

ABSTRACT

Title of Document: **RESTORATIVE JUSTICE PRACTICES AS A
FRAMEWORK FOR CHANGE IN HIGHER
EDUCATION**

Kaleigh A. Mrowka, Doctor of Philosophy, 2022.

Directed By: Dr. Beverly Bickel, Clinical Associate Professor
Language, Literacy, and Culture

Dr. Yolanda Valencia, Assistant Professor
Geography and Environmental Systems

This dissertation project interrogates the efficacy of restorative justice practices in repairing interconnections, human dignity, and social responsibility. More specifically, I analyze how these practices enable the creation of more relational spaces/relational ecologies in higher education in the United States. Using a collaborative methodology, I - a student affairs professional myself - will work with other student affairs professionals to explore the impact of using restorative justice practices in higher education institutions. To accomplish this, I used an ecologies of knowing framework to understand how implementing restorative justice practices in higher education settings impacts learning and produces change on the individual, community, and larger organizational or system level. Drawing upon the principles, commitments, and tools of indigenous research, restorative justice practices, and participatory action research and ethnography, I worked with twenty-seven members of the International Institute for Restorative Practices (IIRP) Higher Education

Learning Collaborative to explore, discuss, and reflect upon the ways that restorative justice practices can contribute to positive organizational and social change within the academy at multiple levels. Across the study, collaborators expressed that their implementation of restorative justice practices impacted their personal and professional practice and reflection at an individual, relational, and organizational level. The study suggests that restorative justice practices can serve as one valuable lens for considering a more relational and equitable higher education institution.