is positioned as a unified, infantilized, entity in the policies. This subjectivity supposedly represents all students. Nonetheless, student activism expands our understanding of the meaning of citizenship, responsibility, and community. This expanded understanding of the student embodies self-definition and agency—someone who designs their own path, expressing what a true 'ideal' student is, which includes dedication to their studies as well as applying their education to life experiences.

While the University of Lethbridge, as with many other institutions, is framed around a heteronormative nuclear family construct, there is room for a reimagining of what that construct might signify or could be otherwise. Just as the notion of the family can be queered, so also can the University of Lethbridge, opening the institutional space up for more possibilities of equity and growth. University policies are not only guidelines for procedure but also frame who belongs and who exists within the university community. There is opportunity for policies to reflect the various demographics and continue to strive for adequate equity for those demographics that are not fully recognized. The student subject within the policies has possibilities to exceed the normative construct.

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