

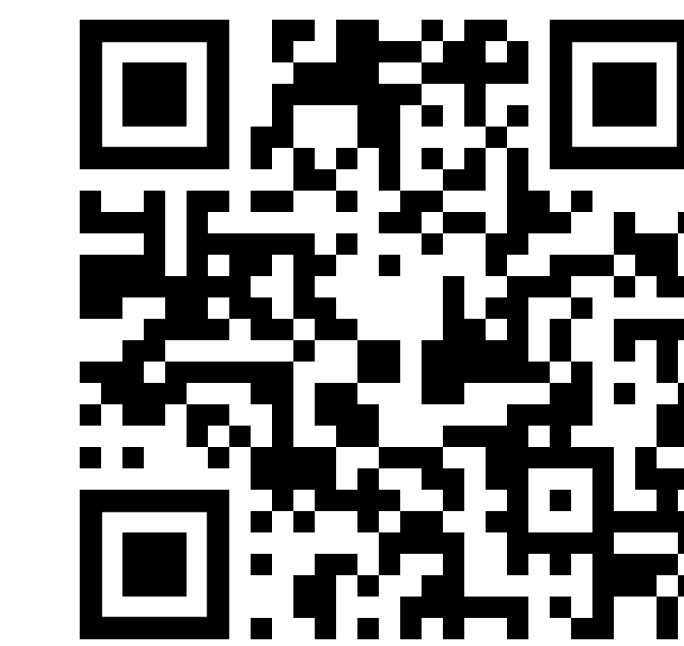
# Scholarship Equity Inquiry

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## President's Equity & Change Commission (PECC)



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### Research Questions

#### 1. Who receives institutional scholarships at CSULB?

- Is there racial parity in the number and size of scholarships awarded?
- Are these numbers consistent across units that review and award scholarships?
- Are students with financial need receiving scholarships in similar proportions to those without financial need?

#### 2. What is the scholarship administrative process?

### Introduction

One of the goals of the President's Equity and Change Commission is to interrogate university policies and practices to optimize equity. One priority under this goal, as outlined in the PECC strategic plan, is to increase equity in the scholarship process.

In the past five years, the average amount for institutional scholarships decreased substantially for some racial and ethnic groups, while white students are overrepresented as recipients. For example, the population for President's Scholar scholarship recipients have been predominantly white (42%) despite only 18% of the CSULB student population identifying as white.

The goal of this study is to identify areas of the scholarship process that warrant support to promote ethnic and racial parity within scholarship distribution.

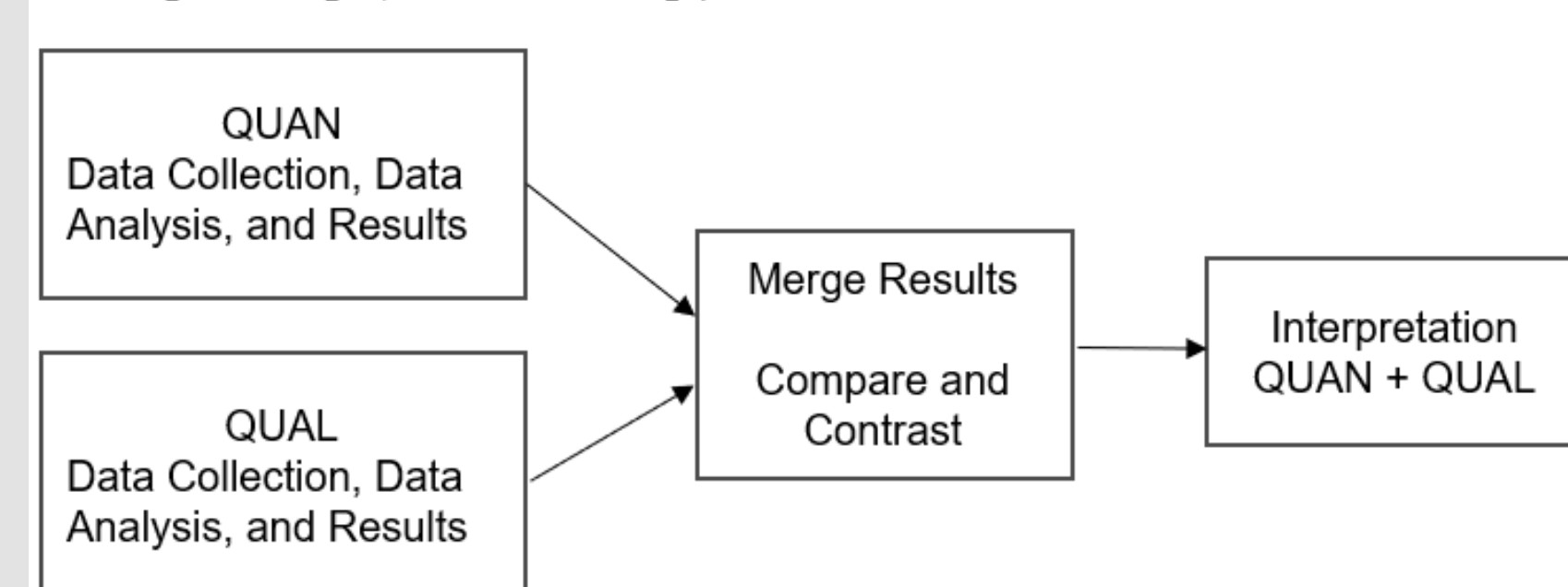
### Methods

#### Mixed Method Design

**Quantitative Data Source:** Dataset of institutional scholarship recipients from 2017 – 2022. Key Variables: Race/Ethnicity, Pell-Eligibility indicator, college/dept, award amount.

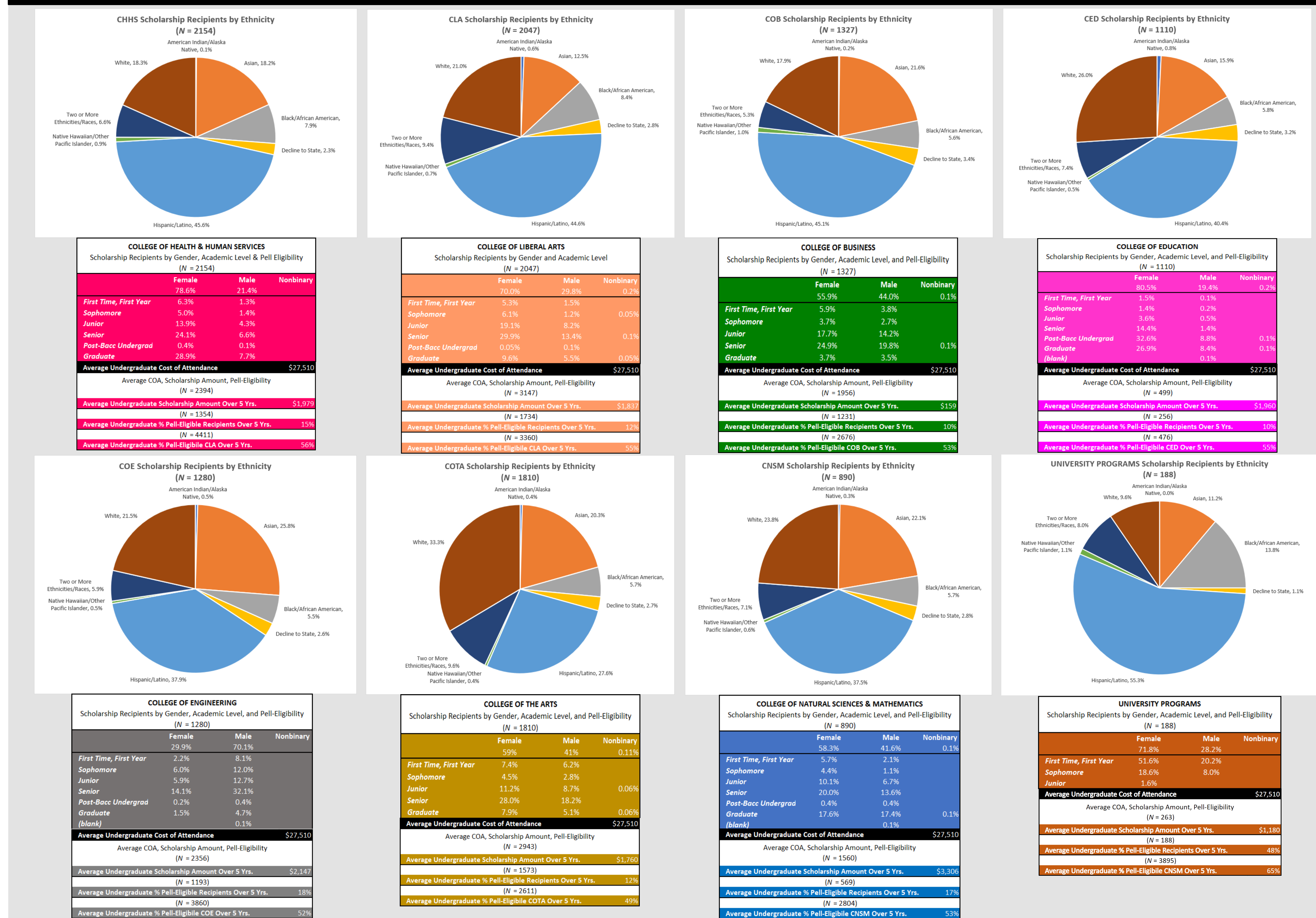
**Qualitative Data Source:** Data from 12 individual interviews conducted across 8 units (CHHS, CLA, COB, CED, COE, COTA, DSA, FASO) that included both faculty and staff with experience and expert knowledge of various scholarship processes.

Convergent Design (One-Phase Design)



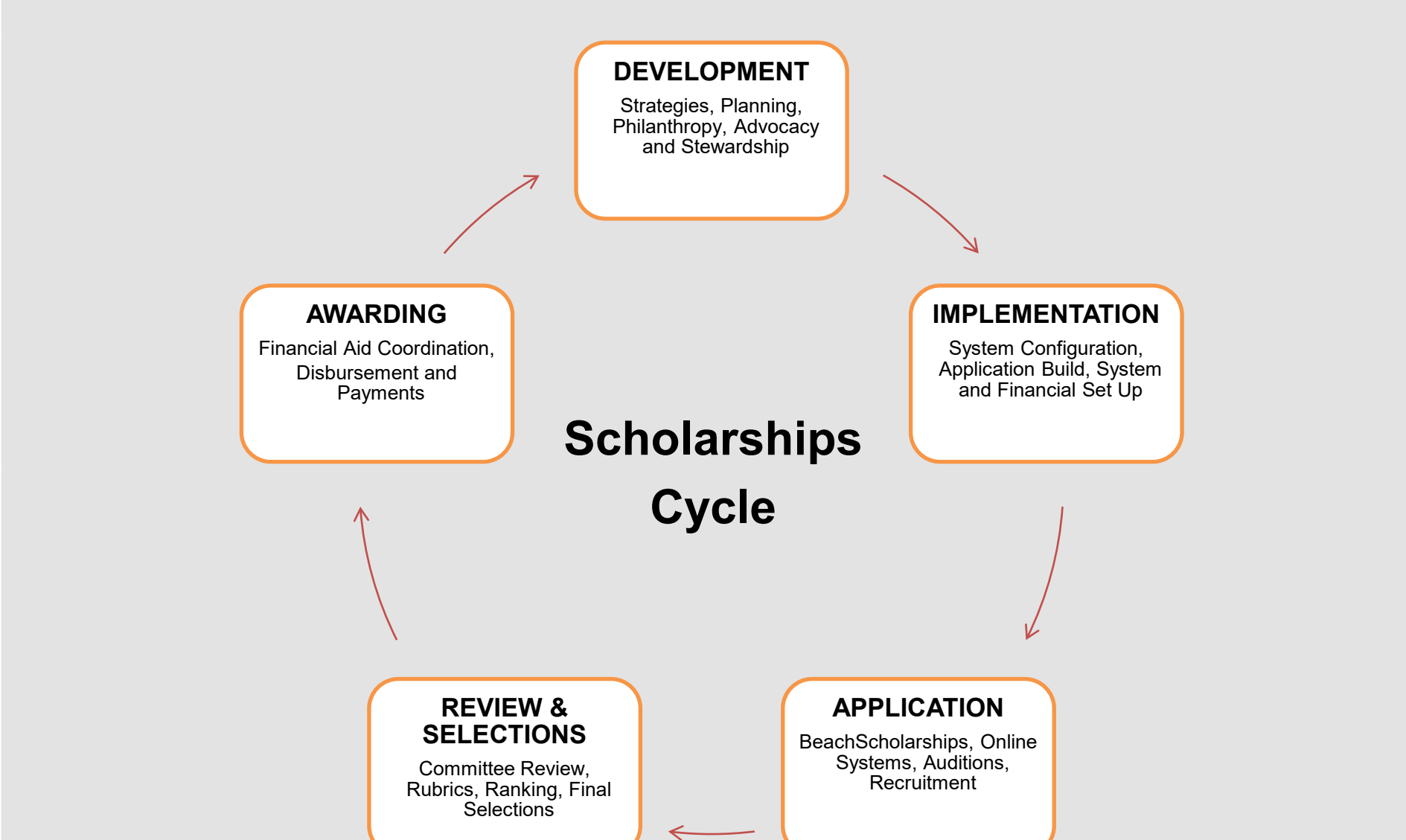
Note. Adapted Convergent Design model illustration (Creswell & Creswell, 2017, p. 218).

### Results



Theme	Exemplar Quote
Scholarship application review process lacks mechanisms to identify racial and ethnic identity, financial need	"We actually tried to avoid that because we wanted every student as just or like, there's no, like for example, no, no race, no ethnicity, no color, no anything." "That the scores were entered correctly for example right so that's just an example. There are things in the process with the systems we have in place that I think need to be reviewed or added." "We don't have the systems to make sure that those that needed get it."
Challenges with retaining and recruiting scholarship committee members	"I definitely think the challenges also come from our committee is constantly changing every year. It's very rare for me to have the same people on the committee twice in a row, or the exact same committee."
Scholarship criteria heavily focuses on GPA, and less on financial need	"We do not get data about these matters we do not get data on finances, and we do not get data on race and ethnicity. Unless it's volunteered by this, by the applicants themselves." "Personal experiences have been used when applying for a scholarship. GPA accounts for 10%, and then short-term, professional, professional goals and achievements account for 30%." "We have gone through 5 in all of the categories, and GPA is one of them. So you were asking, We ask about personal and background obstacles. Kind of, kind of getting at no way, just you know, with, we say here like resilience, based on obstacles and personal challenges."
Scholarship eligibility criteria can present barriers.	"I mean [the criteria] is just so stringent that there's like Who in the world and this university would even qualify for this award, you know." "And even our transfer students. It's a little bit tough on them because they some of the criteria, some of the things that are required for some of our scholarships that transfer students you know come in they're only here you know, two years. So by the by the time they come in it's like they're just kind of behind the game of being able to submit some of those materials that makes them qualified for some of our awards."

College	Percentage of White Scholarship Recipients 2017-2022	Percentage of White Students Within College Demographic Fall 2022	Difference
CED	26.0%	16.2%	9.8%
COB	17.9%	14.6%	3.3%
COE	21.5%	14.0%	7.5%
CHHS	18.3%	12.7%	5.6%
CLA	21.0%	16.5%	4.5%
CLA	21.0%	16.5%	4.5%
CNSM	23.8%	16.4%	7.4%
COTA	33.3%	20.8%	12.5%
UNPG	9.6%	8.1%	1.5%



### Conclusion / Discussion

While the racial and ethnic demographic of scholarship recipients generally mirrors that of the university, it was noted that white students were overrepresented in every college when compared to the current demographics of the college. Pell-eligible students were underrepresented as scholarship recipients across colleges as well.

Scholarship review processes vary across colleges, without a common structure to ensure equitable application review, and equitable distribution of aid. Currently, colleges lack standardized requirements to track or analyze award data for racial or ethnic parity in comparison to the college's student demographic.

Scholarship administrators see opportunities to reduce barriers for students to apply for scholarships, as they have witnessed a low percentage of applicants, and reviewers have noted opportunity gaps.

Scholarships rely heavily on GPA and/or academic achievement vs. financial need, which can reduce opportunities for students from minoritized backgrounds.

Donor-selected criteria or review can narrow the pool, presenting barriers for some students to receive aid they would otherwise qualify for.

### Implications for Action

Findings from this study reveal opportunities for the university to make the scholarship review process more consistent and transparent across colleges. Scholarship donors, administrators and reviewers can benefit from equity-oriented guidelines, trainings and orientation processes. The findings also support improvements to the scholarship application process, and the marketing of scholarships to students, specifically those from underrepresented or minoritized backgrounds.

### Next Steps / Future Directions

- Potential next steps include:
- Student survey to understand how students perceive the application process, why they do or do not apply, and how they learn about scholarships.
  - Conduct additional interview with Development staff to understand donor recruitment process.
  - Create a report that provides an overview of the scholarship cycle and the current state of institutional scholarships.