

THE SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES OF AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE
ADMINISTRATORS IN STUDENT AFFAIRS AT PREDOMINATELY
WHITE INSTITUTIONS IN THE SOUTHEASTERN UNITED STATES

by

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the experiences, successes, and challenges of African American student affairs administrators at six institutions within the southeastern United States. Using a purposeful sample of eight full time African American student affairs administrators from various institutions with completely different makeups concerning their student population and the number of African American student affairs administrators at each institution. The study revealed important themes that emerged from analysis of interview transcripts to explain the experiences, successes, and challenges in a predominantly White institution in the southeastern United States. Specifically, the study addresses the strategies used by the African American male student affairs administrators to survive or thrive within a space that is not created with them in mind. By exploring the day-to-day experiences of African American male student affairs administrators, this study also sought to give predominantly White institutions an opportunity to gain information on how to retain and recruit this population.

The conceptual frameworks that guided this study, Critical Race Theory and Cultural Community Wealth Theory focused on the many different variables that influence, negatively and positively, the African American male student affairs administrators within predominantly White institutions in the southeastern United States. Further, the study explored the experiences, successes, and challenges of African American administrators working at a predominantly White institution as suggested from

a review of literature. There are very few resources regarding this population, thus, making this study a necessity in ensuring that they are successful within their positions.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to three people, my wife and my parents. To my wife, you have been patient with me throughout this process and I appreciate that so much. You have been my backbone when I have needed to be strong or a push forward, and you have been my rib to stand beside me through it all as a cheerleader and coach. Thank you for all that you do for our family. I love you!

To my parents, both of you pushed me to be the best that I could be throughout my life. As a child and teenager, I often rebelled against your rules and your pushing me to be better. However, in hindsight, I know that it was you that gave me the mental fortitude to not give up when things got hard...to keep pushing when I was dog tired and my brain felt like mush. Your lives inspire me daily and I am everything I am because of you. I love you both!

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remembered his first paper that you made him write (For the Love of Money). A million times.... thank you!

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

The *Brown v. Board of Education* decision of 1954 was an important moment for the civil rights of African Americans in public education. The thought was that this groundbreaking law would open the doors of education to African American students and provide jobs for African American faculty and administrators in predominantly White institutions. However, for a large part of the South and in higher education in general, that did not happen until many years later. For instance, in 1965, Caplow and McGee wrote:

Discrimination on the basis of race appears to be nearly absolute...No major university in the United States has more than a token representation of Negroes...and these tend to be rather specialized persons who are filled in one way or another for such a role... (p. 194)

African American faculty and administrators were deliberately excluded by law from working in predominantly White institutions, specifically in the South (Myers 2002).

Twenty years after Caplow and McGee's observation and 30 years after *Brown v. Board of Education*, Menges and Exum (1983) noted that the existence of African American faculty and administrators at predominantly White institutions was so rare that they could be individually identified. This was the case because, as late as 1980, more than half of the African American administrators in higher education were employed at

Historically Black Colleges and Universities or HBCUs (Wilson, 1994). Those African Americans that worked in predominantly White institutions, as mentioned by Caplow and McGee, were often relegated to specific jobs. According to Moore and Wagstaff (1974), a majority of the African American administrators at predominantly White institutions were given titles such as coordinators and directors of special programs and projects with prestigious sounding titles. These positions rarely held any institutional power or influence. In fact, many of these positions were in areas concerning race (Wilson, 1994). Between the years of 1980 and 1998 there was little change in the status of administrators of color especially African American administrators (Chenoweth, 1988; Konrad & Pfeffer, 1991).

Fifty years after Caplow and McGee's observation and 60 years after *Brown*, we are still in the same predicament. African American student affairs administrators are still scarce on campus. Despite programs such as affirmative action and concerted efforts by institutions to recruit them, their numbers remain relatively low. Affirmative action laws and equal opportunity language were intentionally deceptive and thus created an array of "assistant or associate" jobs. This was done to generate the effect that African Americans were a part of the administrative structure of these institutions when they really were not (Anderson, 1988; Moore & Wagstaff, 1974; Poussaint, 1974). According to the National Center for Education Statistics, there are 256,888 executive, administrative, and managerial positions listed at all U.S. degree-granting institutions and an astounding 77% of those positions are filled by White administrators (NCES, 2015). In comparison, only 9.8% of those positions at degree granting institutions are filled by African Americans (NCES, 2015).

Of those 9.8% African American administrators, just a small portion are male. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, African American males held 9,251, or about 4%, of the 256,888 executive, administrative, or managerial positions at all U.S. degree-granting institutions (NCES, 2015). Those numbers are actually a lot bleaker because they include Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). There is a scarcity of African American male student affairs administrators on predominantly White college campuses across the United States. But why is that an issue? Predominately White institutions (PWIs) are struggling with the retention and recruitment of African American male student affairs administrators in the southeastern United States. But what can these institutions do to help with the recruitment and retention of this population? How can these PWIs better prepare themselves and the African American males that are working within their halls for the successes and challenges that they surely face.

Statement of the Problem

There has been a significant amount of research generated about the status of African Americans in higher education (Holmes, 2004). Most of that research focuses on the recruitment and retention of African American students and faculty (Holmes, 2004; Jackson, 2001, 2002; Perna, Gerald, Baum, & Milem, 2007). Yet, there was a dearth of research that focused specifically on the successes and challenges of African American male student affairs administrators at predominantly White institutions in the southeastern United States. Also, there was a lack of literature concerning African American male student affairs administrators at predominantly White institutions, overall. According to Green (2000), Guillory (2001), and Ricard and Brown, (2008), the

main reason this was the case was because the majority of African American male administrators were at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). The second reason was that there are only 4% African American males in these positions at predominantly White institutions (Ricard & Brown, 2008). This lack of research seems to come from the fact that there are such low numbers of the population in the pipeline and within the institution that many feel that it is not worth the effort to study them.

When it comes to people of color, there is evidence to suggest that there was a connection between the widespread historical and present-day acts of racism and injustice and access to higher education, equal opportunity, and career mobility (Holmes, 1999; 2003). Further, this toxic connection lingered in such a way that race-related issues made true equity and full participation in all areas of the academy difficult for African Americans and other administrators of color to achieve (Holmes, 1999, 2003; Turner & Myers, 2000; Wolfe 2010). In light of the historical context surrounding African American people in U.S. society and in higher education, this study was formulated to explore the methods of success and persistence in the face of the challenges utilized by African American males, who served in student affairs administrative positions at predominantly White institutions in the southeastern United States. There was some information available concerning African American administrators' persistence at predominantly White institutions (Jackson, 2001; Jackson, 2002). However, there was a gap in the literature regarding African American male student affairs administrator's success and persistence in the face of challenges at predominantly White institutions in the southeastern United States. While the historical context highlighted some factors that had been challenges and successes for the overall African American administrator

population, there had been very few avenues for success explored in the literature for African American male student affairs administrators and most of this research was dated.

Most higher education institutions had been striving to create a diverse and equitable learning environment for approximately 50 years (Pope, Mueller, & Reynolds, 2009). This endeavor is considered as one of the most prominent issues on university campuses today. Predominantly White institutions had expressed their desire to create this type of environment, not just in the student ranks; but also, in the faculty and administrative ranks. There had been tremendous focus on the recruitment and retention of students of color over the last two decades. This focus had explored multiple ways in which to help these communities succeed within institutions, especially African American males. According to Brown (2006), some institutions had shown improvement in the enrollment of African American male students, however, the struggle to retain and graduate those students was a constant battle. The belief was that out-of-the-classroom experiences were playing a significant role in African American male students' recruitment and retention to the institution (Solórzano, Ceja, & Yosso 2010).

Research had shown that the success of undergraduate students of color could be directly related to the number of faculty and administrators of color that they interacted with at their chosen institution (Gallien & Peterson, 2005; Harper & Harris, 2010; Strayhorn & Terrell, 2007). However, despite the increasing number of African American male students attending predominantly White institutions, the percentage of African American administrators failed to reflect the number of diverse students entering these institutions (Harvey & Anderson, 2005; Jackson, 2003). Of those African American

administrators who were employed by predominantly White institutions, African American males were often relegated to the bottom of the professional ranks (Guillory, 2000; Owens, 2003).

Predominantly White institutions found themselves trying to figure out why the African American male student affairs administrator numbers were low and not growing. It seemed that African American male student affairs administrators were leaving predominantly White institutions. The main reason often given for leaving an institution was the feelings of alienation and social isolation many of them experienced while being employed at the institution (Allen, 1992; Allen et al., 2000; Banks, 1984; Bell, 1994; Bjork & Thompson, 1989; Blackwell, 1989; Hughes, 2004; Jackson, 2001; Jones, 2001; Watson, 2001). According to Jackson (2001b), African Americans males at predominantly White institutions pointed to an unwelcoming climate on campus as the reason that they tended to leave. They also discussed an institution's lack of acknowledgment, appreciation, and recognition of African American culture and achievement, which were prevalent issues. This caused a significant number of African American student affairs administrators to feel disconnected from the institution. These negative experiences failed to validate this population and often compelled African American male student affairs administrators to leave an institution or sometimes academia altogether. This points to the need for institutions to create an environment that is more conducive for the nurturing and success of this population.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the successes and challenges of African American male student affairs administrators who are currently employed at

predominately White institutions (PWIs) in the southeastern United States. By exploring the day-to-day personal and professional experiences faced by African American male student affairs administrators, this study illuminated both the struggles and successful persistence strategies being used to navigate through challenges. Further, this study was utilized by university student affairs administrators as a sample because of the degree of influence administrator's hold over institutional policy and culture. Thus, the lack of African American male student affairs administrators reflected the negative climate issues pertaining to African American students, specifically African American male students.

Methodology

This qualitative research study was my attempt to gain a fuller understanding of the successes and challenges of African American male student affairs administrators in higher educational institutions in the southeastern United States. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) labelled qualitative research as a set of interpretive practices that made the world more visible. These practices altered how the world was viewed. They turned the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, and conversations (p.3). In this particular study, one characteristic of qualitative inquiry that was utilized was interviewing.

I encouraged study participants to share their stories to reveal a deeper meaning of their lived experiences as African American male student affairs administrators. According to Crane (1999), qualitative research offers great potential in the development of a sound, theory-rich empirical base. This allowed me to gain valuable information concerning African American male student affairs administrators. It afforded the

participants the opportunity to illustrate their experiences in their own words. The interview method allowed for thematic information to naturally emerge, thus giving me the opportunity to further explore the successes and the challenges of African American male student affairs administrators in a higher educational institution in the southeastern United States. I utilized Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Yosso's Community Cultural Wealth theory as theoretical frameworks to interpret the data. Delgado (2000) argued that through CRT, it was possible for participants, in this case African American male student affairs administrators, to tell their stories as a means to counter the dominant narrative about them, but also as a form of liberation from the burden of the dominant narrative.

Storytelling was a powerful means for creating meaning as well as challenging myths (Delgado 1989). Counter-storytelling was a tool that CRT scholars employed to contradict racist characterizations of social life. Counter-storytelling also aimed to expose a discourse that was race neutral and reveal how White privilege operated within an ideological framework to reinforce and support unequal societal relations between Whites and people of color. Solórzano and Yosso (2002) defined counter-storytelling as "a method of telling the stories of those people whose experiences are not often told" including people of color, women, gay, and the poor (p. 26). Yosso (2005) outlined how Community Cultural Wealth theory (CCWT), as seen through the lens of CRT, is the knowledge and abilities that communities of color, in this case, African American male student affairs administrators, possessed and used to battle against and persevere through various forms of oppression that they encountered daily.

Research Questions

There was one overarching research question posed within this study and two sub-questions: What were the experiences of African American male administrators in Student Affairs at predominantly White institutions in the southeastern United States?

1. What are the successes and challenges faced and how are each negotiated?
2. What were the implications of those experiences for career advancement?

Theoretical/Conceptual Framework

Critical Race Theory (CRT) sprang up in the mid-1970s with the work of Derrick Bell and Alan Freeman. They were deeply distressed over the slow pace of racial reform in the United States. They noted that the momentum of the Civil rights movement had stalled and were in some cases being rolled back. They argued that new approaches were needed to understand the new form of racism that had become entrenched in American society. Since its origination in the 1970s from the work of legal scholars, the influence of CRT has extended into a variety of disciplines. Though there are differences, there are shared insights and similarities. According to Delgado and Stefancic (2001), CRT was an examination of race, racism, and power, through an activist lens that sought to understand American society and change it for the better. Further, CRT posited that racism was embedded in the very fabric of American life. It asserted that the United States possessed a system of “racism that is ordinary, not aberrational...this racism is difficult to cure or address...because it (racism) advances the interests of both White elites and working-class people, thus large segments of society have little incentive to eradicate it” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 7).

Race was at the center of this theory. CRT is comprised of four premises. First, it postulated that race was a social experience where each group experienced and understood race in different ways. Second, CRT theorized that the experiences of other racial groups were inferior to that of the White racial experience. Third, the work around CRT applied to the perceptions of how race functioned in society and still systemically disadvantaged underrepresented people. Finally, CRT highlighted the causes that maintained racial minorities' subordination in a post-Civil Rights culture (Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller, & Thomas 1995; Davis, Johnson, & Martinez, 2001; Delgado & Stefancic, 2000). Further, CRT lends voice to underrepresented groups (Bell, 1995; Delgado, 1995; Dixson & Rousseau, 2005; Lynn, 2004; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002), while also challenging the ascension of colorblind ideology, which mostly benefits Whites while only superficially “helping” non-Whites (Bell, 1992; Crenshaw, 1988, 1993).

Critical race theory (CRT) was first used as an analytical framework to assess inequity in education in 1994 (Decuir & Dixson, 2004; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Since that time, scholars have used it as a framework to examine educational research and practices (Ladson-Billings, 2005). CRT, within the educational framework, explained how racism in education was so deeply rooted and complex that when people did recognize it and its failures, they continued to employ it because it was all they knew and understood (Ladson-Billings, 2005). According to Solórzano and Yosso (2000), CRT in education sought to identify, investigate, and ultimately alter the cultural and foundational facets of education that continued to suppress people of color. The colorblind ideology currently employed in some areas of higher education highlights what Lynn (2004) described as an intentional systemic suppression of people of color

from kindergarten through graduate school. This suppression ultimately affected the pool of African American administrators as the educational pipeline became damaged by this ideology. The American system of education claimed to operate in an objective manner that promoted equal opportunity, however, CRT in education challenged this notion and claimed that the system has failed to eliminate any of the disparities that plagued the system before integration. A prominent example of this is the school-to-prison pipeline that plagued African American males in many school systems especially those in the southeastern parts of the United States (Dixson & Rousseau, 2005; Howard-Hamilton, 2003).

This study utilized Critical Race theory (CRT) to analyze and provide meaning to the successes and challenges of African American male student affairs administrators at predominantly White institutions in the southeastern United States, while also exploring the implications of those experiences for their career advancement. One tenet espoused by CRT is counter-storytelling. According to Delgado Bernal and Villalpando (2002), counter-stories were personal narratives of people of color. These counter-stories could be used to analyze and provide meaning to the climate of higher education by providing faculty, staff, and students of color an opportunity to give voice to their marginalized experiences. This was significant because it provided underrepresented populations an opportunity to offer a counter to the dominant population's narrative. The dominant narrative often glossed over the oppression and injustices that were perpetuated against people of color in the academy and thus legitimized its privilege. So, the stories of people of color could offer an illustration of how oppression and injustice operated in the academy.

This study utilized Community Cultural Wealth theory as viewed through the lens of Critical Race theory as adapted by Tara Yosso. When seen through a CRT lens, Community Cultural Wealth theory is outlined as the knowledge and abilities that communities of color possessed and used to battle against and persevere through various forms of oppression. These communities encountered these forms of oppression on a daily basis. There were six forms of capital through which communities of color nurture cultural wealth. These forms of capital were: aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, navigational, and resistant. A seventh capital, spiritual, was added by Lindsay Perez Huber (2009). They were dynamic processes that built upon one another. This theory took the cultural capital theory from Pierre Bourdieu and shifted it from a deficit-thinking model to a non-deficit model by viewing it through the lens of CRT.

According to Yosso (2005), through the CRT lens, CCWT highlights that there were some things that cultures, other than White middle class, brought to the forefront. It shifted the focus from the White middle class to that of communities of color. While cultural wealth in the traditional view (White middle class) was seen as one's accumulated wealth, CCWT through the CRT lens expanded this view to include assets and resources from the history and lives of communities of color. According to Solórzano and Solórzano (1995), CRT shifted the focus from a deficit view of disadvantaged to a positive view; where the dominant group could learn from the communities of color's cultural advantages and capital.

Significance of the Study

This study illustrated its significance to three main constituencies: stakeholders (African American male student affairs administrators), policymakers (predominantly

White institutions in the southeastern United States), and participants. Concerning the stakeholders, this study's significance informed African American male student affairs administrators in higher education of salient and successful persistence strategies that they could use as they navigated through challenges and day-to-day interactions at predominantly White institutions in the southeastern United States. It outlined the potential issues they could encounter in their careers within predominantly White institutions in the southeastern United States. The study identified how "-isms" could become a burden that prevented advancement and validation. The study also indicated to them that they could be future leaders at their institution and that they could succeed at their chosen profession. The study identified ways in which African American male student affairs administrators could make space to amplify their voice at predominantly White institutions in the southeastern United States. Finally, it empowered the participants to reflect on their experiences and revealed to them the cultural wealth that they may not have recognized.

For policymakers (predominantly White institutions in the southeastern United States), this study illuminated the issues and problems that African American male student affairs administrators encountered in their day-to-day duties. The study provided critical feedback that could be used to create intentional retention methods for this population. These retention methods could be used to retain the African American male student affairs administrator population on their campuses. The study brought to light the issues that created a hostile and unwelcoming climate for African American male student affairs administrators in hopes that the institution could create mechanisms to mitigate that climate. This, in turn, will help the institution to be intentional about how to create a

welcoming and open climate that nurtures African American male student affairs administrators within the profession and individual institutions. The study will also encourage policymakers to amplify the voices of African American male student affairs administrators on their campuses to utilize their skill set in helping the institution to accomplish its goals, especially when it comes to the recruitment of African American students.

Also, policymakers must look at the staffing patterns of African American male student affairs administrators. The pattern at degree-granting institutions was inconsistent with the growing concentration of African American students enrolled at predominantly White institutions. The absence of African American administrators at predominantly White institutions increased the likelihood of negative outcomes, which included the reinforcement of false stereotypes that African Americans do not succeed in higher education (Harper, 2009; Smith, 2004), there was decreased impact on policies within the institution that dealt with equity (Assensoh, 2003), and consistent and pervasive feelings of isolation (Harper & Hurtado, 2007). Furthermore, the absence of African American male student affairs administrators, further, decreased the likelihood of contact between African American students and same-race mentors, which is said to have a positive impact on the success of African American students at predominantly White institutions (Fries-Britt, 1997; Harper, 2012).

Further for policymakers, according to Cole and Barber (2003), there are four benefits to having African American administrators on campus: (1) equity for African Americans in higher education would signal that discrimination is no longer a hindrance to career opportunities; (2) an increased representation of African American

administrators would positively affect the academic success of African American students; (3) having more African American administrators would make it easier to recognize other diverse groups; (4) the more African American administrators on campus, the more role models there are for African American students.

For participants, this study allowed them to apply their knowledge to help current and future African American male student affairs administrators as it is based on the premise that the process of persistence for African American male student affairs administrators is defined by a culture in which they function as a minority. The study provided them with an opportunity to advocate and generate more African American male student affairs administrators to being role models for their students. It provided a sense of accomplishment to them for succeeding where so many have failed. Also, the knowledge of those that participated and their experiences into a body of literature will ensure that other African American males are prepared for the challenges of pursuing an administrator path in predominantly White institutions in the southeastern United States. Finally, the participants gained the knowledge that they have added literary work to an area of need in the field of higher education.

Overall, this study showed its significance by highlighting African American male student affairs administrators who are employed at a predominately White institution in the southeastern United States and the successes and challenges that they encountered while working at that institution. A majority of the information that is available concerning persistence methods of African American male student affairs administrators at a predominantly White institution is viewed through the monolithic lens of all African American administrators, while others are focused on African American

female administrators. This is significant because there was very little information about the successful persistence methods of African American male student affairs administrators at predominantly White institutions. Further, there was little to no information concerning African American male student affairs administrators that focused on institutions in the southeastern United States; making it extremely rare to find information concerning African American male student affairs administrators, their success and challenges and their successful persistence strategies working through those challenges in a predominantly White institution in the southeastern United States.

Conclusion

This study added to and extended the research regarding persistence strategies utilized by African American male student affairs administrators who are employed at a predominately White institution (PWI) in the southeastern United States. This review of the various themes in the literature concerning African American male student affairs administrators provided the foundational support needed to uphold the findings of this study. This chapter also outlined the framework which will be used to analyze the data collected during the study. Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Community Cultural Wealth Theory (CCWT) was used to shift the focus of the data from a deficit outlook to a non-deficit outlook. Chapter 2 contains a Literature Review. This review will provide a thorough summary of the major research that has been conducted concerning African American history within the United States educational landscape and African American administrators' experiences in higher education.

Chapter 3 outlines the methods that were used to gather the information needed in the study. This chapter briefly describes the context, significance and purpose of the

study, and highlighted the gap in the literature and the theory that guides the study.

Chapter 4 details the findings by utilizing the participants data and statements to flesh out the study and to show inside knowledge concerning the participants thoughts, ideas, and feelings. Finally, Chapter 5 concludes the study by tying the data to the overall framework and theories utilized to frame the study, offers a study overview, and recommendations for future studies.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the following section, I sought to expand on the extant and limited knowledge concerning African American male student affairs administrators by examining five critical areas concerning this population in a predominantly White institution in the southeastern United States. I utilized literature from books and various electronic databases such as the Education Resource Information Center (ERIC), JSTOR, LexisNexis Academic, and others to build a solid case explaining the challenges and successes of African American male student affairs administrators in the southeastern United States.

Included in this section is a historical overview of the African American experience in higher education. The chapter begins with an argument for the importance of African American administrators experiences at predominantly White institutions. It then discusses the changing demographics of administrators of color at PWIs and discuss the barriers that hinder African American administrators, in particular, for advancing professionally at these institutions. Finally, I highlight some retention strategies already utilized by African American student affairs administrators in higher education. Throughout this review, I will foreground possible gaps in the literature that this dissertation study may address.

Historical and Legal Background of African Americans in Higher Education

The African American experience in higher education is unique, in that, historically, African Americans are positioned in higher education where they are forced to undertake academic pursuits within a society that was designed by White males for the benefit of White males (Brubacher & Rudy, 1997; Gregory, 1995; Wilson, 1989). This historical background of higher education in the southeast will include a brief outline of segregation and discrimination in the south. I will then discuss deculturalization, its impact on the lives of African Americans and how it advantaged the racialized Jim Crow south. Next, is an overview of the clash between African American giants: Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois and how it shaped African American perceptions of higher education, and finally a profile of the first African American male administrator at a predominantly White institution (PWI).

Historical Background of Higher Education in the Southeastern United States

The societal order of the day, in which African Americans were on the bottom of the social ladder, was sanctioned and maintained by a system of segregation that permeated throughout South. This includes the educational system. “Between 1800 and 1835, southeastern states passed laws making it a crime to educate slaves” (Spring, 1997). According to O’Brien (1999), prior to the Civil War, many states forbade African American slaves from getting a formal education. In southeastern states such as Georgia and Alabama, it was illegal to teach slaves to read or write (Joiner, Bonner, Shearouse & Smith, 1979). African Americans were kept from gaining an education by these restrictive laws which were specifically aimed at discriminating against and keeping them within the confines of segregation (Holmes, 2004; Rai & Critzer, 2002; Spring 1997).

According to Anderson (1988), Whites opposed education among African Americans because

[t]he possibility of an emergent literate Black working class in the midst of a largely illiterate poor White class...constituted a frontal assault on the racial myth of Black inferiority which was critical to the maintenance of the South's racial caste system. (p. 27)

The opposition was segmented, as some Whites suggested that it was too late to undo the progress made during the civil war and reconstruction. Those that advocated for African American education noted that educating them, in order to maintain the caste distinctions and division of labor, would prove crucial for the betterment of the South. This specific type of education was being offered at the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute of Virginia.

For African Americans, education represented an opportunity to improve their economic conditions. The "subjects taught in Black schools were not geared to reproduce the caste distinctions or the racially segmented society desired by those Whites that supported educating them" (Anderson, 1988, p. 28). African Americans believed that education could help raise them out of poverty into a better social class and organization. They could not be organized without educated ministers, politicians, businessmen, and managers. Despite it being unsafe to do so, African Americans went out of their way to educate themselves. They did this in spite of the lack of facilities and resources and in the face of stiff opposition to limit their access to formal education. The African American community valued education and took steps to undergird a system of education during dangerous times.

African Americans expressed the belief that the learning and self- improvement found in education was the foundation for their freedom and eventual citizenship. Southeastern African Americans in the south contributed financial capital to expand their educational foundation. By 1870, they had raised more than one million to fund their schooling, which was a significant accomplishment for people recently released from slavery and largely impoverished (Davis, 2016). They had an inherent desire to create public education systems throughout the South and put in the work to create one.

Deculturalization

Segregation in public schools in the United States was also directly related to maintaining an inexpensive source of labor (Spring 1997). It also served as a way of deculturalization, where Whites effectively stripped African Americans of their culture and identity and replaced it with their own (Spring 1997). In the South, segregated education was justified as providing an inexpensive labor force for the industrialization and conservation of agriculture. According to Spring (1997), the relationship between segregation and the economic mistreatment of African Americans was based on several factors.

According to Spring (1997), one factor was that it was impossible to get a good education at segregated schools. This made it difficult for those who were being exploited to use education as a way to climb out of poverty. The second factor was that students in segregated schools were taught that they were inferior economically and socially, and as a result, many African Americans accepted that they were inferior. The third factor is that segregated education taught skills that led to poor job opportunities. The final factor is

that segregation reinforced the belief and the structures that supported the assessment that Whites were superior to African Americans (pp. 52-53).

The superiority complex of the final factor allowed Whites to feel very little guilt about the situation in which they had placed African Americans. In fact, many Whites argued that they were doing African Americans a favor by even allowing them to be educated. More than just Whites southeasterners supported deculturalization, segregation, and subservience. There was also support for these ideas from prominent African American leaders of the day.

W.E.B. DuBois and Booker T. Washington: The Education of African Americans

The direction of African Americans was indirectly shaped by the struggle of ideas between W.E.B. DuBois and Booker T. Washington. The disagreements between these two men shaped the landscape of African American politics, education, and civil rights. DuBois, who is distinctly known as the first African American to graduate with a Ph.D. from Harvard, and one of the cofounders of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), believed in racial equality. According to Bracey (1999), DuBois was uncompromising in his belief that African Americans should have social, economic, political, and educational equality. He wanted to utilize the talented tenth of African American society to move the race forward through education. Bracey (1999) stated, "Integration alone could not solve the persistent, daunting educational and emotional problems of many urban and rural Black students, problems that were a direct result of poverty and continuing racism" (p. 10).

DuBois also wanted to expose institutional racism and discrimination. He viewed both as immoral and utilized his profile and writings to confront White traditions of

education, politics, and culture. DuBois's book, *The Soul of Black Folks*, was one such writing that sought the change. This book was a collection of essays that focused on rural African American life and experiences (Norrell, 2009). This book would influence African American thought, literature and activism throughout the 20th century and its legacy still lingers today. In this book, DuBois described a concept called a double consciousness. Norrell (2009) explains this as a:

[v]eil behind which all Black life was lived, an enforced separation that marked Blacks with inferiority but gave space for separate cultural development. He identified the double consciousness of the African American: One ever feels his twoness, - an American, a Negro; two souls two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. (p. 277)

In Dubois' mind, the most important issue of the 20th century was race and the future would prove him correct.

On the other hand, Booker T. Washington put himself through school at the Hampton Institute in Virginia and went on to open the Tuskegee Institute in 1880. He was known to be a man of leadership with a high business acumen. He was a major player in race relations throughout the United States, especially in the South during the 19th and 20th century. Washington was a proponent of African Americans partaking in industrial and vocational training as a way of achieving economic and social success. He founded the Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute in the Black belt of Alabama to teach these skills (Washington, 1901).

According to Bracey (1999), Washington did not believe that most African Americans could deal with the complex issues of politics, economics, or higher education. Bracey (1999) stated, “One got the impression (from Washington) that poor Black people in American should be treated as impressionable children, not the intellectual equals of Whites” (p. 11). Washington was able to convince many White governors and leaders that his way of education offered at Tuskegee would keep African Americans in menial positions such as on the farm or in low wage jobs in the trades. To African Americans, he promised a means of gaining self-worth by getting away from sharecropping to owning small businesses.

His prominence and respect was so deep among both Whites and African Americans, that he was invited to speak at the opening of the Atlanta Cotton States and International Exposition in 1895 (Norrel, 2004). This was the first time that an African American addressed a large group of southeastern Whites. The integrated crowd and Washington’s message was viewed as both groundbreaking and controversial to many in attendance. To Whites and some African Americans, it was a great speech. In their minds, it outlined a vision of African Americans as industrial and trade workers that would not seek to vote or hold public office. This vision was acceptable to some, but not to all. To some African Americans, it became known as the Atlanta Compromise (Norrel, 2004). They called it a compromise because Washington called upon Whites to provide jobs and education to African Americans in the industrial, vocational, and agricultural areas. He believed, and insinuated, that if Whites provided the jobs, that African Americans would stop their pursuit for civil rights and equality (Norrel, 2004).

Further, Washington expressed that African Americans should forget political and social equality and focus on gaining respect through hard work in the agricultural, vocational and industrial areas in the South. He believed that once African Americans proved their worth in those areas, then Whites in the South would willingly give them social equality and civil rights (Norrel, 2004). To many, Washington's words expressed that African Americans should accept their subordinate role in American society especially in the South. He suggested that those who disliked his speech, did so only because they did not understand the dichotomy of the South. Washington believed that once southern Whites saw the African Americans excelling in the industrial and trade jobs, that they would then grant them civil and voting rights.

According to Washington (1901), during his address at the Atlanta Exposition Booker T. Washington stated:

[t]o those of my race who depend on bettering their condition in a foreign land or who underestimate the importance of cultivating friendly relations with the Southern White man, who is their next-door neighbor, I would say: "Cast down your bucket where you are" - cast it down in making friends in every manly way of the people of all races by whom we are surrounded. Cast it down in agriculture, mechanics, in commerce, in domestic service, and in the professions. And in this connection it is well to bear in mind that whatever other sins the South may be called to bear, when it comes to business, pure and simple, it is in the South that the Negro is given a man's chance in the commercial world, and in nothing is this Exposition more eloquent than in emphasizing this chance...Our greatest danger is that in the great leap from slavery to freedom we may overlook the fact that the

masses of us are to live by the productions of our hands, and fail to keep in mind that we shall prosper in proportion as we learn to dignify and glorify common labor and put brains and skill into the common occupations of life. No race can prosper till it learns that there is as much dignity in tilling a field as in writing a poem. It is at the bottom of life we must begin, and not at the top. Nor should we permit our grievances to overshadow our opportunities. In all things that are purely social we can be as separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress. (pp. 219 -221)

This speech infuriated many African Americans, especially African American intellectuals who felt that the speech would set back the small bit of progress African Americans had made since emancipation. However, not all African American intellectuals felt that way. Ironically, DuBois, who would become one of Washington's fiercest critics, maintained a distance from Washington's opponents concerning the speech. He actually praised the Atlanta speech. He believed that some give and take was required for African Americans to make progress, not just in the south, but also in the north. It was not until a few years later that he began to distance himself from Washington. And when he did begin to distance himself, he did so with such ferocity that it would cement their rivalry for all time.

DuBois's break with Washington came around 1903. He teamed with Washington's other detractors in the African American community and began a full-scale assault. DuBois began to lob criticisms in the media to diminish Washington. In one such criticism, he declared Washington to be a "Black leader chosen by Whites...all White southerners liked Booker and his message...as he was the most distinguished southerner

since Jefferson Davis” (Norrell 2009). DuBois was not done, he continued to excoriate Washington for what DuBois deemed as a “palm branch mentality”; where Washington would accept anything that was offered to him on behalf of African Americans, even if it was poverty, segregation, and disenfranchisement (Norell, 2009).

DuBois began to fully advocate that African Americans should fight for their social and civil rights. He believed that the only way this could be successful was if African Americans could be educated

[i]n scholarly study of the history of the African American experience in the United States...this would help undermine racism and raise the historical consciousness of both White and Black Americans...DuBois favored immediate social and political integration and the higher education of the talented tenth.

(Bracey, 1999, p. 12)

DuBois saw this as a remedy for elevating African Americans from a position of disenfranchisement and disempowerment to one of elevation and empowerment (Norrell 2004).

In *Souls of Black Folk (2014)*, Dubois presented the “triple paradox” of Washington’s philosophy. DuBois wondered how African Americans could own businesses and property if they could not even vote or have rights. How could they practice thrift and self-respect, while being constantly degraded by White supremacists? Finally, if all African Americans attended trade schools...then who would teach in those schools? DuBois felt this philosophy led to a position of permanent subservience.

Booker T. Washington believed that his method of education for African Americans was more likely to be accepted by Whites. He believed opportunities that

allowed African Americans to take advantage of early education and job-training programs would less likely challenge the values of the White establishment, which heavily relied on merit and individualism (Bracey, 1999). He believed that if African Americans worked hard and did not challenge the political and educational status quo they would be fine, as their success would be based on their individual effort, training, and talent. This belief fit well within the ethos of White society.

DuBois believed that this type of thinking held African Americans back and set them up to be a permanent second-class (Bracey, 1999). He believed that a direct challenge to the system and the education of the African American population would force White society to accept them as equals. DuBois charged that Washington's vision for African Americans accepted the inferiority status of African Americans. He stipulated that all African American citizens must have (1) social and civil equality, (2) the right to an education, and (3) the right to vote (Bracey 1999; Norrel, 2004). DuBois argued that Washington's vision ignored the injustices and economic manipulation of the African American people in American society. Further, DuBois felt that Washington's plan kept African Americans from becoming leaders in higher education by keeping them from the liberal arts (Bracey, 1999).

Though Washington and DuBois held different views on how to best educate and elevate the African American community, they both held significant influence in how higher education proceeded in American society for African Americans. Many believed that Washington's vision was the best way forward and others believed that DuBois had the right idea. However, both wanted the same thing, the education and advancement of

the African American people (Bracey, 1999). Even today, there is still a strong debate concerning the education of African Americans, especially African American males.

Carter G. Woodson expressed in his book, *The Mis-education of the Negro*, that the concept of mis-education hinged on America's educational system's failure to teach genuine Black history in schools. There is also a paucity of literature available that could accomplish this purpose as the books being used tend to ignore the Black presence in America. Woodson considered this disgraceful, and referred to it as an American tragedy, dooming Black people to a "brain-washed" acceptance of being inferior. Woodson was not arguing for segregated schools, or mixed schools, but for a good education for Black students. Woodson (2018) stated:

[a] separate Negro school where children are treated like human beings, trained by teachers of their own race, who know what it means to be Black...is infinitely better than making our boys and girls doormats to be spit and trampled upon and lied to by ignorant social climbers, whose sole claim to superiority is ability to kick "niggers" when they are down.

Woodson (2018) criticized the educational system and explained the vicious cycle that findings from mis-educated individuals teaching and mis-educating others. His conclusions regarding the American educational system are on firm footing. His ideas were important to the 60's civil rights movement and played a role in educational reforms. Those thoughts about education and how it was inadequate is being embraced by the very universities identified by DuBois and many others as problems. These institutions are now heeding Black student's voices and soliciting Black student's opinions concerning their education. Some of these institutions are actively transforming

the way they view education in order to help Black students achieve at a high level. But, to some, those transformations are controversial and not necessarily conducive to African Americans.

Spence (2012) argued that there has been a neoliberal turn in African American politics in which private entities have replaced the public sector in providing interventions within the educational lives of African Americans. In Spence's view, former President Barack Obama's signature program, *My Brother's Keeper*, and programs like it, serve to stigmatize African American communities, particularly African American males. He felt that these programs paint a picture that African American males need "paternalistic intervention to eradicate deficiencies of character and provide psychological uplift for those willing to overcome the damage inflicted on them largely as a result of their failure to adapt to shifts in the global economy" (Dumas, 2016; Melamed, 2011; Sexton, 2008).

The argument concerning African American education is not that programs such as *My Brother's Keeper* are useless. Dumas (2016) explained how these types of programs provide a great service to the African American community especially considering the reduction in resources and funding from federal and state governments in public education. Further, these programs are needed to continue fighting civil rights issues and the extremely high levels of poverty within the African American community. According to Crenshaw (2014), the concern is that turning to the private sector will focus the attention on the "what" concerning African American males such as their behaviors and actions; while ignoring the "why" such as the economic and social problems that cause those behaviors and actions in the first place.

Thus, on one side, arguably the most powerful and popular African American in a generation, former President Barack Obama, argued for a neoliberal approach to stemming the tide of the education gap between African Americans and Whites, while many African American policy makers and thought leaders of the day argue that utilizing such an approach would undermine any efforts at the deep structural changes needed to change the lives of African American males in education and society. These policy makers and thought leaders continue to push for governmental (public) sector changes.

Legal Issues Affecting Desegregation in Higher Education

For African Americans, de jure segregation was no longer a tenable situation. The centuries old struggle to be allowed access into higher education was as symbolic as the larger struggle for equity and equality. There had always been a one step forward, two steps back, and a couple steps sideways dance in the struggle for access and personhood for African Americans (Allen & Jewell, 1995). After the Civil War, African Americans were still viewed as ignorant and inferior beings that were not capable of or deserving of a quality education (Allen, Teranishi, Dinwiddie, & Gonzalez, 2000). African Americans would no longer allow the effects of deculturalization, segregation, or discrimination to hinder them from challenging their status as second-class citizens. They were determined to gain fair and equal treatment as a people. They were also determined to be educated in the same fair and equitable manner. Those two goals often coincided to push the needle forward toward granting African Americans what they dreamed of: equal opportunity.

Utilizing the U.S. Constitution, or more specifically the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, African Americans began challenging the status quo. The Due Process Clause guaranteed equal protection under the law for all U.S. citizens, thus

forming the foundation for the challenges that came in the form of legal battles, acts of congress, and executive orders. These challenges came in three different steps:

- Step one is *Plessy v. Ferguson* through *Brown v. Board*
- Step two is the legal decisions to desegregate higher education via legislation from the government including the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Affirmative Action
- Step three is the dismantlement of the dual education system via *Knight v. Alabama* and the *United States v. Fordice* Decision

Plessy v. Ferguson through Brown v. Board

The first step is set within the foundation of the 1896 landmark case of *Plessy v. Ferguson*. This case set the stage for racial segregation in the United States, especially in the South. The Supreme Court considered whether a Louisiana law passed in 1890, which called for all railways to provide separate cars for Blacks and Whites, was legal (Tushnet, 2008). The law stipulated that the cars be equal by banning Whites from sitting in Black cars and Blacks from sitting in White cars. Homer Plessy, who considered himself, one-eighth Black and seven-eighths White, rode in a railroad car specified for Whites only. Under Louisiana state law, this was illegal (Tushnet, 2008).

Plessy was arrested and convicted. However, Plessy sued declaring that his Fourteenth and Thirteenth Amendment rights were violated, and his case eventually landed at the U.S. Supreme Court. The Court decided against Plessy, stating that segregation was permissible as the Equal Protection Clause only covered political and civil rights, not social rights. Further, if both entities were of equal nature and provided equal service, then the Fourteenth Amendment was not violated, thus creating the

“separate but equal” rule (Tushnet, 2008). This ruling was significant because it granted Whites the ability to keep one particular institution separated; however, it eventually gave way to further separations, especially in educational institutions (Fleming, Gill, & Swinton, 1978; Preer, 1982; Spring, 2005). The Plessy decision paved the way for Whites to continue to discriminate against African Americans by keeping them from participating in choice occupations in all areas of society (Holmes, 2004). This included areas within higher education.

This ruling institutionalized racism in the U.S. and became the foundation upon which several legal cases utilized the “separate but equal” doctrine. Legal cases such as *Missouri ex rel. Gaines v. Canada* (1938), *Sipuel v. Board of Regents* (1948), and *Sweatt v. Painter* (1950), were challenged based upon this doctrine. For example, in *Missouri ex rel. Gaines v. Canada*, an African American student named Lloyd Gaines attempted to enter law school at the University of Missouri but was denied (Wormser, 2002). Instead of granting him admission, the university offered to pay for him to attend another law school out of state. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) argued against this in Court stating, “Missouri was obligated to either build a law school for Blacks equal to that of Whites or admit Gaines to the University of Missouri” (Wormser, 2002).

The Supreme Court agreed with the NAACP argument and sided with them over the University of Missouri. In response to Gaines decision, the state established a law school at Lincoln University for African Americans. Ten years later in the *Sipuel v. Board of Regents* case, the Court citing the Gaines ruling, declared that Ada Lois Sipuel, an African American woman trying to gain admission into the University of Oklahoma

Law School, was entitled to the same legal education as a White applicant. This decision was monumental because it made clear that states would have to either build new schools, provide equal facilities that would serve African American students, or let African American students attend with Whites (Wormser 2002).

McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents and Sweatt v. Painter

According to Wallenstein (1999), *McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents* and *Sweatt v. Painter* laid the groundwork for the Supreme Court's 1954 decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*. The *McLaurin* and *Sweatt* cases are parallel in that both cases involved the university turning down an African American applicant simply based upon their race. Both Oklahoma and Texas, respectively, had state laws that made it illegal for Whites and African Americans to attend the same institution. After losing their case at the District Court level, the University of Oklahoma granted George McLaurin admission to their doctoral program; however, he was required to sit in designated areas within the institution (Wallenstein, 1999). The university argued before the Supreme Court that they were providing equal accommodations and that the designated seating areas did not hinder McLaurin's education. The Supreme Court rejected this argument noting that these special accommodations essentially held back McLaurin's pursuit of an advanced degree and his opportunity to learn. The special accommodations set him apart and kept him from engaging and studying with other students (Wallenstein, 1999).

In the *Sweatt* case, the Supreme Court ruled that the Texas law that prohibited Heman Marion Sweatt from attending the University of Texas Law School unlawful (Wallenstein, 1999). Thus, Texas opened a new law school for African American students. However, the Supreme Court ruled that even with the new school, the state was

not providing equal accommodations for African Americans. The Court argued that the Whites-only University of Texas Law School had far superior intangibles and qualities than the recently opened African American law school (Wallenstein, 1999). The Whites-only law school possessed such things as "reputation of the faculty, experience of the administration, position and influence of the alumni, standing in the community, traditions and prestige" (Sweatt, pp. 634). These were things that the newly opened African American law school could not provide Heman Sweatt.

These cases targeted very narrow legal issues related to the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. The Sweatt case targeted, "to what extent does the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment limit the power of a state to distinguish between students of different races in professional and graduate education in a state university?" (Sweatt, p. 631). While the McLaurin case targeted, "whether a state may, after admitting a student to graduate instruction in its state university, afford him/her different treatment from other students solely because of his/her race" (McLaurin, p. 638). In answering these questions, the foundation was laid for and specifically referred to in the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling. These cases essentially overturned *Plessy v. Ferguson* by demanding a greater degree of equality than "separate but equal" and highlighting that in education, separate is inherently unequal.

Brown v. the Board of Education

Brown v. the Board of Education was a watershed moment not just in the civil rights movement, but also in the plight of African American administrators in higher education. During the 1950's, separate but equal was the law of the land. This was made possible through the *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision in 1896. Again, the NAACP utilized the

laws and courts system to their advantage by bringing class action suits asking the court to force school districts to allow African American children to attend school with White children. These suits were brought forth on behalf of African American school children in Kansas, South Carolina, Virginia, and Delaware (McBride, 2006).

Oliver Brown, a resident of Topeka, Kansas, filed a class action suit against the Topeka school board claiming that “Topeka’s racial segregation violated the Constitution’s Equal Protection Clause because the city’s Black and White schools were not equal to each other and never could be” (McBride, 2006). His suit was dismissed by the federal court but was appealed to the Supreme Court where Brown’s case was consolidated with the other class action suits challenging the “separate but equal” doctrine working their way through the legal system in other states. According to McBride (2006), the Supreme Court, in a unanimous decision, determined that African American children suffered low racial self-esteem due to segregated schools, and officially overturned *Plessy v Ferguson*. The Court ruled that education was a fundamental right for all American citizens,

[f]orming the basis of democratic citizenship, normal socialization, and professional training and in this context any child denied a good education would be unlikely to succeed in life...thus education becomes a right that must be afforded equally to Blacks and Whites. (McBride, 2006)

This decision opened the doors to African Americans to not only attend schools with White children, but to also work at schools with White students and White administrators. This covered not just K-12, but higher education as well.

Desegregation of Higher Education via Legislation from the Government

While the ruling of *Brown v. Board* was easy to enforce within the K-12 public educational system, desegregating higher educational institutions was more of a challenge. The mere fact that higher education was not compulsory or free like K-12 most likely delayed the litigation concerning the desegregation of higher education. The entire learning process had to be weighed in determining equality. This process took into consideration several intangibles such as student interaction, the prestige of the institution, and the traditions associated with the institution (Teddlie & Freeman, 2002). According to Preer (1982), the Sweatt and McLaurin rulings helped in the desegregation of K-12 public schools, but only added confusion to the issue of desegregation in higher education. Further, Preer (1982) elaborated that, "Before *Brown*, the failure to provide separate educational opportunities facilitated access to state universities; after *Brown*, the existence of separate Black colleges impeded access to White schools" (p. 128). The Supreme Court first applied the *Brown v. Board* ruling toward higher education desegregation in the case of *Florida ex rel. Hawkins v. Board of Control*.

In the South, limited action was taken to impose the desegregation mandate of *Brown* in higher education. There were legal cases that tried to force the official desegregation of higher education, but it was an incremental process in gaining it. In the rare instances when the cases were won in the South, the institutions would ignore the ruling, have it overturned via appeal, or use legislative action to keep the students from entering the institution, as was the case with *Florida ex rel. Hawkins v. Board of Control* (Wallenstein, 1999). The official beginning of the Hawkins case was four years before the *Brown v. Board* ruling. In the case, several African American students sought to gain

admission into the University of Florida's Law School. The state of Florida had already created a law school for African Americans at Florida A&M University and thus denied Hawkins and the other students' admissions. The state argued that they were in compliance with *Plessy v. Ferguson* and that the African American students could attend Florida A&M University.

The *Hawkins* case did not make it to the Supreme Court until after the *Brown v. Board* decision, which remanded the case back to the Florida Supreme Court to review in light of the Brown decision. According to Teddlie and Freeman (2002):

[t]he Florida Supreme Court unanimously agreed that its state's universities must admit all qualified applicants. However, the University of Florida urged a delay in admitting Hawkins to its law school, arguing that Chief Justice Warren had delayed desegregation of K-12 schools due to "social complexities." On this principle, five of the seven Florida Supreme Court judges decided that there was no duty to admit Hawkins at any particular time. (p. 80)

It was not until 1956 that the Supreme Court clarified its position on Hawkins by making clear that the complex social issues that accompanied the desegregation of K-12 schools should not be an issue with higher education programs.

The case was sent back to the Florida Supreme Court with strict orders to admit Hawkins and the other students to the University of Florida Law School expeditiously. Though the *Hawkins* case was won, there was still no official guidance concerning the desegregation of higher education. It was clear that the Supreme Court had desegregated public schooling from K-12 to higher education, however, the lack of action unless federally forced to act, would play a crucial role in the battles moving forward especially

for institutions in the South. Examples of southeastern defiance to desegregation were numerous.

An example of this dichotomy is when the Supreme Court ordered the admission of Autherine Lucy to the University of Alabama in 1956. The university admitted her, only to later expel her. The university explained that they expelled her in order to keep her safe. A similar action took place in Mississippi in 1962, when the Supreme Court ordered the admission of James Meredith into the University of Mississippi (*Meredith v. Fair*, 1962). The United States Marshals and National Guard had to be called in to ensure his admittance without violence. Two people died during the riots to keep Meredith out of school. The most famous act of defiance came from Alabama Governor George Wallace, who famously took his “Stand in the Schoolhouse Door”, to prevent the enrollment of two African American students: Jimmy Hood and Vivian Malone (Payne, 2004).

Civil Rights Act of 1964

In 1964, Congress joined the fight toward desegregation for African Americans by passing the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The Act was designed to outlaw discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. It enforced the desegregation of public schools from K-12 to colleges and universities. It guaranteed the right to vote, ending Jim Crow laws. Finally, it ensured equal access to public places and employment. It did not end discrimination, but it did open the door to further progress (National Archives, 2017).

Title IV desegregated public schools and gave the U.S. Attorney General the right to file suit against those that did not desegregate. This played out in spectacular fashion at

the University of Alabama with Governor George Wallace and US attorney general Robert Kennedy (Payne, 2004). Title VI of the Civil Rights Act prevented the discrimination by government agencies that received federal funds. If an agency is found in violation, they could lose federal funding. Title VI was crucial as it prohibited discrimination based on race, national origin, or color when dealing with federally financially assisted programs or activities (Gaines, 2010). According to Gaines (2010), this meant,

[i]f a recipient of federal assistance is found to have discriminated and voluntary compliance cannot be achieved, the federal agency providing the assistance should either initiate fund termination proceedings or refer the matter to the Department of Justice for appropriate legal action.

Thus, mandating that the federal government was responsible for pursuing any violations of these laws.

Adams v. Richardson

The *Adams v. Richardson* case from 1973 is crucial to African American administrators as it began the deconstruction of the dual public higher education system in the United States. The *Adams v. Richardson* case was spawned when the Department of Health Education and Welfare (HEW) determined that 10 states: Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania and Virginia had segregated public higher educational systems (Gaines, 2010). When the states were asked to submit a plan to remedy their systems, half of them responded with inadequate plans and the other half ignored the requests completely (Gaines 2010). Three years had passed, and all 10 states still had segregated public higher education systems.

Thus, a group of African Americans filed a lawsuit against the HEW to force the 10 states to follow Title VI of the Civil Rights Act (Gaines, 2010). The district court agreed that HEW had neglected to do all they could to enforce Title VI in the ten states that were not in compliance with the law. Thus, they were ordered to implement several actions to get the states into compliance. This allowed for each state to advance statewide integration of their system of higher education and further opened the doors to African American students and administrators (Gaines, 2010).

Affirmative Action

President John F. Kennedy introduced the final challenge, affirmative action, in 1961. Affirmative action was created to be a counter weight to societal racism and discrimination (Thelin, 2004). This is one of the most prominent and controversial challenges concerning access to higher education for African Americans (Finsterbusch, 2001; Yetman, 1999). Kennedy's executive order placed the onus upon government contractors to ensure applicants are considered for employment regardless of race, color, or national origin (Thelin, 2004).

The *Brown v. Board of Education* decision legally ended segregation of schools and marked a significant turning point for all public educational institutions including public-funded higher education institutions that began desegregating by 1956 (Allen & Jewell, 2007). This decision was monumental as it effectively provided access to education for all, however, what was de jure discrimination transformed into de facto racism and continued to have a negative effect on the ability of African Americans to gain access to an equal education at integrated schools.

President Lyndon B. Johnson followed President Kennedy's equal employment opportunity declaration with an order prohibiting discrimination by organizations that received federal contracts (Lyndon Baines Johnson Library and Museum, 1965).

Famously, President Johnson addressed the affirmative action order in his commencement address at Howard University in 1965. He outlined his conviction that affirmative action was the right thing to do by stating:

You do not take a person who for years has been hobbled by chains and liberate him, bring him up to the starting line of a race and then say, 'you are free to compete with all the others,' and still justly believe that you have been completely fair... this is the next and the more profound stage of the battle, for civil rights. We seek not just freedom, but opportunity. We seek not just legal equity, but human ability, not just equality as a right and a theory but equality as a fact and equality as a result (Lyndon Baines Johnson Library and Museum, 1965).

Despite the aims of this order, it faced stiff challenges. These challenges resulted into two competing camps and ideologies: meritocracy and affirmative action. The meritocracy camp believed that job positions should be awarded to individuals on the basis of an individual's merit, regardless of race or sex. The applicant's merit is backed up by qualifications and experience (Brown 1994). For those in the meritocracy camp, the view is that minorities and women already have access to positions and that affirmative action amounts to preferential treatment for those groups and reverse discrimination against White males (Brown 1994).

Affirmative action proponents argue that the system is rigged against women and minorities. They believe that policies and laws are needed to remedy the inequities within

the system. However, affirmative action did not always accomplish its designed goal, nor did access gained through affirmative action translate into acceptance by the predominantly White culture. Kawewe (1997) argued that institutions of higher education developed complex internal mechanisms to neutralize affirmative action in the hiring, retention, and promotion of those the law was created to assist. Instead, these machinations were actually working to the advantage of White people. If a person of color did gain access they were deemed as nothing more than a token hire.

In higher education, the legal ramifications of affirmative action have been challenged through the legal system. According to Ball (2000), in 1978, the Supreme Court decision stemming from the *University of California v. Bakke* case established the foundation for affirmative action as it currently stands. In the *Bakke* case, a White male, Allen Bakke, applied to the University of California-Davis Medical School and was denied. He filed a lawsuit against the school, under the pretense that he was denied admissions because of his race and that the university policy favored certain races. The Supreme Court ruled in favor of Bakke, claiming no institution receiving government funding could exclude someone from admission under the consideration solely on the basis of race (Ball 2000).

In 2003, *Grutter v. Bollinger*, another affirmative action case, came before the United States Supreme Court. Barbara Gutter, a White female, applied to and was denied admission to Michigan Law School (Beckman 2006). Her legal team argued before the court that it was because she was White. Michigan's Law School did seek to admit underrepresented students because, much like UC-Davis' Medical School, it believed having a diverse student body would positively affect the character of their school and the

law profession. Michigan won this case, and affirmative action was sustained. However, the court struck down the University's more rigid, point based undergraduate admission policy, which they deemed as a quota system in the *Gratz v. Bollinger* case (Beckman, 2006).

The most recent assault on affirmative action in higher education came from the *Fisher v. the University of Texas* case. Abigail Fisher, who is White, was denied admission to the University of Texas at Austin in 2008. She sued the university, arguing that her Fourteenth Amendment right to equal protection was breached because she was denied admission to the public university in favor of underrepresented applicants that were not as qualified (Hannah-Jones, 2016). The University of Texas argued that its policy is essentially identical to the one upheld in *Grutter v Bollinger*. The university contended that its use of a holistic admissions policy, only considering race as one factor for admission, created a diverse student body that benefited the entire university.

The Fifth Circuit ruled in favor of the University. Fisher appealed to the Supreme Court. After hearing oral arguments, the Supreme Court vacated and remanded the case back to District Court which again ruled in favor of the University. Fisher again appealed to the Supreme Court. This time the Supreme Court ruled in favor of the University of Texas. According to Scotus Blog (2018), the Supreme Court upheld that the university's rationale for diversity "sufficiently measurable to permit judicial scrutiny of the policies adopted to reach them, despite a lack of a numerical quota. The goals that the Court affirmed as sufficiently measurable included the "destruction of stereotypes," promotion of "cross-racial understanding," preparation of students for "an increasingly diverse

workforce and society," and cultivation of "leaders with legitimacy in the eyes of the citizenry."

Dismantlement of the Dual Education System via *Knight v. Alabama* and the *United States v. Fordice*

The *Knight v. State of Alabama* was a federal court case that challenged the policies and guidelines of the state's institutions of higher learning. The plaintiffs charged that the colleges and universities of Alabama were racially discriminatory toward African Americans. John F. Knight, Jr., a state representative of Alabama, filed the lawsuit in 1991. Joining Knight in this lawsuit were students, alumni, and other interested parties from Alabama State University and Alabama A&M University (Hamill 2015).

The lawsuit declared that Alabama was essentially running a dual higher education system, one for HBCU's and the other for predominantly White institutions. This dual system was racially discriminatory in a number of areas, namely:

[a]dmissions standards at historically White institutions, claimed to disqualify disproportionate numbers of Black applicants; selection procedures for the governing boards, administrations and faculty of historically White institutions, claimed to result in the under representation of Blacks; curriculum policies at historically White institutions, claimed to include little representation of Black history, thought, or culture; campus environments at historically White institutions, claimed to be hostile to Blacks; funding and facility policies governing historically Black institutions, claimed to result in their inadequacy; duplication of programs at both historically White and historically Black institutions, claimed to result in racial separation; and restrictive institutional missions at historically Black institutions, claimed to result in the absence of

graduate and other desirable programs at those institutions. (Knight v. Alabama, 787 F Supp 1030 (N.D. Ala 1991))

There were two trials held before the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Alabama: the first one took place in 1991 and the second in 1995 based on the standards and stipulations issued in the *United States v. Fordice* case. Based from the *Fordice* standards, the court ruled that the state's dual system of higher education was in violation of the United States constitution. The court held that the policies and guidelines of the predominantly White institutions were indeed racially discriminatory and fostered a sense of segregation. The court went a step further and appointed five neutral expert witnesses to help it with creating a remedial decree. The neutral experts agreed with the court that there was indeed a violation of the constitution within the Alabama higher educational system (Knight v. Alabama, 14 F. 3rd 1534 ([11th Cir. 1994])). Numerous changes to the policies and guidelines of Alabama institutions of higher education were

[o]rdered including less duplication of programs at geographically close institutions; strengthened curricula at historically Black institutions; increased integration of administration and faculty at all institutions; more flexible admissions policies; increased Black student recruitment; and increased funding of historically Black institutions. (Knight v. Alabama, 14 F. 3rd 1534 ([11th Cir. 1994]))

The court declared that it would monitor those changes for 10 years to supervise the progress being made by the state.

In 2005, the plaintiffs claimed that the goals set forth by the court, which included: the creation of new high-quality programs at Alabama State University and Alabama A&M University; increasing the financial aid and scholarship funds to help African Americans attend college could not be accomplished because the state was seriously underfunding its K-12 and higher education systems. The plaintiffs argued that Alabama's property tax laws were a violation of the Constitution because they were designed to underfund the educational system of African Americans, which caused irreparable harm to the African American communities in Alabama. The court found that the tax system was discriminatory and that Alabama political leaders had intentionally prevented the state from collecting property taxes with the aim of denying African Americans an adequate education (Hamill, 2015).

The U.S. Supreme Court had already ruled that laws created to discriminate against African Americans were unconstitutional. Further, higher education policies and guidelines that had been created to promote dual systems of education, by which, African American students would be denied equal educational opportunities were also unconstitutional. This led many to believe that the property tax laws would be ruled unconstitutional and that the state could then redo the laws to reflect a fairer system of taxation. The district court and the Eleventh Court of Appeals did not rule Alabama's tax laws as unconstitutional. The court explained that there was insufficient proof that the tax laws caused African American students inadequate funding for higher education (Hamill, 2015).

United States v. Fordice (1992)

The *United States v. Fordice* case was brought forth after a group of private citizens, mostly African Americans, sued the governor of Mississippi for what they claimed were efforts by the state to continue the policy of de jure segregation in its public university system (Mitchell, 2002). The United States government intervened on their behalf, agreeing that Mississippi had not made a good faith effort to disassemble the dual system of higher education that existed in the state. The plaintiffs claimed that the state maintained eight universities, five that were predominantly White and three that were predominantly African American. This was a violation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.

The Supreme Court had addressed dual systems in the K-12 level, making clear that it was illegal through the *Brown* decision. Though the Court did not directly address higher education in the dual system ruling, they had the expectation that the K-12 ruling extended into higher education. However, the Court was very clear in its position that Mississippi was obligated to dismantle its dual system in higher education. So, the Court had to determine whether the state had made a significant effort to dismantle their dual system (Mitchell, 2002). Mississippi argued that it had met its duty because all of their institutions had changed their admissions policies and the state had removed all laws that kept African Americans and Whites from attending school together. The state also allowed students to go to any institution that they chose to attend without restriction. According to Mitchell (2002), the state further argued that the students, not the states, were keeping the institutions segregated. As, the students were making the choice of what

institution that they would attend. The Court felt that Mississippi did not meet its duty through the policies that it had implemented.

The Court suggested that they had not gone far enough to rid the state of the policies of de jure segregation in its public university system. The Court identified four policies of the state that on the surface seemed like progress but was really well disguised discrimination. According to Mitchell (2002), the first policy dealt with the admissions policies of the institutions. The Court noted that the admissions policies had a “discriminatory intent” because they were based solely on American College Testing Program (ACT) cut-off scores. The Court felt this was intentional because African American students scored lower on the SAT than Whites. Further, the Court pointed out that the minimum score to attend was higher at the predominantly White institutions (Mitchell, 2002).

The second policy criticized by the Court was how Mississippi classified its institutions. The predominantly White institutions were all classified as flagship institutions. The flagship institutions had better facilities, programs and more funding. Meanwhile, Mississippi’s Black colleges and universities did not have the flagship designation, nor did they have good facilities and programs. Further, they possessed less funding. The third policy the Court focused on, was the state’s duplication of programs between the predominantly White institutions and the historically Black colleges and universities. The Court felt that this duplication supported the dual system of de jure segregation (Mitchell 2002). Lastly, the Court argued that Mississippi did not need eight institutions of higher learning considering most of the institutions were closely located to one another (Mitchell 2002). According to Morris, Allen, Maurrasse, and Gilbert (1995),

this decision was the *Brown v. Board of Education* for Higher Education. They referred to it this way because it effectively ended the separate but equal treatment of African Americans in higher education.

Legal Legacy for Desegregation

Because of these lawsuits, laws, and executive orders, African American administrators finally started to make some headway into predominantly White institutions. However, as late as the mid-1980s, half of the African American professionals, including administrators were in HBCUs. The situation has not gotten much better today. In fact, it reflects the situation outlined by Moore and Wagstaff's 1974 study concerning African American professionals in White institutions; which is "the greatest number of [African American] administrators continue to be coordinators and directors of special programs and projects, unusual and prestigious-sounding titles, but which mean very little in terms of job authority and decision-making power" (Moore & Wagstaff, 1974). The legal narrative of the African American experience illustrates the hard road traveled to gain access to higher education. For African American administrators, that road has been one with some successes and failures.

African American Administrators in Predominantly White Institutions

The African American male student affairs administrator should be an important piece of the puzzle for predominantly White institutions. The changing demographics of the nation will ensure that African American male student affairs administrators will be critical to the success of predominantly White institutions. However, there is a lack of African American male student affairs administrators in these institutions. In fact, researchers have found that there is an inadequate representation of staff members of

color (Hurtado et al., 2008). There have been attempts to reverse this disparity. However, despite the attention given by the profession to the problem, inequities in staffing patterns for this population continue to appear (Bensimon, 2004; Turrentine & Conley, 2001). If institutions want to improve the representation and the quality of African American male administrators, then extra emphasis must be placed on implementing a campus climate that is more supportive for African Americans (Bridges, 1996; Tucker, 1980).

Patrick Francis Healy

The fight for and about education for African Americans has been constant since the emancipation of the slaves. However, during that time there were tremendous pioneers that broke through to make a lasting impact on the legacy of African American history. According to Hrabowski (2004), Patrick Francis Healy was a groundbreaking pioneer that became the first African American male administrator to hold a position in a predominantly White institution. The Georgia born son of a slaveholding Irish man and a domestic slave; Healy would go on to become a crucial figure in African American history. Hrabowski (2004) stated that Healy became the chief academic officer at Georgetown University in 1868 and later became the twenty-ninth president of the same institution in 1874. Healy was seen as one of Georgetown University's most dynamic presidents. He is credited with transforming Georgetown from a small liberal arts college into a modern institution. He was an avid fundraiser for the expansion of campus buildings and was instrumental in expanding the curriculum to implement more vigorous requirements (Newman, 2000).

Though Healy broke through the barrier, he did so while passing as White. He and the Jesuits, who historical sources indicate were aware of Healy's true racial identity,

decided to keep his African ancestry a secret from the rest of the Georgetown community for fear of a racist backlash (Newman 2000).

Expectations and Roles of African American Administrators

It is important to develop a short and long-term effort to increase the supply of African American male administrators. Predominantly White institutions must also create mechanisms to train and develop African American male administrators. As they must possess skills to cope with not only the normal day-to-day duties, but also the special demands placed upon them by virtue of their race (Watson, 1972). According to Tucker (1980), there is a high expectation placed upon African American administrators and simultaneously not many people know who they are and the important work that they do at predominantly White institutions. This disconnect between expecting a lot and not knowing who they are or what they do causes this lack of understanding and unrealistic expectations that is very crucial to the African American administrator's survival.

At predominantly White institutions, the African American administrator has a difficult and different set of tasks as an administrator: (1) they are a noticeable and symbolic sign of African American achievement and power to students and faculty, while also serving as an ambassador of the university to the surrounding African American community; (2) they are seen as, and must act as a counselor, a confidante, and an advocate to African American students on campus; (3) they must attempt to implement institutional change in order to provide more opportunities for African Americans and other minorities (Watson, 1972).

According to Tucker (1980) and Watson (1972), African American administrators do not have the luxury of being just an administrator or just an African American man.

There is a focus on the duality of self, as they must be both an African American male and an administrator, while also being good at both. They have no choice in this duality. It harkens back to the “double consciousness” argument of W.E.B. Du Bois. Double consciousness describes how a person’s identity is divided, which makes it almost impossible to have a cohesive identity. Du Bois coined this term in the description of African Americans within the context of race relations in the United States. Which is perfectly described by how the African American male administrator can never be fully African American or fully an administrator. They are constantly pulled into two separate directions. Everything the African American male administrator does is influenced by their race.

According to Tucker (1980), African American male administrators are often pulled toward one of two extremes: (1) they have the sole responsibility for minority affairs and are expected to not be a part of the other issues in the academy. They are pigeonholed into the role of diversity champion to the detriment of their other skills, (2) the African American male administrator abandons minority issues to become a champion of the institution and its positions. Essentially writing off other minorities and focusing only on relationships and issues that affect the majority. Neither extreme allows the African American male administrator function in a way that could be seen as conducive or constructive to the institution or to the students that they serve. It is essentially a cultural and racial dead-end.

According to Watson (1972):

[t]he African American administrator must deal intimately with the White power structure and the cultural apparatus, and the inner realities of the Black world at

one and the same time...they cannot be separated from either the Black or White world...they must understand systems, organizations, and institutions. They must have grounding in goal setting and planning, they must be able to conceptualize, develop, and implement.

Also,

An administrator of color can add distinct characteristics to a department or office. The characteristics include a leader who can: 1) lead a diverse group; 2) redirect the educational mission to address the needs of a multicultural and diverse community; and (3) focus on making replacements that reflect diversity (Bowen & Miller, 1996).

African American Male Administrators as Role Models

According to Rowley (2000), from a historical standpoint, the number one focus of an African American male administrator should be to advance the African American community in American higher educational society... African American administrators must always choose the course that does the most good and the least harm to themselves and to their people. This is a weighty responsibility placed upon these administrators. The experiences of African American administrators are crucial because their role as leaders on campus is directly tied to the degree completion of African American students at predominantly White institutions (Gardiner, Enomoto, & Grogan, 2000). African American administrators working and thriving on-campus project a sense of accomplishment that encourages success in African American students. This enables the students to see themselves as being able to hold professional positions. Thus, advancing the African American community through their work and visibility.

Recently, institutions of higher education have focused on the educational success of African American males. (Harper, 2012) Their dismal college enrollment numbers, disengagement and underachievement, and low rates of baccalaureate degree completion are among the most pressing and complex issues in American higher education (Harper, 2012). This makes the need for African American male administrators even more pressing. Research argues that administrators of color increase the success of students of color (Henry & Nixon, 1994; Jackson, 2001). Further, the presence of African American males in the administration at a predominantly White institution provides a sense of whether an African American male student will feel welcomed at the institution (Jackson, 2001).

Further, the Commission on the Higher Education of Minorities found:

It is necessary to recognize the important functions that minority academics serve as role models; as advisors; as student advocates; as monitors of the institutional policies and practices; as dedicated educators committed to educational excellence and equity; as scholars approaching traditional subjects and research questions with new perspectives or laying the intellectual foundations in emerging fields of inquiry; and as ambassadors to the minority community. (Drummond, 1995, p. 44)

Changing Demographics and Administrators of Color

Predominantly White institutions have seen a transformation in the past generation from a racially homogenous population to one that is diverse, though not yet representative of the population (Cohen, 1998; Thelin 2004). Educational opportunity for people of color has greatly expanded since the 1960's (Harvey, 2002). This has set up an

institutional system in which there are more students of color than ever before (Allen, 1992). While this is an improvement, it fails to reflect the changing demographic trends of the day. Looking at the data, parents who identified their child as White with Hispanic origin were the largest minority, making up 22% of the 19.9 million children under age 5, followed by African American children, who make up 15% (Wazwaz, 2015). According to the Census Bureau projections by 2050, the African American population will grow from 39.9 million to 56.9 million, an increase of 17 million or 46% (Crouch, 2012). Institutions of higher education must begin to plan for this increase of minorities, especially Hispanics and African Americans. There is abundant literature that argues for the need to have diverse administrators (Cruse, 1994; Davis, 1994; Drummond, 1995; Rusher, 1996). The literature argues that it is crucial to have a diverse staff. It recognizes the positives gained by institutions that possess diverse staffs.

The lack of African Americans in the administration of colleges and universities is a mirror image of society (Wilson, 1989). However, with society changing and the numbers of African American students rising, and due to rise even more, it is imperative that the number of African American student affairs administrators rise as well. According to Flowers (2003), the more diverse the predominantly White institution is, the greater the need for diverse administrators, leaders, and policymakers on behalf of that diverse group. Brudney, Hebert, and Wright (2000) state that the more representation a predominantly White institution can get from African American student affairs administrators, the better the conditions will be for the African American students. Given the increasing number of African American students in predominantly White institutions and the increasing efforts to address the retention of these students, the issue of

persistence amongst African American male student affairs administrators must be addressed as well, if there is to be improvement in those areas. Although there have been pioneering efforts, “little to no progress has been made in achieving and maintaining administrative positions for African American males” (Noble, 1993). The retention of African American administrators at predominantly White institutions is crucial considering the changing demographics (Davis, 1994; Jackson 2001).

Barriers Encountered by African American Administrators

Barriers to success for administrators of color are pervasive and can be found throughout industries and coursing through the economy (Jackson & O’Callaghan, 2009). These barriers are widespread, and they impact people of color regardless of career choice. Irrespective of how the barriers originated or the mechanisms through which they achieve success, it is a known fact that they persist in higher education. The barriers include underrepresentation in the upper administration (Benjamin, 1997; Jackson, 2003a, 2004b); ill-defined positions that lack authority (Benjamin, 1997); stressful, low paying and status employment (Howard-Vital, 1987; Mosley, 1980; Wolfman, 1997); low work satisfaction (Bell and Nkomo, 2001); and the inherent belief that people of color are token hires (Watson, 2001). Research on the topic of barriers encountered by African American administrators may be categorized into two subgroups: social barriers and organizational/institutional barriers.

Social Barriers

Those that operate within the organization often bring about the manifestation of social barriers that hinder the advancement for administrators of color. These are people who exhibit prejudice, racist, and biased attitudes in the workplace. Though, sometimes

very few individuals hold these attitudes; they are often rooted in the daily life and work environment of administrators of color.

Research shows prejudice, discrimination, and “-isms” such as: racism, tokenism, isolationism, and sexism still remain within the institution. These social barriers make things like equity, respect, and fully partaking in all that the academy has to offer difficult for African American administrators (Barksdale, 2007; Gardner, 2014; Holmes, 2004). Further research outlines that African American administrators typically describe working at a predominantly White institution as exhausting and burdensome because of the constant need to validate their existence (Holmes, 2003). This finding is not unexpected considering the continued pervasive influence of prejudice, discrimination and “-isms” in American higher education (Barksdale, 2007; Holmes, 2004; Jackson, 2008).

Research shows that feelings of racism, tokenism, separation and isolation create a revolving door for African American student affairs administrators at predominantly White institutions. The day-to-day grind of moving between the dominant culture and one’s own culture can prove stressful. This constant switching between worlds can cause strong emotions and physical manifestations (Gardner, 2014). These emotions and physical manifestations often translate into feeling emotionally isolated and physically separated from peers. According to Gasman, Abiola, and Travers (2015), “the dearth of [African American] college and university administrators...can be attributed to discriminatory practices and racism faced at every rung of the ladder regarding their career paths” (p. 3).

African American student affairs administrators often encounter environments in the workplace that are unfriendly, unwelcoming, and oftentimes uncooperative (Trower & Chait, 2002). This environment can go undetected because it is often covert in nature. It is subtle and less conscious. These attitudes do not just come from those who are racist, but from those that consider themselves as allies as well. McEwen, Engstrom, and Williams (1991) stated that higher education, as a profession, reflects Anglo, Euro-American values and this promotes a cultural environment that is not responsive to visible racial and ethnic group members of the profession.

Further studies show that social barriers provide resistance to African American student affairs administrators. African American administrators are leaving institutions of higher education due to inhospitable campus environments, alienation, marginalization, and feelings of powerlessness (Patterson & Wolfe, 2015). Also, White peer's prejudgment of the supposed inability and incompetence of African American administrators illustrates the covert discrimination and racism of their White counterparts (Barksdale, 2007). The inherent resistance caused by these issues is a detriment to the institution's pursuit of this population as discrimination continues to dominate in most higher education workplaces.

According to Jackson (2008):

Although these forms may be more subtle, indirectly expressed, and rationalized, they have equally negative consequences for people of color. This new form of racism is viewed as aversive...characterized as the racial attitudes of many Whites who endorse egalitarian values, who regard themselves as non-prejudiced, but who discriminate in subtle, rationalizable ways. (p. 1013)

Social tokenism is a concern within institutions of higher education. When there are a small number of African American administrators at the institution there is a high possibility they will be treated as a “show” piece (Holmes 2003). This spawns negative attitudes from peers because of the perception that the African American administrators were hired without being adequately qualified (Jackson, 2008). This also puts them in the impossible position of having to defend every failure against the accusation that they were not qualified for the position in the first place. The issues that arise from tokenism have a long-lasting effect on the career of African American administrators

Further research concerning tokenism discusses how it affects the day-to-day career of African American administrators. According to Jackson (2008), “it is common for tokenism to manifest itself in a myriad of forms (e.g., committee overload, marginality, and professional isolation)” (p. 1014). Further, the lack of other African American administrators leads to a person losing their individuality and becoming the spokesperson for all African Americans. This phenomenon manifests itself in the fact that African American administrators are no longer seen as individuals, but as symbols or representations of their entire race (Jackson 2008).

According to Bowman and Smith (2002):

[t]he majority culture’s assumption is that African Americans generally do not share mainstream values of hard work, self-reliance, and individualism. These views tend to feed into the aspect of modern racism. Cultural pathology stereotypes that African Americans, in general, not only lack mainstream virtues but also hold self-defeating, ghetto-specific preferences may play a role in the opposition to race-targeted policies that would help increase the number of and

success of African American administrators. These cultural stereotypes may have combined with both a reactionary resentment of African American progress and also with individual-deficit attributions, thus diverting attention away from African American retention barriers and resulting in a subtler form of modern prejudice that has replaced Jim Crow-era discrimination. This type of attitude, at times, permeates the academy. (p. 107)

Davis (1994) stated:

[n]o leadership development seminar, workshop on administration, nor administration, nor management school prepares administrators of color for demands such as...dealing with psychological warfare and feelings of alienation...dispelling myths among faculty and administrators that they are competent and not inferior...and assisting White faculty and administrators in overcoming basic fears of professional interactions with African Americans. (pp. 61-62)

The promoting and retaining of African American administrators bring underlying anxieties and fears to the surface. These psychological tensions are encapsulated as social barriers, which derail efforts to diversify the academy. However, there are other barriers that are just as harmful to African American administrators.

Institutional and Organizational Barriers

Unlike the social barriers, institutional and organizational barriers are linked to frustrating professional experiences for administrators of color. This type of racism and discrimination is typically found buried in policies and procedures influenced by the institution and/or the administration themselves.

Several recent studies have raised red flags as their findings suggest that there is discrimination, bias, and segregation that's embedded throughout the hiring practices in higher education (Flowers & Jones, 2003; Jackson, 2002, 2003, 2006; Williams & Williams, 2006). Many predominantly White institutions have "gatekeepers" who use seemingly harmless human resource tactics in order to discriminate and segregate (Jackson, 2008). "Educational requirements, institutional prestige, job interviews, letters of recommendation, and prior professional achievements are common criteria used in the hiring practices of higher education" (Trix & Psenka, 2003). These measures are often used to control who gets interviewed and eventually hired for the positions within predominantly White institutions. These types of tactics and practices are seen as "gatekeeping".

Research shows that a lack of institutional commitment and entrenched organizational practices will ensure that African American administrators' numbers remain low in higher education (Jackson, 2008). This finding holds merit because it is simply unrealistic for an organizational culture that once excluded racial and ethnic minorities purely on the basis of appearance to quickly transform into a system completely anchored in fairness and equal opportunity (Jackson 2008). Institutional policies are reflecting, not changing, the unfair treatment of African American administrators (Jackson, 2003). In fact, there are more institutional policies that lessen access for African American administrators to positions than there are that promote them to those positions (Jackson, 2003).

According to Guillory (2001), African American administrators face numerous barriers, with discrimination and prejudice being seen as the main barriers to their

success. Guillory (2001) examined institutional biases, in which an institution's tradition contributes to privileged pattern of treatment for the majority but often excludes minorities. Additionally, African American administrators are at a disadvantage when it comes to communication networks within the institution. The informal contacts, peer recommendations and referrals that provide a source of information for advancement are often not accessible to African American administrators. These informal networks can further perpetuate a system of exclusion because they leave valuable information only in the hands of the majority, thus, frustrating the advancement of administrators of color (Guillory, 2001). There is illustrating research that college and university decisions to promote into administrative positions rely less on qualifications and more on whom the administrator knows. Further, this line of thought also extends into which of the candidates "fit in" with the already established dominant group (Cox, 1993). Thereby, highlighting that "fit" is less about job description and more about a person's communication or social network.

Institutional Leadership

The lack of an institutional commitment to diversity shows a lack of leadership as the reasoning behind the low number of African American administrators in higher education. Leaders of predominantly White institutions must project and support a "philosophy of fairness" that displays to African American administrators that they are an appreciated and integral part of the institution (Flowers, 2003). Institutional leaders must do more than pay lip service to the principles of diversity. They must actively commit to these principles in their hiring procedures, print materials, web-based communications, and day-to-day dealings with African American administrators (Flowers, 2003).

Because leadership in higher education is trending toward a colorblind practice in determining policies and procedures, they fail to tackle the inherent racism, racial practices, and oppressive norms that exist within the institution. Instead, they end up accommodating present inequalities and divisions by inadvertently projecting them as positive (Wolfe, 2015). Thus, the popular claim that higher education is objective, meritocratic, colorblind, and race neutral and that it supplies equal opportunity for all (Bennett, 1984; D'Souza 1991; Schlesinger, 1993) clearly does not hold up when analyzing the racial segregation of administrators. Those claims are a camouflage for the self-interest, power, and privilege of dominant groups in U.S. society who exert influence over higher education (Villalpando & Bernal, 2002).

Barr's Identified Institutional Barriers

Barr (1990) identified other institutional barriers to the retention of African American administrators. These barriers were (1) lack of/no professional identity, (2) lack of /no career path, (3) subpar working conditions, (4) insufficient compensation, (5) outside competition, and (6) inner competition. It is vital that we further hash out these barriers. A lack of or no professional identity exists mostly due to uncertainty with what is needed to be successful in college and university administration. This could be a lack of professional development or proper training. Further, colleges and universities lack a promotion and rank system for administrators. This makes it unclear for administrators to determine their position on the ladder to success. Concerning working conditions, administrators tend to work at a rigid pace with very few if any guarantees concerning job security. Quite often, working well past the typical 40-hour a week threshold that

most employees enjoy. To exacerbate this issue, the administrators are often not paid for those additional hours illustrating the lack of compensation concern (Jackson, 2001).

Referring to outside competition, this is something that all institutions face at some time or another. Specifically, organizations outside the academy working to lure administrators away from higher education with the promise of higher compensation and more predictable hours. Lastly, inner competition comes from within the academy as underpaid and overworked administrators look for other jobs with higher pay and more stable hours, but with similar titles and duties. According to Jackson (2001), many administrators make lateral or upward transitions across departments or to other institutions in order to advance their career.

Cultural Taxation

Another institutional barrier is cultural taxation. Academic institutions impose this barrier onto African American administrators to provide internal and external student and community service (Tierney & Bensimon, 1996). Administrators of color are often overwhelmed with being the sole representative for their ethnicity. This feeling of being overwhelmed comes as a result of disproportionate service on committees, mentoring, and cultural speaking engagements, that they have minimal time for their job which severely impacts their evaluations and promotion potential (Fujimoto, 2012; Tierney & Bensimon, 1996; Turner, 2008). It also adds to a sense of overload and tiredness that can lead to the burnout of an administrator.

Debasement Filter

Another institutional barrier for African American male student affairs administrators is a phenomenon called the debasement filter. According to Sangaria

(2002), this is a form of filtering done in administrative searches in higher education. It is a form of racism that manifests itself in four ways: (1) the doubt of the seriousness of the African American candidate, whether internal or external, interest in the position; (2) the search chairs perception of professional invisibility for African American candidates; (3) the devaluing of professional experiences and competencies; and (4) the expectation that African American administrator would be responsible for responding to issues germane to their and other groups of color. Previous research supports that people of color are often unfairly judged on different criteria than their White counterparts (de la Luz Reyes & Halcon, 1988; Konrad & Pfeffer, 1991).

Lack of Critical Mass

The final institutional barrier is the lack of critical mass of African American administrators at predominantly White institutions. This takes a heavy toll on the few African American administrators employed by the institution. Though the institution claims and may have made good faith efforts to increase the number of African American administrators to campus, most have failed (Holmes, 2003). African American administrators often feel as if they are the “token” by their predominantly White institution because they are often asked to be so many things at once. They are expected to be a spokesperson for their race, to advise the academic and non-academic community on African American related issues, programs, and events. They are asked to do these things as if their White colleagues lacked the knowledge of how to do these things. African American administrators are asked to provide high visibility for the institution by attending functions on and off campus that are diversity related. This translates into a

high service, but low job completion scenario where the African American administrators are asked to spend a lot of personal time for non-job-related tasks.

The Retention of African American Administrators in Institutions of Higher Education

Research on the topic of retention of African American administrators may be categorized into three subthemes: issues with retention of African American administrators, institutional commitment to diverse retention, and positive retention strategies. The retention of this population is not an exact science, but it requires extensive work on the part of the university, as a whole, to be successful. This requires a diverse focus, as African American administrators are not monolithic.

Issues with Retention of African American Administrators

According to Gardner, Barrett, and Pearson (2014), African Americans are faced with adjustment problems that are not experienced by their White counterparts. These adjustment issues may negatively affect the retention rate of administrators. Jackson and O'Callaghan (2011) sought to explore the disparities of employment in higher education utilizing the glass ceiling theoretical framework. The purpose of the study was to build on previous research that applied the glass ceiling effect to circumstances within higher education. They also sought to use the glass ceiling lens to determine how the academic workforce attain their positions. The authors felt that this study was needed as there was a "lack of prior research on the topic, glass ceiling effects criteria has not been used to understand employment disparities in the academic workforce, and the glass ceiling framework may be valuable research tool in understanding race-based discriminatory hiring practices."

Further, Jackson and O' Callaghan (2011) found four conclusions that reflected upon understanding the disparities in employment by race/ethnicity especially among African American administrators. (1) People of color had a very low chance of getting entry-level positions in the academic workforce, especially Asians and African Americans; (2) the ability to persevere allowed for gratification once they reached senior level positions among people of color; (3) bad experiences earlier in the careers of people of color often negatively affected their job production and satisfaction later in their career at the institution causing attrition; and (4) institutional fit is important to job retention and career success.

Research into other reasons that retention is difficult among African American administrators is a pipeline issue. The research according to Gasman et al. (2015) discovered that there was a noticeable issue with access and equity in graduate and doctoral programs. Which, in turn, causes a smaller pool of applicants for administrator positions. This small pool leads to a pipeline issue for administrators (Wolfe, 2015). Even those who were able to get jobs in predominantly White institutions found gaining employment within their area of desirability more difficult than if they were at a minority serving institution. (Jackson, 2002)

More research data by Gasman et al. (2015) revealed three major tactics that could help improve the racial and diversity landscape. (1) Recruitment – using outside evaluators to scout talent in order to dismantle built-in institutional biases and roadblocks, (2) Retention – working diligently to build and cultivate a recruiting pipeline on all levels from student affairs to the faculty, and (3) Congruency between missions

and actions – there is a noticeable change in the student population (positive), but those changes are not translating to changes in administration.

The research above plays into what Jackson (2008) calls the revolving door syndrome for African American administrators. This refers to the issue of retaining administrators of color at institutions of higher education. The institutions are basically operating a revolving door as they are losing African American administrators as soon as they get them due to a lack of retention strategies designed to ease the transition of these new hires. To help close the revolving door, it is clear that programs and strategies will need to be created to address the situation.

Institutional Commitment to Diverse Retention

Institutional characteristics also affect the retention of African American administrators at predominantly White institutions. Jackson (2002) argues that, not only should retention for administrators of color be included in the overall efforts of the college or university, but also offers it as the new test of diversity. The number of people of color elevated to positions of authority is a good indicator of an institution's commitment to diversity. Jackson (2002) further expressed:

Colleges and universities should commit to the principles of diversity and affirmative action. One gesture would be to simply add a diversity educational component to all institutional training programs for its personnel. This sends a message that the institution truly wishes its members to be understanding of difference and appreciative of those differences. But most importantly, it shows that the institution values administrators of color's experiences and perspectives.

(p. 9)

Retention of African American administrators begins with an institution's recruitment and hiring practices. An institution that has well thought out and printed practices for recruiting and hiring administrators of color sends a positive welcoming message to incoming and current administrators of color (Flowers & Jackson, 2003).

Predominantly White institutions seeking to retain African American administrators must engage in a careful review of hiring policies, job descriptions, and current practices. This review must be targeted and focused on identifying and eliminating those philosophical or programmatic components that suggest duplicity and lack of commitment. All levels of leadership must communicate this goal as paramount (Flowers & Jackson, 2003). Further, predominantly White institutions that seek to retain African American administrators should consider the following strategies: (1) communicate and integrate a philosophy of fairness into the campus environment, (2) develop or support mentoring opportunities, (3) empower African American administrators for success, and (4) make salaries more representative of African American administrators' job contribution (Flowers & Jackson, 2003).

Predominantly White institutions cannot stop with "making one or two hires" of African American administrators, in order to reach critical mass, there must be a commitment toward the retention of all African American administrators at the institution. To do this, leaders at predominantly White institutions must empower African American administrators by reducing barriers that are deterring their success. Institutional leaders "should seek to integrate and communicate a philosophy of fairness and respect into every facet of a campus environment" (Jackson & Flowers, 2003). Leaders should also invest in and empower African American administrators to job and career decisions

without overly burdening them. Finally, institutional leaders must ensure that the pay that African American administrators receive is commensurate with the job they are working (Jackson & Flowers, 2003).

Harper and Hurtado (2007) found that African American administrators often find themselves in uncomfortable positions because they are acutely aware of the racial climate of the institution and its need to change. Despite this often untenable position, many administrators “indicated a reluctance to publicly call attention to these trends for fear of losing their jobs or political backlash” (Harper & Hurtado, 2007, p. 19). Instead of raising the alarm and discussing their concerns, African American administrators often worked individually with students in a private setting to help them address issues. These administrators feel powerless, voiceless, and disenfranchised, frequently choosing to not raise these issues to other administrators or to their White colleagues.

Positive Retention Strategies

Research on the study of positive retention strategies for African American administrators show that there are several successful strategies to retain African American administrators. The study highlighted that a positive retention strategy begins with the recruitment and hiring process. Further, an institution that possesses strong policies and procedures concerning recruiting and retaining staff of color send a strong message to incoming and current staff of color that the institution is serious about their wellbeing. This has to be more than a policy; it must be part of an established set of goals and objectives (Flowers, 2003).

Grow your own programs. One of the main challenges of recruitment and, in turn, retention is the small pool of African American administrators. Institutions that have long-term thinking concerning their retention programs are implementing “grow your own programs” in which the institution commits to searching for, identifying, and cultivating recent graduates and newly hired professionals. These programs enable institutions to retain African American administrators because all parties are familiar with one another. Jackson (2001) stated that African American administrators are familiar with the current climate, strengths and weaknesses of the institution. This helps with retaining them at the institution. Programs such as these seek to retain through proper recruitment. They also show a conscious and sincere effort to employ and retain African American administrators. Flowers (2003) argues that “Grow your Own Programs” show tremendous promise for institutions of higher education.

Competitive incentive packages. Research about retention also mentions the importance of providing a competitive incentives package for potential employees (Jackson, 2001). The professional relationship with the African American administrators is shaped in the negotiation process. Institutions should make every attempt to provide competitive wages and salaries, because it shows commitment to the person in the position (Jackson, 2001). There is research that says that salary discrimination exists (Euben, 2001; Fogg, 2003, Knapp, Kelly-Reid, & Ginder, 2010; Reason, 2003). Often administrators can be lured away by other institutions willing to offer more benefits; therefore, financial packages have to be sufficient and equitable (Jackson, 2001).

Empowerment. Additional research explains, once the African American administrators assume their positions, it is imperative that the institution empowers them to be able to do their jobs. Jackson (2001) explained that giving the administrators the power to do what they were hired to do shows that the institution has confidence in their hire and the administrators; and it gives the administrator the ability to exercise their duties to the fullest of their ability. Having the institution to validate and show trust concerning African American administrators job duties and authority strengthens the institutions hand in retaining this crucial population (Jackson 2002).

Professional development. More research about positive retention strategies center on professional development for African American administrators. These opportunities are extremely beneficial to African American administrators. These opportunities could come in the form of giving presentations/workshops at professional conferences such as NASPA, ACPA, or at other institutions (Jackson 2001). Additionally, time to prepare and submit manuscripts for publication in academic journals can be a valuable and rewarding experience. It could also lead to other professional growth opportunities such as consulting, grant writing, or speaking engagements (Jackson 2001).

Mentoring/Networking. Mentoring/networking provide a coping mechanism for African American administrators to navigate environments that may be unfamiliar or unfriendly. Getting a new job is already a stressful situation. The stress is compounded with being in a new area, with new responsibilities, colleagues, and no personal connection to the institution (Barksdale, 2007; Burke & Carter 2015; Jackson 2002). Personal relationships with established members of the institution, whether they are

African American or any other race, enables connections to be formed to the institution. These relationships provide a foundation of support and information that would otherwise be non-existent (Barksdale, 2007; Burke & Carter 2015; Jackson 2002).

Mentoring/networking helps to ease the stress of transitioning to a new environment.

In a study by Jackson (2002) concerning mentoring, Jackson stated:

[d]eveloping mentoring programs focused on career and academic development for African American administrators provide a critical aspect for professional development and retention. Partnering the African American administrator with a seasoned professional for guidance and advice provides a sounding board for the new professional. Formal and informal mentors ideally would play a critical role in the administrator's pursuit of his or her career aspirations, Moreover, these mentors could provide local knowledge about the political environment, helpful hints in reference to acclimating to the campus culture, and any other in-depth piece of knowledge that would enable the administrator to perform his or her job effectively. (p. 12)

Studies about mentoring/networking suggest that it provides a foundational support network for African American administrators. This network can include family, colleagues, peers, and friends (Barksdale, 2007). Having a network that can provide positive reinforcement and feedback enables African American administrators to cope with on the job pressures such as racism, tokenism, and discrimination (Patterson & Wolfe, 2015). With African American administrators being more vulnerable to various types of "isms" and barriers, it is crucial that they form a range of mentoring/networking relationships to support their careers development (Burke & Carter 2015).

Further, mentoring/networking provides professional development opportunities for African American administrators. The formation of meaningful connections with senior staff/administrators or faculty within the institution helps to support the growth and development of African American professionals (Gardner, 2014). Additionally, these relationships create conduits in which African American administrators can increase their social and career networks and ultimately expand their professional opportunities in the institution (Burke & Carter, 2015). Mentoring/networking has been shown to aid mentees with transition, help mentors avoid burnout, positively influence teaching and job effectiveness, which cultivates higher learning (Gasman et al., 2015).

Additionally, research shows that mentoring programs can help retain African American administrators by providing needed social interactions that promote deeper personal and professional affiliation with the institution. Further:

Mentoring interactions provide insight into both the written and un-written institutional expectations. Further, with appropriate mentors, staff members have opportunities to take on additional responsibilities and a safe space to ask unfettered questions. Ultimately, the sum of these activities promotes a sense of belonging for the African American/Black administrators as well as engagement with and commitment to the institution (p. 12).

Institutional-led orientation. Career orientation is a vital piece to the transition of African American administrators to careers in higher education. Participating in an orientation program offers the opportunity for mentoring/networking, to gain information about their work environment, and their future colleagues. These programs also offer a sense of welcoming and openness, which can ease the tension of being the new hire.

African American administrators gain a sense of being plugged into the institution when they partake in institutional orientation programs.

An orientation program should have a community aspect to it as well. According to Jackson (2002), “community orientation could entail the community leadership introducing the new administrator to the community in addition to informing the new administrator about the present network systems (e.g., churches and social groups)” (p. 10). For African American administrators, having a connection to the community enables them to have a support network outside of the university (Jackson, 2002). This network can provide solace during tough times and relieves some of the isolation that often is felt by African American administrators new to an institution.

Jackson (2008) further explained that orientations should also be robust at the campus level. Putting together a reception to introduce all the new members of the department/unit to the current staff, students, and stakeholders could provide a wonderful opportunity to create meaningful connections. These orientations could include sessions with campus stakeholders that acclimate the African American administrators to the culture of the institution (Singh & Williams-Green, 1995). The on-campus orientations should promote a deeper personal and professional affiliation with the institution. Further, it should provide insight into both the written and un-written institutional expectations (Jackson, 2003).

Leadership-led retention. Leaders must understand the importance of adhering to the principles of diversity and affirmative action when dealing with African American administrators (Jackson, 2001). Predominantly White institutions should be sure to incorporate a diversity educational component with all institutional training programs for

faculty, staff and students. Doing this sends a strong signal to African American administrators that the institution is dedicated to the principles of diversity. It also sends the message that the institution wants all of its members to be knowledgeable about differences and learn to be appreciative of them as well (Jackson, 2001). Perhaps most importantly, taking this action shows that the institution values and respects the African American perspective.

Leaders have to learn to use recruitment as a retention strategy (Jackson, 2001). They have to go a step beyond just articulating recruitment policies for African American administrators and move toward setting goals and objectives for their desired diversity mix. These goals should be targeted and detailed. According to Jackson (2001), examples of using recruitment to retain administrators are: (1) utilizing upper level administrators to send out recruitment letters to colleagues at other institutions to submit qualified candidates African American administrators; (2) ensure that all administrative search committee members are up to date in their training and knowledge concerning the institution's diversity goals; (3) being willing to reopen and reclassify searches to aggressively attempt to diversify the pool to meet set diversity goals; and (4) be honest about the institution's challenges and rewards within the work climate (particularly those that are related to the institution's diversity issues and goals).

Leaders should ensure that there is an open line of communication between the administration hierarchies. That communication should include feedback and input concerning the administrator's work and behavior. Most professionals value that feedback and often seek it out in order to grow professionally. However, it is imperative that the feedback and input be constructive and encouraging. It also should come from

someone that is above the administrator in the hierarchy. The feedback should be given with professional courtesy and not in a condescending manner. This type of communication is seen as valuable and developmental support. It goes a long way toward developing a sense of belonging and not just another member of the team. This type of support enables the administrators to make difficult decisions with confidence.

According to Jackson (2001):

[p]redominantly White institutions should recognize that for the most part, African Americans work in a dichotomous world: one African American and the other majority White. Most predominantly White institutions still maintain a vestige of the old systems that were designed primarily for White men. There is a different “face” that many African Americans have learned to wear in these “old systems” environments in order to successfully negotiate them. Although many African Americans have learned to negotiate these types of environments, there can still at times be feelings of alienation. By raising their awareness to the presence of these environments, predominantly White institutions can greatly enhance the experience of African Americans at their institutions. (p. 106)

There are many different types of retention that can play a role in keeping African American male student affairs administrators in PWI's in the southeast. However, it will not always be easy for institutions to retain them. Sometimes, it takes the mental fortitude from the administrator to make it. This is where persistence comes into play for African American male student affairs administrators.

Persistence

Tinto's theory for institutional departure (1987) is one of the most cited theories in higher education. This theory sought to explain how and why and the processes that moved individuals to leave an institution. Tinto's model uses a sociological lens to understand student retention (Tinto 2006). Tinto's model claimed that the more involved and invested a student was in the social and academic systems of an institution, the more likely a student was to persist to graduation at that institution. Tinto's model did not distinguish between persistence and retention. Despite revisions to his theory, there was criticism of Tinto's models.

One critique is that it does not do a great job of addressing low-income or first-generation students. Tierney (1992) argued that the model relied too much on the traditional student. He argued that Tinto misconstrued parts of Van Gennep's rites of passages theory and that this held "potentially harmful consequences for racial and ethnic minorities" (p.603). He felt that Tinto's model was too embedded in social integrationist theory. The theory spoke about ritual but did not consider the cultural context in which it is rooted. Tierney (1992) outlined the problem, as being that American higher education reflects the dominant society, which in America, is White. This means that individuals from one culture must undergo a ritual in another. According to Tierney (1992), this illustrated the problem with Tinto's model.

In light of the research in this area, it was crucial to come up with a definition for this study. It was also important to determine which term: persistence or retention would be used as a marker for this study. According to Reason (2009), retention focuses on the institutional goal of keeping students until degree completion, while persistence is an

individually focused student reaching his or her specific educational goal attainment. Retention is more focused on what the institution does to help a student to reach his or her goals, while persistence is focused on the individual's work toward reaching his or her goals within the institution. Both can be used to explain student matriculation through the academic cycle of higher education. In light of the fact that this study is focusing on the persistence of administrators at predominantly White institutions in the southeastern United States, a definition must be crafted to fit in order to properly gauge the persistence methods of African American male administrators.

Thus, the definition for persistence for this study will be the individual phenomenon that focuses attention on the individual goal or goals of an administrator reaching his or her specific goal attainment on the job. This definition focuses on the individual actions and goals of the administrators within this study. What choices does he make to remain employed in his position? What programs does he take part of to help him along his path as an administrator? What strategies does he use to navigate hostile environments? Utilizing this definition of persistence will allow the study to determine the answer to these questions.

Resilience

Reivich and Shatte (2002) expressed how vitally important resilience was in one's personal life:

It's the level of our resilience – the ability to persevere and adapt when things go awry – that determines the happiness and longevity of our relationships, our success at work, and the quality of our health. Indeed, more than any other factor

in the scheme of our emotional intelligence, resilience is what determines, how high we rise above what threatens to wear us down... (p. 34)

Grotberg (2003) explained how adversity is inevitable and the ability to deal with and be transformed by that adversity promotes self-identity and resilience. A willingness to embrace adversity and to promote it within self-identity is instrumental in overcoming challenges within one's personal and professional life. The literature supports the premise that building resilience characteristics will be beneficial in future endeavors. Henderson and Milstein (1993) stated that "resilient students need resilient educators...it is unrealistic to expect students to be resilient if educators are not" (p. 47).

Henderson and Milstein (1993) suggested that if administrators were in high-risk situations and barely managing, then how could they promote resilience among their students. It is critical to note that an individual's environment is crucial to the development of characteristics of resilience. Further, according to Henderson and Milstein (1993), the role and impact that an administrator plays in the development of students and the creation of educational environments shows that the administrator's ability to have resilience is vital in promoting resilience among students and their environment.

Conclusion

In this chapter the various legal cases associated with desegregation was discussed in detail to outline the complexities of the dismantlement of "separate but equal" and dual education systems in American society. Further, the chapter detailed the role and importance of African American administrators in increasingly diverse predominantly White institutions. The research highlighted the barriers that African

American administrators faced within the academy, but it also illustrated wonderful things some institutions have done to retain African American administrators.

The research presented in this chapter investigated many different issues surrounding African American administrators in predominantly White institutions from the historical and legal perspective to the current retention efforts being utilized to mitigate the attrition of African American administrators. However, the information that this study was built around does not necessarily address the experiences and persistence methods of African American male administrators in predominantly White institutions in the southeastern United States. The information presented is monolithic as if all African American's experiences are the same. The research focused heavily on African American female administrators but finding studies that addressed the plights of the African American male student affairs administrators were difficult to find.

The information presented in this chapter was pertinent because the monolithic view included African American male student affairs administrators in their research. This study was crucial because it offered an opportunity to disaggregate the African American male student affairs administrator experience and persistence methods which would provide crucial information to predominantly White institutions in the southeastern United States from the traditional African American experience. Further, the information often focused on predominantly White institutions with no specific designation. By focusing on the southeastern United States, this study will make inroads in an area that has a dark past concerning race and discrimination within their institutions. Chapter 3 outlined the research methodology that was utilized in this study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODS

This chapter explores the rationale behind the methods used to collect data for the study. It will highlight why the researcher chose to utilize qualitative research, what qualitative research is, and how it will help answer the questions framed within the study. Further, the chapter outlines the participant selection process, site selection process, data collection process, and interview process. Additionally, the chapter will explain the data analysis procedures, ethical considerations, quality assurances, assumptions, limitations, and delimitations of the study. Utilizing qualitative methods, the researcher sought to discover the experiences of African American male student affairs administrators in predominately White institutions in the southeastern United States. Further, the methods allowed the researcher to explore participant successes and challenges and how it affected their career advancement.

Methods Rationale

Qualitative research is vital to this study because I attempted to gain deeper understanding of the experiences of the participants. According to Rubin and Rubin (2005), qualitative research is ideal when trying to recreate the events and instances in which the researcher did not participate. Additional digging into research designs illustrates why a quantitative research design was not conducive to my study. Rubin and Rubin (2005) explained that a quantitative research design uses a fixed methodology that focuses more on numbers and statistics to answer the questions posited by the study.

Further, Patton (2002) explained that quantitative research designs are restrictive and limiting to the participant mainly because quantitative research requires a batch of preset categories in an arranged question set. Additionally, Creswell (2007) stated that quantitative research utilizes hypotheses and cause and effect to draw conclusions from the data. Utilizing this information, I concluded that quantitative research was too limited and rigid to utilize. It is also too numbers-focused to illustrate the passion and details that were expected from participant experiences.

While both methodologies have value, they do different things for very different reasons. In the case of this study, little is known about the experiences of African American male student affairs administrators at predominantly White institutions in the southeastern United States. This made the study more of an exploratory study, which was better suited for a qualitative research approach.

Qualitative Methods

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2011), qualitative research consists of a set of interpretive and material practices that make the world more visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self (p. 3). There are certain characteristics of qualitative research that distinguish it from other methodologies. According to Crane (1999), qualitative research develops a sounder, theory rich empirical base, while Creswell (1998) described that the basis of qualitative research is that it is concerned primarily with utilizing human mediation as the primary instrument. It is focused on the informational discovery process rather than outcomes. Finally, it employs analysis with descriptive and inductive reasoning.

One characteristic of qualitative inquiry that was utilized was interviewing. Participants were encouraged to share their stories as a way to reveal a deeper meaning of their lived experiences. The information gained will be used as a guiding point for stakeholders and policymakers in implementing retention methods designed specifically for African American male student affairs administrators. It also enabled participants of this study to reflect upon the successes and failures of their techniques in coping with the barriers they encountered throughout their career with the hope that it would save future African American male student affairs administrators from some of the pitfalls they encountered.

Research Questions

This qualitative study sought to yield new knowledge about the experiences of African American male student affairs administrators in PWIs in the southeastern United States. Based on the literature in Chapter 2, these questions were created with the purpose of exploring African American male student affairs administrator's experiences. The intent of these findings is to yield insights into the experiences, successes and challenges of African American male student affairs administrators for institutional leadership, student affairs practitioners, and other African American male student affairs practitioners. Consequently, the questions for this study included:

Overall Purpose: What are the experiences of African American male administrators in Student Affairs at predominantly White institutions in the southeastern United States?

1. What are the successes and challenges faced and how are each negotiated?
2. What are the implications of these experiences for career advancement?

These questions were created and designed to gain deeper insight into the experiences that African American male student affairs administrators go through at PWIs in the southeastern United States.

Site Selection

The setting for this study was various campuses via Zoom and Skype throughout the southeastern United States, specifically, Alabama, Georgia, Tennessee, Florida, and Louisiana. Many predominantly White institutions in this region have a history of exclusionary practices related to students, faculty, and staff of color, especially African Americans. During the 1960s, most of the institutions in these states did not voluntarily desegregate. It was not until the Supreme Court, through the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, mandated them to do so, did they reluctantly admit their first African American students and even then, it took several years after the decision.

Table 1
Description of Participant Sites

Institution	Location	Size	Integration Date	# of African American Students	# of African American Administrators
South State University	Florida	56,079	1958	2,254	154
Bayou College	Louisiana	30,861	1953	3,703	67
Smith University	Mississippi	24,250	1962	2,486	37
College of the South	Alabama	38,392	1963	4,038	19
South Tennessee State College	Tennessee	28,894	1961	1,726	40
Southeastern University	Alabama	20,902	1963	3,069	87

South State University

South State University is the pseudonym name given for a four-year public, predominantly White university located in Florida with an African American student body representation of 4% of the 55,000 plus reported on campus in the 2018 fall semester. Full-time employee data show 22% or 154 African American administrators with 13% or 20 being African American males. South State University did not desegregate until it was mandated to do so by the federal courts. The first African American student was not admitted until 1958, and the first African American administrator was hired 11 years later.

Bayou College

Bayou College is the pseudonym name given for a four-year public, predominantly White university located in Louisiana with an African American student body representation of 11% of the 30,000 plus reported on campus in the 2018 fall

semester. Full-time employee data show 18% or 67 African American administrators with 6% or 38 being African American males. Bayou College did not desegregate until it was mandated to do so by the federal courts. The first African American student was not admitted until 1953, and the first African American administrator was hired eight years later.

Smith University

Smith University is the pseudonym name given to a four-year public, predominantly White university located in Mississippi with an African American student body representation of 10% of the 24,000 plus reported on campus in the 2018 fall semester. Full-time employee data show 17% or 37 African American administrators with 15% or six being African American males. Smith University did not desegregate until it was mandated to do so by the federal courts. The first African American student was not admitted until 1962, and the first African American administrator was hired 13 years later.

College of the South

College of the South is the pseudonym name given for a four-year public, predominantly White university located in Alabama with an African American student body representation of 12% of the 38,000 plus reported on campus in the 2018 fall semester. Full-time employee data show 13% or 19 African American administrators with 30% or six being African American males. College of the South did not desegregate until it was mandated to do so by the federal courts. The first African American student was not admitted until 1963, and the first African American administrator was hired seven years later.

South Tennessee State College

South Tennessee State College is the pseudonym name given for a four-year public, predominantly White university located in Tennessee with an African American student body representation of 12% of the 28,000 plus reported on campus in the 2018 fall semester. Full-time employee data show 9.3% or 40 African American administrators with 57% or 23 being African American males. South Tennessee State College did not desegregate until it was mandated to do so by the federal courts. The first African American student was not admitted until 1956, and the first African American administrator was hired 11 years later.

Southeastern University

Southeastern University is the pseudonym name given for a four-year public, predominantly White university located in Alabama with an African American student body representation of 13% of the 28,000 plus reported on campus in the 2018 fall semester. Full-time employee data show 13% or 87 African American administrators with 62% or 54 being African American males. Southeastern University did not desegregate until it was mandated to do so by the federal courts. The first African American student was not admitted until 1963, and the first African American administrator was hired six years later.

Participant Selection

I chose eight full-time African American male student affairs administrators at various PWIs across the southeastern United States. These administrators were purposefully selected as participants for the study (Patton, 2001). According to Maxwell (1998), qualitative researchers typically utilize small sample sizes because qualitative

research goes for depth in order to flesh out detail in experience. In order to select administrators, I had to find a standardized definition that fit the study and explain the position in clear terms. According to the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's (EEOC) classification system, administrators are EEO-1 positions within higher education institutions. This generally refers to positions held by professionals and managers whose jobs require administrative and/or managerial skills that help them in setting and implementing policies and lead individual departments (<http://www.doi.gov/hrm/pmanager/classfaq.html>). Continuing to define administrators, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2018) defined higher education administrators as people who oversee various services for students and academics at colleges and universities. An administrator's duties vary and depend on the area of the college they manage.

Further, according to Jackson (2004), a university administrator is an individual who possesses a managerial or policymaking capacity that may have a line or staff function. There are three specialty levels to administration in institutions of higher education. Those levels are: academic affairs, which consists of presidents, academic deans, vice presidents or provosts; administrative affairs, which consists of vice presidents of finance, directors of alumni affairs, and directors of computer services; and finally, student affairs, which consists of vice presidents of student affairs, dean of students, and directors of financial aid (Moore & Sagaria, 1982; Sagaria, 1988).

I searched various websites, called human resource departments, and utilized contacts at several institutions in order to identify candidates that fit the previously mentioned definitions and the focus of the study. Once candidates were identified, I recruited the administrators by sending a request to participate email and a follow up

form. The email requested their assistance. It outlined what information would be needed and how it would be used. Once the participant agreed to be a part of the study, I sent them an informational form to fill out. The informational form was sent to each participant so that I could create a biographical profile. This profile included background information and allowed the participant to create an alias in order to protect their anonymity and encouraged an open and honest dialogue on the issues concerning the study. The eight chosen participants will be highlighted in greater detail in Chapter 4.

Theoretical Framework

This study incorporated a critical race framework. According to Solórzano and Yosso (2002), critical race methodology in education challenges White privilege and exposes research that silences and distorts people of color (p. 26). It also offers methods, perspectives, and pedagogies which help to identify and eventually transform the structural and cultural aspects of education that maintain subordinate and dominant racial positions in education (Solórzano et al., 2000, p. 63). Finally, CRT provides a framework for communicating the experiences and realities of the oppressed (Ladson-Billings, 1998).

In addition to the critical race framework, this study incorporated the Community Cultural Wealth theory (CCWT). CCWT is an array of knowledge, skills, abilities, and contacts that are possessed and utilized by communities of color to survive and resist various forms of oppression (Yosso, 2005). There are seven forms of capital through which communities of color nurture cultural wealth. These forms of capital are dynamic processes that build upon one another: aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, navigational, resistant, and spiritual (Huber 2009; Yosso, 2005). According to Yosso

(2005), CRT in combination with CCWT highlights that there are some things that cultures, other than White middle class, bring to the forefront and shifts that focus from the White middle class to that of communities of color. This, in turn, challenges the way race and racism impacts society, while valuing the voices and presence of communities of color. For this study, the five tenets of CRT and the seven types of cultural capital were used to analyze the data from the participants. It aided in better understanding the experiences of African American male student affairs administrators in PWI's in the southeastern United States.

Data Collection

Throughout this research study, data were collected from individuals who have experienced the phenomenon, in this case, the experiences of African American male student affairs administrators at predominantly White institutions in the southeastern United States. The data were collected via an in-depth, semi-structured interview with the participants of the study. A set of questions was created to guide the interview process. Once a participant gave their approval to be a part of the study, an initial interview date was scheduled. Open-ended (semi-structured) interview questions was the primary method of data collection. I utilized an audio recorder to gather and ensure the accuracy of the collected data. Each participant's interview lasted between one and one-and-one-half hours in duration. Each participant was interviewed twice in order to follow up on themes and to clarify issues concerning the study topic totaling more than 18 hours of interviews.

Interview Process

One of the most common formats of data collection in qualitative research is performing interviews. A qualitative interview is a framework where the principles and practices are documented, questioned and reinforced (Jamshed, 2014). Kvale (1996) stated that, on the surface level, interviews were simply conversations. However, drilling deeper, Kvale (1996) explained that qualitative research interviews are really efforts to understand real life from the point of view of the participant. These interviews are a way of unpacking the meaning of various experiences in the real world. Interviews are especially useful in getting the less obvious details behind a participant's experiences. As the interviewer, I could pursue detailed information around a specific topic or subject.

Further, Creswell (2013) explained how participants should be asked two broad, general questions: What have they experienced in terms of the phenomenon? What contexts or situations have typically influenced or affected their experiences of the phenomenon? The focus must be on gathering written descriptions of the experiences, and ultimately providing an understanding of the common experiences of those participants. After the interviews occurred, I detailed an exact transcription of the audio recordings into Word documents. Next, I electronically forwarded a copy of the transcript to each participant so that they could be reviewed and verified.

The researcher attached to this electronic document instructions that requested each participant to review, verify, and/or make changes to the document. The letter also included a bolded request for the participant to note any questions that they may have for the second interview. The follow-up interviews were conducted in order to member check and to ensure clarity and validity of data. According to Creswell (1998), member

checking is when a researcher tries to determine the trustworthiness of the data analysis. By member checking, the participants had the opportunity to review my conclusions to determine whether I had accurately depicted their experiences and that they had correctly recollected their statements. The second interview was more informal and used to answer any follow up questions raised by the participants during their review of the transcribed document.

Data Analysis Procedures

Data were analyzed using traditional qualitative methods, including the development of themes and codes that surfaced from the coding process (Creswell, 2013). Notes were taken during the interviews and in the first review of the transcripts to assist in triangulation efforts. Saldaña (2013) talked about a qualitative research cycle that includes, holistic coding, in vivo coding, and concludes with a specialized form of coding that is specific to the area of research. The cycle began with holistic coding as big picture ideas and general themes were identified and categorized. This is where the ideas isolation and racism started to come across after already appearing in my interview notes. Next, in vivo coding, the second cycle of coding, occurred. This round of coding allowed me to code based on the participant's terminology. This gave them the chance to truly be allowed to "speak" into the research. In this cycle, the ideas of decision-making and racism became apparent.

The third and final cycle of coding is a more specialized form of coding. It was applied to the collected data. While a number of options exist, narrative coding fit best for the purpose of this study. Exploring the experiences of African American male student affairs administrators in PWIs in the southeastern United States, Saldaña (2013)

explained that narrative coding works well as “its interpretive tools are designed to examine phenomena, issues, and people’s lives holistically” (p. 131). With this in mind, narrative coding provided insights needed to analyze the collected data. Through this coding, the themes of relationships, self-care, code-switching, isolation, and managing expectations stood out.

According to Kavale (1996), in order to properly analyze the data, there must be structuring, clarification, and analysis proper. Structuring the data is simply reducing and streamlining it so that it is understandable and manageable. Next, the data must go through a clarification process in order to make it ready for analysis. The clarification process takes the data and gets rid of non-essential and repetitive material. The analysis proper process is where the researcher develops meaning from the interviews. In this stage, the data are organized in such a way that preliminary conclusions can be drawn from the participants’ own understandings and the new perspectives brought to light by the phenomena. However, these conclusions must not be definitive.

Critical Race methodology was used as a lens through which to analyze the collected data. Due to the centralized nature of experiential knowledge, which is critical to the understanding and analyzing of racial subordination, critical race theorists believe that methods of communication such as storytelling and narratives are essential to learning about people of color (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). In this study, through the lens of counter-storytelling, I expected to learn more about the experiences of African American male student affairs administrators that have attributed to their persistence strategies. Since counter-storytelling tells the experiences of minority populations that are often not shared, it was expected that analyzing the data through the framework of

Critical Race Theory would add deeper insights to help predominantly White institutions in the southeastern United States to develop successful strategies that could improve the challenges faced by African American male student affairs administrators.

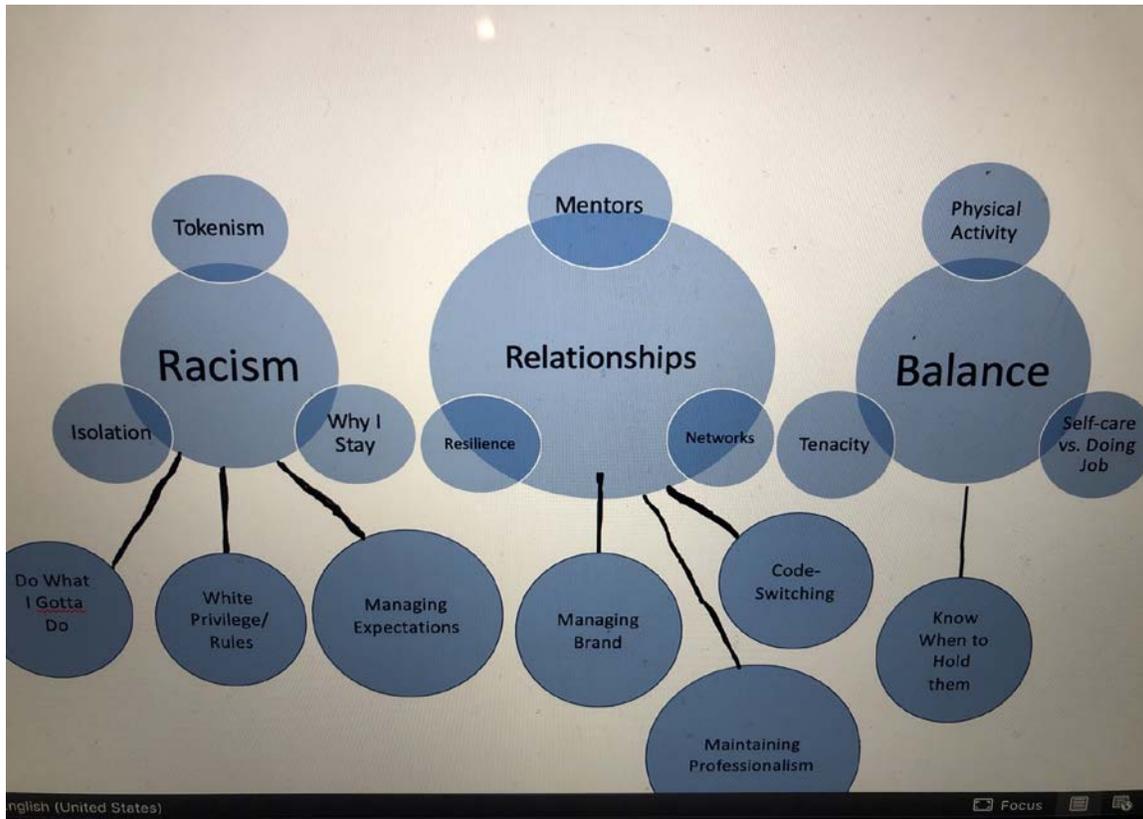


Figure 1. Visual diagram of codes and themes.

Ethical Considerations

In order to ensure that there were no ethical issues that surface during the data collection, analysis, and distribution of the data, steps were taken to minimize those risks. Considering this was an interview process concerning the experiences of African American male student affairs administrators at a predominantly White institution in the southeastern United States, each participant was given an alias in order to insure their anonymity. Further, the nature of the study was explained in detail to each of the participants. This was done to ensure that they could make an informed decision

concerning whether they wanted to participate in the study. The data were shared with the participants in order to ensure that the researcher correctly captured the participants thoughts and experiences. The IRB process was completed for this study, thus ensuring compliance to all research requirements.

Quality Assurance

According to Phelps (1994), internal validity is an overall strength of a qualitative study. The internal validity was high because it was a participant-driven study. Considering the aim of the study was to compare and translate the findings, external validity was not considered. Further, the study utilized triangulation to increase the validity of the methodology chosen for this study. According to Creswell (2013), “this process involves corroborating evidence from different sources to shed light on a theme or perspective” (p. 251). Thus, the research that was gathered previously was checked against the information gathered from the interviews of the participants. Finally, the study utilized member checking, which according to Creswell (2013), is “the most critical technique for establishing credibility” (p. 252). The data were shared with the participants so that they could judge the accuracy of their statements and comments. They were encouraged to offer feedback and/or comments on their interview statements to ensure that they felt that their statements are an accurate representation of their experiences.

Assumptions

In conducting this study, the following assumptions were made:

1. The participants will answer the questions honestly and to the best of their ability.
2. The participant’s experiences and challenges will reflect similar experiences and stories.

Limitations

The study hinges on the truthfulness of the participants and there is no guarantee that the participants gave truthful and accurate data. Finally, the researcher was the device of data collection and analysis. According to Merriam (2001), with the researcher being human, mistakes and errors in judgment could have been made. This illustrates that the findings are only credible depending on the skill level of the researcher.

Delimitations

This study focused strictly on African American male student affairs administrators in EEO-1 positions in predominantly White institutions in the southeastern United States. My reasoning for choosing this population is that there is a small number of African American males in administrative positions within predominantly White institutions. There is very little information concerning their experiences and how they negotiate their successes and challenges. My focus on the EEO-1 positions was that these positions are capable of setting and implementing policies that can change the landscape of the institution. This is crucial to me as I feel that knowing more about this population can help institutions better support them.

I chose the southeastern region of the United States because of the history of racial prejudice and injustice that permeated throughout that region from slavery until the end of Jim Crow and in some cases beyond that. Some would argue that racism is still a part of the fabric of this region. I feel that it is important to explore the dynamics of race and how it impacts this population in this region, which is why I chose Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Community Cultural Wealth Theory (CCWT) as frameworks. CRT

and CCWT allowed me to view the information gathered through a lens of experiential knowledge, which focused on the racial elements encountered by this population.

Positionality Statement

I am an African American male administrator at a large public state university located in the southeastern United States. My path was not straightforward in becoming an administrator. I was raised in a low populated country area in central Mississippi. This was a rural area with a mix of African American and White families. My parents did not graduate high school. My father went into the military at the age of 17 and upon returning he worked odd jobs, from cafeteria worker to truck driver, to support the family. I was raised in an environment that did not explicitly promote higher education but expected us to give our best in our educational pursuits.

While my parents were not formally educated past high school, they did instill in me the desire for knowledge and learning, which encouraged me to be my best. I enrolled in junior college after graduating high school. After two years of junior college, I transferred to a medium sized state university. It was here that my African American female advisor introduced me to higher education administration. The institution also had two high ranking African American males within its administration. So, I did not realize that there was a lack of African American males in the field as it was not my experience.

I majored in college student personnel with the intention of being in higher education administration. After graduation, I moved to a university in the southwestern United States where I began my career in residence life. I have been working in higher education for the last 13 years. My career has given me the opportunity to work with many fine people. I have had the opportunity to manage and interface with several groups

of people. Through these experiences, I have come to respect and appreciate diversity. However, throughout my entire career there was always one constant: almost without exception, I had limited experiences with other African American male student affairs administrators. In fact, I have only worked with six in my 13-year career.

The lack of African American male student affairs administrators led to a lack of mentors and role models. It also left me precariously learning on my own. I was navigating experiences and emotions that left me feeling alone, powerless, and in some ways mentally castrated. As an African American male, I sometimes felt I had to shrink inside myself in order to fit in. As a physically large African American male, I often intimidated my colleagues, especially White females. They often felt they had to have another person in the room to meet with me or felt that my defending myself was attacking them. So, I shrank inside myself and projected a personality of joviality. I would laugh and smile a lot. I would not fight back and became a “company guy”. I lost my personality, and I have spent the better part of five years trying to rediscover myself.

My desires to be a senior administrator in higher education, to assist other aspiring African American male student affairs administrators in moving through the higher educational sphere, and to implement programs at PWIs to increase the numbers of African American male student affairs administrators are of great importance to me. I see my role as an African American male student affairs administrator as critical to assisting me in paving the way for other African American male student affairs administrators of the future. One of my goals in the study was to assist in paving the way by providing a foundation or frame of reference that will assist other African American men to succeed at PWIs in the southeastern United States.

Because of these experiences and observations, during my professional and academic career, I have experienced a constant tension between the institution in which I work and my African American maleness. I acknowledge this tension, and I do realize that I am predisposed to feel a certain way about this research. I believe that the lack of African American male student affairs administrators hinders the growth of other African American male administrators. Moreover, it hinders the institutional efforts in recruiting and retaining African American male students. At times, these observations have caused me to resist or discount my personal feelings about a situation or issue. I understand that the personal attachments and preconceptions that I have, present both strengths and weaknesses, for the research that I am undertaking (Machi & McEvoy, 2012).

I recognize that this bias has the potential to limit my research. I believe that my background, social status, and environment impact the research that I undertake. In qualitative research, my identity as a researcher has the potential to impact the research process. This is especially true if the researcher is dealing with an issue that personally affects them or if it comes from his/her own background and experiences. That is the case with this study. I recognize that this was something that I had to deal with and carefully approach. The first step was to recognize that I had these biases, and then to approach this research with objectivity. There were times during the data collection process that I felt a personal connection to the participants as their experiences seemed to parallel with my own. This connection helped to build rapport with the participants.

Conclusion

This chapter focused on the methods and parameters that guided the researcher as they collected the data for the study. There was a detailed look at qualitative research and

how it was chosen for this study because it had the ability to recreate the events and instances that the participants' experienced. It goes into detail about qualitative inquiry, especially interviewing as that was the method of communication and data gathering for this study. The chapter also expresses why the researcher chose the site (southeastern United States), the participants (African American male student affairs administrators), and the theoretical framework (CRT and CCWT) that guided the analysis of the data. Finally, the chapter explained the method by which the data were collected and analyzed, ethical considerations, quality assurances, assumptions, limitations, delimitations, and the researcher's positionality statement.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

As discussed in Chapter 3, the best method for this study was to use a qualitative approach to explore the phenomenon. As the researcher, I was the primary instrument of data collection. I used a set of semi-structured questions during the in-depth interviews to draw out information that highlighted the successes and challenges encountered by African American male student affairs administrators. Data for the study stemmed from the interviews between the primary instrument (myself) and the eight African American male student affairs administrators. Each of the participants in the study was interviewed via Zoom from their offices or homes (natural setting).

Through the participants' shared personal stories, I was able to gather data that helped me to answer the questions presented in this study. I gathered descriptive statements using direct quotes from participants throughout the study to provide rich and copious descriptions of their successes and challenges while working at a predominantly White institution in the southeastern United States. Further, the participants' verbatim responses served to support my interpretations of those experiences.

The primary focus of this study was to understand the experiences of African American male student affairs administrators in PWIs in the southeastern United States. The two sub-questions that formed the foundation for the 15 interview questions were:

1. What are the successes and challenges faced and how are each negotiated?
2. What are the implications of these experiences for their career advancement?

These questions sought to address the experiences of the participants in student affairs positions and how they perceived their place in a PWI in the southeastern United States. They sought to gain insight concerning the successes and challenges faced by this population and to explore how those successes and challenges aligned with their career advancement. These findings added a more in-depth understanding of what it was like to be an African American male student affairs administrator at a PWI in the southeastern United States, and also expanded the researcher's understanding of the qualitative findings.

Introducing the Participants

Eight African American male student affairs administrators in EEO-1 positions in predominantly White institutions in the southeastern United States were chosen to participate in this study.

Table 2

Participant Data

Participant Pseudonyms	Current Position/Institution	Yrs. in Field	Plans for Future
R.J. Reese	Associate Director at South State University	6	I plan to be a vice president of student affairs or the president of an HBCU.
Anthony Anderson	Coordinator at South Tennessee State College	2	I plan to serve as chairman of the board of regents with a higher education institution/system.
James Brown	Coordinator at College of the South	2	I plan to be a Chief Diversity Officer of a higher education institution.
Will Montgomery	Associate Dean of Students at South State University	7	I plan to be the Director of an Academic Advancement Program similar to the one at UCLA.
Evan Sandler	Coordinator at Bayou University	4	Whatever I do I want to be a resource for all students as they maneuver through their college careers.
Demetrius Mack	Assistant Director at Smith University	7	I plan to be a Dean of Students because there is still some student interaction in that position.
Calvin Barrymore	Director at Southeastern University	10	I plan to be a Chief Diversity Officer for a large urban institution.
Brian Owens	Director at Southeastern University	11	I plan to be an executive director of student housing at a large urban institution

R.J. Reese

R.J. Reese is a mid-level administrator at South State University. He is a very forward thinking and determined individual who seeks to use his influence to better the lives of the students of color on campus. He is someone who sees higher education as a calling and uses what he has to better prepare others for the challenges they may face at a PWI. Reese attributed his success as an administrator over the last six years to his impeccable professionalism, his willingness to go above and beyond for his students, his critical thinking, and last but not least his work ethic. He acknowledged that he faces challenges on a day-to-day basis but feels that he navigates them well because he was raised to be resilient and works hard to ensure that his work is seen as immaculate. R.J.

works at a large institution, and he sometimes feels lost in the shuffle of the politics and people. He is a member of the Black Faculty and Staff Association as a way to stay connected to other African American student affairs administrators that work at the institution. He feels this is essential because he rarely interacts with others that look like him on a day-to-day basis.

Anthony Anderson

Anthony is an entry-level administrator who took a non-traditional route to student affairs. He was working in a completely different field but felt the need to come back and help students to succeed at South Tennessee State College. Anthony is a strategic person who has planned out his next five years with tremendous care. It is his ambition to be a mid-level administrator by that time, working with as many different areas as possible, so that he can be a well-rounded professional. Though he has only been in the field two years, Anthony has seen some amazing successes, and he has attributed them to his strategic mindset and his willingness to listen to those who have come before him. He expressed that he has faced his share of challenges as well, but his ability to plan ahead and think strategically has helped him to navigate those issues. Being a coordinator at a mid-size flagship institution was an eye-opening experience for Anthony. His daily work keeps him connected to students and administrators of color. His experiences have been neutral as he realizes there is more work to do on the campus, but that there have been some great leaps forward over the last two years.

James Brown

James is an entry level professional at College of the South. He followed his mentor's footsteps into higher education. James was so impacted by his mentor that he

wanted to be able to have the same type of impact on young college students as his mentor had on him. Brown attributes his success to being a good listener, communicator, and someone who is open to learning new ways to be effective. He works hard to form mentor relationships with the students that he works with within his position and is looking to branch out and help his fellow peers in student affairs through presentations at conferences. He also acknowledged that he has run into challenges but has thus far succeeded in navigating them by being data-driven and grassroots orientated. James was very vocal about feeling protected and guided by his mentor. He felt that he was able to navigate the pitfalls and barriers easier because he had someone who looked like him, looking out for him.

Will Montgomery

Will is an experienced upper-level administrator at South State College who views himself as a lifelong learner with a constant mind toward improving his craft as well as the lives of the people that he works with on a daily basis. He credited his successes to knowing the importance of accountability, being a consummate professional, and doing his best work at all times. Will has developed a nuanced set of skills that he believes works well in helping others: students, faculty, and staff alike, to be their best selves. He has developed a consulting company and is a well-known presenter at national conferences. He faces the challenges of his position by being willing to stand against them. He is a firm believer in doing what is right even if it is uncomfortable, and he has had to stand in the gap to ensure that the university upholds its duty to treat students as precious commodities.

Evan Sandler

Evan is an entry-level professional with mid-level experience at Bayou College. He has a special connection to his institution as he received both his undergraduate and graduate degrees from there. Thus, Evan has a special connection to his alma mater. He believes that his successes stem from his connection to the institution and his ability to connect to others through his personable and effusive personality. Being from the institution, Evan knows firsthand the struggles that students face on campus and has worked hard to try and help them to navigate those issues. He is an advisor to more than five organizations, as he realizes the need for strong leadership for these organizations of color. He navigates his challenges by being politically savvy and making invaluable connections with people in strategic places who can help him to succeed by mentoring and guiding him through the minefield that is higher education. Evan believes that his experiences have been mostly positive in the field as he has an extensive support network. This network has people who are connected to people within the power structure of the institution, and it has served him well in the past.

Demetrius Mack

Demetrius is a mid-level administrator at Smith University. As an assistant director, he has the ability to affect change on a multitude of levels as he supervises staff and students and works closely with students on a daily basis. Demetrius's successes in higher education come from his willingness to get his hands dirty with his staff, to roll up his sleeves and work along with them. He believes that staying true to his moral compass and having integrity has helped him to be the best version of himself. He believes that challenges in the academy are inevitable because of the mixture of personalities, cultures,

and mindsets. He works to better the lives of his students and staff team by advocating for them at all times. When challenges arise, Demetrius does not shrink... he rises to the occasion and does what needs to be done to help. He realizes that this field can be grating and draining, however, he believes that he is walking in his purpose and despite the barriers and pitfalls, he will make a way.

Calvin Barrymore

Calvin is a high-level administrator at Southeastern University and one of the highest-ranking individuals among the participants. Calvin has had a whirlwind career that has taken him to many different institutions, and all of those stops have made him a better, stronger administrator. Calvin believes that his well-rounded perception of student affairs and the way it functions has helped him to reach heights of success within the field. He is active on the speaking and presenting circuit, often using those opportunities to hone his craft and become even more recognizable within the field. He does not get to work with students as much as he would like but tries to maintain that connection by mentoring and being a keen observer of students during his walks around campus. Barrymore has faced challenges over his 10-year career, but he says that he overcame each of them by remaining true to who he is and maintaining a level of professionalism that makes it tough to call him into question.

Brian Owens

Brian is a high-level administrator at Southeastern University and the longest-serving participant in the study. He has attributed his success to taking ownership of his emotions while in his workspace. He believes that he creates his environment by working hard to focus on his comfort and happiness. Brian is someone who studies the culture of

his office to ensure that his team and the students that they serve are doing well. He understands that being an African American male at a PWI is not ideal, but he works hard to ensure that the environment does not become toxic to those that he works with daily. He created a lunch and affinity group in order to help African American staff feel welcomed and at home. He has encountered his share of challenges, but he has overcome them by understanding that perception is reality and he controls how he views his reality. Brian is a leader among the African American male administrator population at his institution. He works hard to welcome any new African American administrator that comes to the institution and always has an open-door policy to help mentor and guide them through the politics of the institution.

Findings

These findings were byproducts of my interpretation of the participants' responses. Via interviews, participants were able to describe how they experienced meaning making and how their successes and challenges impacted those experiences. Further, it outlined how those successes and challenges influenced their career advancement. Findings are categorized by themes that represented commonalities across interviews. The primary themes were corroborated across most, if not all, of the eight participants' transcripts. Categories do not represent all participants, as no two people have the same experiences. So, it was incumbent upon me to utilize the narrative that I gathered in the most appropriate context and provide a more generalized experience by using the criteria for the best fit, not the perfect fit (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

The Highs and Lows of Working at a PWI in Southeastern United States

This area captured the various ways in which participants experienced and negotiated their successes and challenges within a PWI in the southeastern United States.

Six themes emerged from answering the first question during the interviews with the eight African American male student affairs administrators. Those themes include:

Strong Sense of Self, Managing Expectations, Do What I Gotta Do, Self-care vs. Doing my Job, Isolation, White Privilege, and Not Knowing their Rules.

Strong Sense of Self

When asked about successful experiences that they had in negotiating a PWI in the southeastern United States, participants mentioned having a *strong sense of self* as an essential element in their successes. The majority of participants communicated that having a *strong sense of self* could determine whether one is a success or failure on the job. Participants also declared that maintaining that *strong sense of self* during their time on the job was vital to maintaining a healthy self-outlook and not burning out. Having a *strong sense of self* was explained as: knowing oneself, having an established set of beliefs, having a fully developed identity, being comfortable within their Blackness, being flexible in their expectations, and understanding the way that they are the minority. Participants expressed how they were often made aware through interactions with, or actions by, the institution that there were barriers against their success. However, it was imperative that they carry themselves as if the environment did not affect them. This is where the *strong sense of self* was most important.

For participants, it meant that they did not allow what others thought of them or their work to affect their self-esteem or view of themselves. R.J. Reese described having a *strong sense of self* in this way:

You must focus on yourself through self-care and self-motivation. It's very important that you have a sense of who you are as a professional and as an individual. It's almost impossible to be your authentic self. I am aware of my identity as a black man and I consciously focus on it because people will make assumptions. Like one time, I had a White co-worker express shock that I knew my dad. It's important that you know yourself and be confident in who you are.

Calvin Barrymore stated:

My workplace is not considerate of my identity or my experiences. I always try to be my authentic self, but it can be difficult... Being a Black man in student affairs, they try to put you in a small box. And if you step too far outside of the box, it can present some challenges for you, especially, if you are not comfortable in your identity.

Anthony Anderson went deeper into why a *strong sense of self* is something that African American male student affairs administrators must possess:

I can always come back to the fact that I know who I am and where I stand on issues and situations...that is important to me as a man of faith. I realize that there will always be someone dictating to me about how to do things and where to go as that is the nature of the beast, but at the end of the day no one can tell me who I am. I can't allow circumstances or other people change my character or my demeanor because my sense of worth comes from my faith in God.

Overall, a majority of the participants shared similar thoughts when it came to having a *strong sense of self*. They were very much aware of the culture and barriers that opposed them within the institution, however, they were very intentional about centering themselves around those issues and not allowing them to adversely influence their *sense of self*.

Managing Expectations

All of the participants reported that one of the most common variables in their strategy to being successful at a PWI was best characterized as *managing expectations*. To manage expectations is to understand that what you expect may not come to pass. What you need may not be available, and what you thought was a dream position could quickly turn into a nightmare scenario. For African American male student affairs administrators, participants suggested that they managed their expectations because of the obstacles that they will face and the issues that typically arise with being an African American male administrator in student affairs.

James Brown offered:

African American male student affairs administrators should expect to work a lot, to have a lot of expectations place upon you, to face blatant racism, and to suffer through microaggressions. It is best to just listen and not give your opinion if it is not rooted in something dealing with the office. Unfortunately, it is made crystal clear through policies and attitudes that you're not going to change the world or the culture. It's better to leave your expectations at the door or you will find yourself getting burned out fast.

This outlook lays out a dire picture for African American male student affairs administrators. Participants all expected to encounter a racialized workspace, but it was surprising for some that they had to have a sense of flexibility concerning expectations and ideas. Some of the participants complained that not *managing expectations* could eventually become an inconvenience. Will Montgomery outlined how he managed his expectations, stating:

After being in this field, I have come to understand that I have to white flag my personal expectations, I work hard, and I give the institution what they pay for. I give 100% every day! No more, no less. If I give less that would be stealing from the university. But if I did any more that would take away from my well-being. So, by white flagging my expectations, there is less of a chance that I will be blindsided.

The issue of *managing expectations* can easily morph into going into the position with none at all. As one participant stated, “in my experiences, expectations and reality rarely match...higher education was not created with Black people in mind.... it’s not considerate of my identities and experiences or how they were shaped.” This statement ties back to the information in Chapter 2 and how higher education was not created with people of color in mind. This is, also, where a person who fails to manage their expectations could run into the tradition of the institution. Tradition is usually ingrained with racist policies and procedures. This racism is entrenched within the very fabric of the institution, so any type of expectation that will challenge that fabric is seen as a threat. Soon, the friction of bumping up against an entrenched tradition by trying to live out self-expectations becomes taxing to the point of burn out.

Evan Sandler illustrated this sense of taxing burnout:

Most of these institutions have the expectation that we connect students of color to their traditions, but they rarely realize that those traditions were created and crafted before those students were allowed to even come here. Then, it becomes incumbent upon us to get the students to be invested in a tradition that we don't even believe in as it wasn't created with Black people in mind. At my institution they have a creed, and they want the students to live by and honor the creed, but the creed was written before there were Black students at the institution and to many of the students of color that I speak with about it, they find it inauthentic and for them (White students). So, my boss is strongly pushing me to help with this initiative concerning the creed and I'm facing stiff resistance from the students. It's frustrating and tiring because I don't agree with placing the creed in a prominent position because it didn't include students of color. I try to explain the students' point of view, but I have learned to temper my expectations as they (White people) can't see past the supposed importance of the creed to the institution's identity.

Doing What I Gotta Do

For this theme, participants have attributed their survival to the challenges they face at PWIs to blending in at the institution to avoid conflict and undue scrutiny. They shared their belief about *doing what I gotta do*. For instance, Will Montgomery noted:

I try to get along with everybody as this helps me to, in some ways, blend in with the crowd. You have to be like one of them. They must be able to feel comfortable around you to let you into their environment. Do I like doing this?

No! But I gotta do what I gotta do to survive. I hate that, at times, I have to strip away my social characteristics just to be considered “normal”.

Calvin Barrymore shared a similar viewpoint:

The way I see it, you have to decide where and who you are going to sleep with. If you are in a White institution you can't go in meetings and say, “Black this and Black that”. White people don't like it. You have to know how to get what you need professionally without being detrimental to the institution. You have to *do what you gotta do* to mesh with the institution and with your co-workers.

Participants explained that *doing what you gotta do* sometimes included remaining as neutral as possible in situations that could cause issues. R.J. Reese claimed that his sometimes social neutrality when dealing with his White co-workers was often viewed by other African Americans as negative:

White administrators expect you to be a team player. They demand team play even though sometimes it calls into question your allegiance with other people of color. I've been called all kinds of names behind my back and to my face because I decided to stand up for what's right and it didn't align with my African American brothers and sisters.

Yet, despite the unwarranted perceptions, Reese insisted that he was staying true to himself and doing what he had to do in order to survive:

[i]n the middle of two power struggles that can have a racial tinge, I tend to remain neutral as long as I can and then choose who has my best interest in mind both personally and professionally. Some people will get mad and some will call

you names, but for my well-being, I have to *do what I gotta do* to be successful on my terms.

Self-care vs. Doing Their Jobs

The majority of participants articulated compelling stories of how oftentimes they had to choose between *self-care and doing their jobs* to the specifications expected of them from the supervisor or institution. Participants did not have an issue concerning doing the work, they just felt that they were undervalued and underappreciated in comparison to their White counterparts. Whiteness allows for specific social, cultural, and economic privileges that people of color cannot possess or experience. This lack of privileges, such as the ability to practice self-care, shined through in the experiences outlined by participants. The majority of participants mentioned the importance of self-care and how it could be the difference between success and failure on the job. Several things were ascribed to self-care by participants such as: working out, going to a mental health provider, quiet time, listening to gospel music, praying, equitable work-load, and support from team.

Participants found ways to cope in a perceived hostile environment that was not necessarily conducive to their personal health. Even if they could practice some form of self-care, it was often not enough. Anthony shared why he sometimes felt that he had to choose between *self-care and doing his job*:

I work in one functional area, but spend a great deal of time on other functional areas, such as serving as the advisor to the Black Student Association and the Black Male Initiative. I'm wearing three hats, while my White colleagues are only responsible for one. I know the question is, well why did you choose to be BSA

and BMI advisor? The answer is, if I don't help these Black students, who will? They had an advisor before that was White and they did not get the attention or the development that they craved. So, me, being the only Black administrator in the division, felt it was my duty to step up and help...even to the detriment of my own personal time.

Will also expressed concerns about the phenomenon of feeling to have to choose between self-care and doing his job:

I was asked to take over a dysfunctional department. And I did not want to do it, as I never wanted to work in diversity. However, the VP of student affairs had the university president to call me to ask me to take over this position. I reluctantly agreed, as I was flattered that the university president would call little old me. The department was in such disarray, that I found myself working 12-15-hour days just to help the ship stay afloat. I was burning myself out. I had supervision (White) that unfortunately valued these long hours—it was actually celebrated and commended because, to him, that meant you're working hard. "Well, I know you're putting a lot of energy into this. Keep up the good work. This is what it takes." I'm like... "wait a minute. No! my health is not what it takes. My personal and academic pursuits and sacrificing - I'm also working on a Ph.D., that is not what it takes."

These accounts point to a strong relationship between African American male student affairs administrators' self-care outlooks in comparison to the expectation that they do their job. Further, it outlines how the jobs were clearly eroding the health of participants and affecting their ability to participate in their self-care regiments. This led

to them feeling underappreciated, undervalued, and questioning their allegiance to the division, office, team, and even the institution. This phenomenon was articulated by James in the following statement:

For me, success on the job became less about my accomplishments and doing the job and more about making it through, week to week and month to month. It was about me making it through the week and not being physically and mentally drained. However, I knew that giving up or leaving would leave my students in a precarious situation of having someone that doesn't look like them, advising them.

The challenge that some of the participants faced was very taxing to them, mentally and physically, as they felt the institution valued their work but not them.

Isolation

When thinking about working in student affairs or higher education, one usually imagines working in teams, offices, departments, or divisions. The size or number of people working in those areas depends on the size of the institution and how much the institution invests in that area. In larger institutions, there could be hundreds of people working in a team, office, department, or division of student affairs, while at smaller institutions there could be a much smaller number. As reflected earlier in Chapter 1, there are not a lot of African American male administrators in this field or in higher education in general. It is easy to infer African American male student affairs administrators would be the minority in these teams, offices, departments, and divisions.

Thus, with the numbers being so low, some of the participants expressed a sense of isolation within their institution. The office dynamics added to the sense of isolation

because of the attitudes and behaviors of those in the workplace. As outlined by one participant:

[a]fter a while, isolation starts to happen, and I felt like I wasn't valued or validated in my work. They made me feel like I should be happy to be there, that I should take whatever they were giving. It was demoralizing.

This is where microaggressions and even macroaggressions come into play. James explained it like this:

I was not invited to the tailgates, birthday parties, or lunches. Yet, if there was a racial issue or problem, I am the first person that they run to asking for help. It's taxing to your mind and emotionally when you are left out.

The mental and physical toll that African American male student affairs administrators endured due to isolation from fellow co-workers could be overwhelming and off-putting. Evan explained this phenomenon by saying:

Being one of the only people of color in a student affairs office oftentimes contributes to my feeling isolated. When we are discussing certain issues or having conversations about race issues, it always seems like an 'us vs. them' situation. I have to be very intentional about everything I say and do. I have to dot every "i" and cross every "t". I have to go above and beyond just to get ahead...This can make me feel isolated from my fellow co-workers.

This type of isolation in the workplace also reflected how it could be a place of tremendous pressure and overwhelming stress. Further, the workplace made them feel isolated in their workspace. They were often left out, which added to the burden of the

workplace. All of the participants expressed some semblance of encountering the above issues in their workplace.

White Privilege and Not Knowing Their Rules

Some of the participants identified one challenge as institutional rules that were unspoken and unknown. They felt this was an example of White privilege operating within their day-to-day duties. According to Fields and Pence (1999), White privilege is a set of advantages enjoyed by White people. Participants theorized that White privilege will continue unabated in PWIs in the southeastern United States because White people do not understand, nor want to understand, that this phenomenon exists. Further, participants addressed their engagement with the unwritten rules of the institution. For instance, James Brown stated:

During meetings that have serious implications concerning students and the institution in general, I am often asked to speak for all Black people. They ask me how will people of color react to this rule or this policy? It's like they believe I am the end all, be all, for Black people and people of color. Or, if things are going badly on a project or in the office, White people don't have to wonder if those negative episodes or situations are racial in nature.

Will Montgomery's seven years at the institution gave him insight of institutional practices and White privilege that made him very cautious concerning his decision-making and actions as an administrator. He stated:

I am super careful about any decisions I make in my administrative duties, as I know that things that my White counterparts can do and get away with, I cannot. So, I do things by the book. Yet, when I look around the institution, and I see blatant disregard for policies and procedures by some of my White counterparts. It makes me angry because I know that if I operated in that manner, I would be fired immediately.

Being and Doing Your Best to Fit in at Your Institution

The implications of the successes and challenges on the career advancement of participants was explored to determine if there was a positive or detrimental effect associated with those successes and challenges. Housed in participants' counter-stories, were rich materials that painted a full picture of their experiences in their PWIs. The data revealed six themes: *Maintaining Professionalism, Managing Your Brand, Code-switching, Relationships (Support Networks and Mentors), Know When to Hold 'em, Know When to Fold "em, and Why I Stay?*

Maintaining Professionalism

When asked about successes and challenges and how they negotiated them, all of the participants mentioned their constant focus on remaining professional at all times. Most of them indicated that while they are knowledgeable of the barriers that face people of color, they must continue to operate at a high level as if they are unaffected. To the participants, that meant always being prepared and competent, and above all, maintaining proper appearances.

Demetrius Mack stated:

Get to work on time. If you say you are going to be somewhere, make sure you are there. Dress well, play the part, and speak correctly. If I have a meeting, I make sure that I am at least 10 minutes early and overprepared. I also make sure that I am giving my full attention so that if called upon, I can speak with intelligence. When they view me, I want them to see professionalism at its finest.

R. J. Reese explained:

[t]his is a PWI and most of them have a high percentage of White people. So, you enter into the room, you will be perceived as “that” person of color that does “that” minority thing, whether you work in diversity or not. So, be prepared for that. Be prepared to have to answer for your whole race. But instead of getting frustrated, rise above and go beyond it. Be so professional that you can carry the conversation and uphold the responsibilities wherever you are... I always dress for the next position up, that’s just how I was raised and part of my professional DNA. So, even if it is casual Friday, I still put on khakis with a polo, as opposed to jeans. Even though we can wear jeans...it’s about learning to play the game and understanding the nature of the game. I know that I am not viewed the same as my White counterparts, so I go above and beyond.

Overall, most of the participants shared similar thoughts. They each chose not to allow the often incorrect and unfair perceptions of others influence their professionalism. Participants were aware that their race played a part in the barriers they encountered within the institution. However, all of them agreed that their disposition was to fulfill their individual roles as dictated by their job descriptions at their chosen institution within

their chosen position. At the end of the day, their professionalism was what mattered the most.

Managing Your Brand

All participants reported *managing their brands* as one of the most common implications of the successes and challenges for career advancement. For participants, *managing your brand* meant maintaining a positive image within the field and their institution. This could mean being active and involved in local and national conferences and workshops and publishing in their field. All of the participants spoke of their hard work as being a catalyst for their successes. Evan Sandler described his experiences as it related to managing his brand as something that went beyond his foundation of being a hard worker; he felt his qualifications were a major factor to his persistence. Sandler stated:

Arrive early, stay late. Work hard! Always do more than what people expect.

When people say you don't need to do a fancy presentation using Prezi or PowerPoint, be sure to use them. Then, have it three-ring bounded with enough copies for everyone and give them out. Always prepare as if the president is attending. Play big, put together a product so good that those you are presenting to feel like you are setting a new standard. That's the brand I want to communicate.

You have to manage your brand and how to produce the best brand possible.

When asked about *managing his brand* in student affairs, Brian Owens stated:

[p]rofessional development is the key to establishing and burnishing your brand.

You have to go in with the right qualifications. I must be qualified to have the position and even more qualified to gain the respect I deserve. That's why I

decided to get my Ph.D. It's not a requirement but getting it will strengthen me as a professional. It'll make me more attractive and help me gain some respect from colleagues. I also hit the conference circles pretty hard. I've created workshops for those conferences. I am diligent about staying up to date through article, journal, and book readings. Doing these things helps me to maintain my brand because I am strengthening my qualifications and in turn showcasing my skillset to potential employers and current co-workers.

Code-switching

It can be difficult, as an African American male, to navigate a PWI. However, there are ways that African American male administrators can successfully advance their careers. Some of the participants highlighted how they utilized code-switching to help them in their navigation of their institutions. Gresham (2014) described code-switching as shifting between different cultures as you move through life's conversations or, in other words, a person chooses their communication style based on the people with whom they are interacting. Gresham further stated that it is expected that if someone is educated, then they will no longer use slang or Ebonics. A person with a proper education will show adeptness in speaking and writing. People who do not communicate according to "proper" education standards are often deemed uneducated and at an academic and professional disadvantage. Will Montgomery expressed that he learned that code-switching was essential to navigating a PWI early on:

[t]his a game and a game requires you to have a strategy. In this game, you don't have the advantage, the privilege, or ability to not perform at the highest standard and that sucks...it's important that you understand that your reputation absolutely

precedes you, so sometimes you have to act out of character (in a good way). We don't get a pass like our White counterparts, so I've found that I've got to code-switch often to ensure that I am who they expect me to be and at times that includes shedding some of my Black identity to make other's comfortable.

The idea that African American male student affairs administrators must shed their identity in order to fit in or gain respect is alarming. Research by Gardner (2014) in Chapter 2 showed that feelings of racism, tokenism, separation, and isolation create a revolving door for African American student affairs administrators at predominantly White institutions. The day-to-day grind of moving between the dominant culture and one's own culture can prove stressful. This constant switching between worlds can cause strong emotions and physical manifestations (Gresham, 2014).

For participants, going to work was not as simple as doing good work...it was doing good work in a way that made them more palatable to the majority. This highlights how difficult this field can be for African American males. Calvin expressed that his mentor helped him dig deeper into what he could do in order to achieve career advancement and success in student affairs:

One must learn to code-switch and that has been something that has helped me. I find that I can be my authentic self with family and friends, but there are times when I have to step outside of my comfort zone and "blend in" with my White counterparts. Looking back, I found that I would be this different person...much more extroverted and outgoing than I am normally. While in "mixed company" I make sure that I use proper terminology and language.

Many of the participants expressed that their mentor talked with them in some shape, form, or fashion concerning code-switching and learning how to communicate properly with their White counterparts.

Relationships

Relationships are essential to the advancement of African American male student affairs administrators in their careers. The relationships that were identified as the most influential were support networks and mentors. Participants were almost unanimous in their praise of their support network and mentors as being catalysts for their career advancement and working through the challenges that they encountered on a daily basis in their day-to-day positions. These relationships helped participants through racism and microaggressions from co-workers, job-searches, career advancement opportunities, and professional development. Brian Owens explained:

My mentor is a Black male that has been in the field for 15 plus years. It's critical to get a mentor and not just any mentor, but a mentor that works within your field or that oversees your area. My mentor has helped me to understand how to be a professional and how important it is to understand my supervisor's vision and style. He has also impressed upon me the importance of understanding the Vice President's vision for the division, the department, and my area.

In this mentor relationship, the participant had gained valuable information about how to navigate the world of student affairs from someone who has been a part of that world for more than 15 years. The advice that the mentor had offered provided crucial information concerning how to stay abreast of the institutional strategic and day-to-day plans. R.J. Reese expressed:

My mentor told me when I was coming into the field that initially, we (African American males) are all hot commodities. We are like unicorns. Having a Black male on your staff is not a common thing...but the wonder will wear off. Do your job and do it well, but don't let them pigeonhole you. They will want to come to you most times only when racial issues arise, but you should be clear with co-workers that they make six figures just like you do and if they don't know how to talk to a Black kid, then that's their problem. I will educate them but not do the work for them. That has served me well in my multiple positions. It has helped me to increase the cultural competency of people that I work with and it was the impetus to my being tapped to create a diversity committee within our division.

This participant took his mentor's advice and made it a key plank in his foundation. He used this information to make those around him better and to even create an institutional committee directed toward diversity issues. One participant expressed, "the key to navigating a PWI as an African American male student affairs administrator is to network, network, network. And once you create those connections, find someone that can guide you through the pitfalls of this position." However, there is a Catch-22 with this statement: there is a deficiency of African American male student affairs administrators in PWIs in the southeastern United States. This deficiency is reflected in the number of African American male administrators in Chapter 2. Further, Burke and Carter (2015) pointed out in Chapter 2 that African American administrators were more vulnerable to various types of "isms" and barriers, and it is crucial that they form a range of mentoring/networking relationships to support their career development.

Because of this shortage, it is often hard, if not impossible, to find someone who looks like them to mentor them and help them to navigate through a PWI. So, sometimes, it takes the ingenuity of creating long-distance mentors by utilizing technology or even having mentors that may not look like them. One participant said this about mentoring:

[m]y mentors have helped me to navigate this space when I have felt lost or discouraged and sometimes those crying sessions took place on the phone, during Facetime and even Skype. But I have found that I need that connection to continue to be effective.

Know When to Hold ‘em, Know When to Fold ‘em

This study was conducted to provide a hard look at the plights and issues of African American males within PWIs in the southeastern United States. One issue that takes place is that African American male student affairs administrators often get overwhelmed by the environment and leave for other occupations or for HBCUs. A lot of times, this is because they are feeling underappreciated, overworked, or looked over for promotions. One participant expressed:

Being one of the few Black males that worked in the student affairs department, none of our roles really cross very much in order for us to interact with one another. However, when one (African American male student affairs administrator) of us leaves, it is big deal because the environment becomes lonelier.

As stated in Chapter 2, resilience is a willingness to embrace adversity and to promote it within self-identity. It is instrumental in overcoming challenges within one’s personal and professional life. In his song, *The Gambler* (1979), Kenny Rogers famously

sang, “*You've got to know when to hold 'em; Know when to fold 'em; Know when to walk away; And know when to run.*” This song comes up because the majority of participants said verbatim, that when it comes to whether they will stay or leave their positions it was imperative to “Know when to hold ‘em, know when to fold ‘em.” They used this as a way of explaining the successes and challenges of being an African American male student affairs administrator. Mostly, it was described as a frame of mind in which to approach issues in student affairs. Demetrius stated:

You have to know when to hold ‘em and know when to fold ‘em. Pick and choose your battles. Decide early on, what is that hill you’re willing to die on. What hills can you deal with or tolerate, and what hill is a step to far?

This ties back to the earlier theme of self-expectation, because it requires African American male student affairs administrators to make firm their expectations concerning how far they are willing to go and what they are willing to take to remain in their current positions. However, this digs deeper by testing the very convictions of the administrators by forcing them into fight or flight mode. A willingness to embrace adversity and to promote it within self-identity is instrumental in overcoming challenges within one’s personal and professional life.

R.J. stated:

We had a mass exodus of Black administrators; a couple were Black males. That was hard for me because we had our little network. I knew them well and they watched the people in their division and offices. They saw people who did not work as hard as they did. Some of these folks, they knew, were doing nothing and still being elevated into higher roles within the division. So, they decided that the

institution did not care for them or their work or their personhood and they left.

This exodus made me really start to think, because, not only was I losing a colleague that I had a ton of respect for, but I started to question if the university cared about me? Does the division care about me? It was really hard, and I had thoughts of leaving the institution myself.

This participant lost his support network and began to question whether the institution cared about his work or well-being. This loss causes an internal struggle that is all too familiar for people of color in PWIs. The leaving of his colleagues shined a light on equity issues within his division. He and his departed colleagues felt that their White counterparts operated in mediocracy and were still elevated to higher positions, while their hard work at the job and extra duties, such as advising and mentoring African American students and student organizations, was not appreciated and often overlooked. This viewpoint led to R.J. having a “know when to hold ‘em, know when to fold ‘em” moment. The entire situation really damaged R.J.’s outlook on the institution, the way he viewed his fellow co-workers, and even the way he thought the institution viewed him as a professional and a person.

Why I Stay?

Resilience and persistence are essential to African American male student affairs administrators within PWIs in the southeastern United States. As expressed in the previous section, a “know when to hold ‘em, know when to hold ‘em” mentality is ingrained into the minds of most of the participants. Therefore, the social culture of the institution and the world in general, stressors, and racism plays a role in determining if an African American male student affairs administrator stays at an institution. If they stay, it

is often despite these issues. Administrators survive because of things done by the institution to benefit them and their development or the support and guidance of their mentors or a sense of duty to the students of color. It is also important that the administrators know the “why” behind their day-to-day activities. Demetrius stated:

[i]n student affairs, there will always be setbacks, maybe even disagreement about priorities, etc. You've got to be able to recover quickly in order to do the work of supporting your students because there is the distinct possibility that there is no one else to support them in the way they need supporting.

Evan further explained:

On the job, dealing with certain issues or conversations regarding race issues always feels like an “us vs. them” battle. You have to pick and choose your battles to maintain a sense of sanity. You also have to understand that as long as you get to your ultimate goal, you’re going to have to take losses. You will have to go above and beyond to get ahead. You must have a high level of patience when encountering people who don’t see eye-to-eye with you and unfortunately, that is often the case. It sounds like a lot, and it is, but it helps me to persist at my current institution.

Evan’s statement covers a lot of ground concerning his persistence in his position at his institution. He discusses how race issues are an everyday reality that can and will drain you. Plus, it can cause friction between you and your White counterparts, as oftentimes, they do not understand the racial issues that administrators of color and students of color face on a day-to-day basis.

Demetrius expressed, “resilience has played a part in my career advancement by providing the necessary mindset for me to continue to strive towards my purpose and elevate higher within my purpose as I learn to turn losses into lessons.” Anthony goes on to express:

[i]n order to persist, African American administrators have to get used to the politics of higher education and do good work and make themselves valuable to the institution. It is also important that they have mental strength to stand through the fight, because every day there is a chance that they will run into resistance by just doing their job.

Anthony pointed to several critical pieces to persisting in the institution. Most of those pieces have already been pointed to by other participants or by the research articulated in Chapter 2 which shows prejudice, discrimination, and “-isms” such as: racism, tokenism, isolationism, and sexism that still remain within the institution. These social barriers make things like equity, respect, and fully partaking in all that the academy has to offer difficult for African American administrators (Barksdale, 2007; Gardner, 2014; Holmes, 2004).

Brian stated:

[p]ersistence and resilience plays a huge role in my career advancement. If I didn't have resilience, I would have given up a long time ago, but because I am persistent, I keep pushing. I never saw myself as anyone's director to be honest, but yet, I'm here. There have been times, even in this role, where I wanted to throw in the towel and leave the field. This role can be challenging, at times, with

all the stressors and such, but yet, I'm still here and moving my department forward in a positive way.

This statement outlines how persistence and resilience have played an instrumental role in Brian's career. As African American male student affairs administrators, persistence and resilience plays a major role in their career advancement. Brian utilized both to fuel his career. He even explained how when he wanted to quit in the past, his determination to persist had kept him in the field and in his current role. As each of these participants has outlined, persistence and resilience are vital to the career advancement of African American male student affairs administrators.

Conclusion

This chapter included the findings as gathered from the interview process with the eight African American male student affairs administrators selected to participate in this study. Through the analysis of data, 12 themes emerged that provided the researcher with valuable information that furthered the research listed in Chapter 2. The themes that emerged were important to the successes and challenges of the participants as they navigated their workspace. It also highlighted ways in which they utilized different methods from mentorship to resilience to advance in their careers. The chapter highlights several important issues for African American male student affairs administrators and the participants offered ways to cope, navigate, or endure those issues.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

This study was designed to investigate the successes and challenges of African American male student affairs administrators at predominantly White institutions in the southeastern United States. Utilizing a qualitative research method to guide the inquiry, semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect data, explore, and create narratives from the participants' responses. The data were structured by participants' explanation of their experiences and the researcher's interpretation of those descriptions. This chapter will present a replication and an overall summary of the study's findings. In all, there were 18 hours of in-depth and semi-structured interviews with eight African American male student affairs administrators at various institutions throughout the southeast. Further, I describe the emergent themes from participant interviews, explore how those themes tie into the theoretical frameworks, provide recommendations for further research, and offer conclusions that can be drawn from the study.

Study Overview

This study was guided by one overarching question and two underlying research questions. These questions are listed below and provide the structure for this section in the chapter. The overarching question of the study is: What are the experiences of African American male student affairs administrators at predominantly White institutions in the southeastern United States? The underlying research questions are:

1. What are the successes and challenges faced and how are each negotiated?

2. What are the implications of these experiences for their career advancement?

Statement of the Problem

The problem was that there was a dearth of research that focused specifically on the successes and challenges of African American male student affairs administrators at predominantly White institutions in the southeastern United States. A comprehensive review of literature suggested that despite a considerable amount of scholarship about the status of African Americans in higher education, there is a scarcity of research on African American male student affairs administrators at PWIs in the southeastern United States. The research that focuses on African American administrators is either limited to a generalized and homogenous version of student affairs practitioners (Holmes, 2004; Jackson, 2000; Watson, 2001) or to administrative roles related to the multicultural affairs (Rolle, Davies, & Banning, 2000).

Discussion

The eight African American male student affairs administrators discussed the various successes and challenges that they have experienced within their PWIs in the southeastern United States and the implications of these experiences for their career advancement. They were varied in nature, but each was significant to the participants. During the research, there were 12 themes that were highlighted by participants: *Strong Sense of Self, Managing Expectations, Do What I Gotta Do, Self-care vs. Doing My Job, Isolation, White Privilege and Not Knowing Their Rules, Maintaining Professionalism, Managing Your Brand, Code-switching, Relationships (Support Networks and Mentors), Know When to Hold 'em, Know When to Fold 'em, and Why I Stay.*

A majority of the experiences that participants pointed to were tied to gaining an understanding of their environment, maintaining a healthy self-image, and forming a strong support system. Maintaining a sense of professionalism was by far one of the most important aspects for participants. It was universally understood that no matter what happened, no matter the circumstances surrounding the job, getting the work done was by far the most important aspect of their duties. The belief was that by sustaining a healthy self-image, while being competent, established their brand as administrators.

In order to give a more detailed explanation of these successes and challenges, this section will illustrate how the research findings interact with the scholarly literature which has been previously conducted and the theoretical frameworks. Comparing and contrasting the way participants answered the research questions with the way the literature from Chapter 2 and the theoretical frameworks answered the questions will provide a succinct look at the data collected.

In Chapter 2, it was explained that African American student affairs administrators struggle at PWIs due to social and institutional barriers such as racism, tokenism, isolationism, equity, respect, lack of critical mass, cultural taxation, subpar working conditions, and fully partaking in all that the academy has to offer. According to multiple researchers, African American student affairs administrators encounter these obstacles in their day-to-day pursuits on the job (Allen, 1992; Allen et al., 2000; Hughes, 2004; Jackson, 2001; Jones, 2001; Watson, 2001). However, since there are few studies that specifically target the struggles of African American male student affairs administrators, it remained to be seen as to whether they encountered these same issues. Further, the analysis of the findings related to the two research questions is organized

along particular CRT tenets and Community Cultural Wealth Theory as the study theorized that African American male student affairs administrators' experiences are different than others at predominantly White institutions in the southeastern United States.

The themes that were formed around participant narratives dealing with their successes were: possessing a *strong sense of self*, *managing their expectations*, and *doing what they gotta do*. These three strategies had to do with participants having or attempting to have a healthy self-image. For all eight participants, possessing a *strong sense of self* revolved around ensuring that they knew who they were as professionals. For participants, having a *strong sense of self* was knowing oneself, having an established set of beliefs, having a fully developed identity, being comfortable within their Blackness, and being flexible in their expectations. This *strong sense of self* helped them to navigate their career choices and issues that could arise within the office. This kept them from having a lack of a career path or experiencing a lack of professional identity.

Looking at the themes, *strong sense of self*, *managing expectations*, and *doing what I gotta do* through the lens of CRT and CCWT, it is easy to see their importance to African American male student affairs administrators. Participants have all achieved a level of success in their careers with most of them being in the field at least three years or more. The literature in Chapter 2 explains the barriers such as racism, tokenism, and cultural taxation that African American male student affairs administrators must deal with on a daily basis (Barksdale, 2007; Gardner, 2014; Holmes, 2004). However, despite that, these administrators are showing resilience, and in some cases, ingenuity in a field that was not created with them in mind. They are utilizing mentors as safety nets, they are

creating faculty and staff associations to form these connections, and learning to adapt to the system through actions such as code-switching. One of the participants discussed his ritual of coming in an hour earlier than required in order to orient his day and get ahead so that he can spend his day worrying about that day's challenges. One participant talked about waking up at 4 a.m. to go workout and do yoga, which helped him be more relaxed and calmer throughout the day. Finally, another participant talked about his "free your mind" Fridays. He has a weekly mental health session with a psychologist and then he goes to the spa to get a facial and massage. He says it helps him to decompress from the week and prepares him for the next one.

Racism, isolationism, and tokenism, (Barksdale, 2007; Gardner, 2014; Holmes, 2004) are all designed to strip a person of their identity and in some cases their dignity. CRT highlights this through its Whiteness as Property and Permanence of Race tenets (Decuir & Dixson, 2004; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Both tenets express how racism is a part of everyday society and the White majority benefits from this as they have evolved from being an identity to becoming a form of property, thus, being protected by the laws that govern this country. Participants utilize cultural capital as outlined in CCWT to navigate their spaces and combat these issues. For instance, participants spoke about their hopes and dreams concerning their futures within student affairs. Many openly shared their aspirations to advance and to be future leaders within the field. This coincides with Aspirational capital. Participants were able to utilize their hopes and dreams to push through some of the day-to-day negativity associated with being a person of color by focusing on their aspirations. This reflects that participants possessed a *strong*

sense of self because they were focused on the future, their hopes, and dreams, in spite of the daily grind of racism.

Further, when discussing *managing their expectations*, all eight of the participants understood that what they expect from the position, their students, and fellow administrators may not come to pass. They *manage their expectations* because of the obstacles that they will face and the issues that typically arise with being an African American male. Participants explained that managing expectations was more of a defense mechanism used to maintain a sense of mental balance, to not get too high on victories or too low on defeats, to do the best that they could do, but not to expect pats on the back. Permanence of Race again comes into play, as it illustrates how Whites are privileged over people of color, and in this sense, three of participants expressed that they had to often work twice as hard to get half the credit as their White co-workers (Decuir & Dixon, 2004; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). However, these same participants outlined how they persevered through these obvious injustices.

Participants talked about learning to navigate within those spaces without support, without credit, and without expecting those things. They determined within themselves that they would not expect credit for doing their job but would continue to operate at a level of excellence so high that it would be difficult for the powers that be to ignore their achievements. In this case, those three participants were utilizing Navigational capital as a means of succeeding in an unsupportive or maybe even hostile environment. They saw this as a way to strengthen their portfolios and gain valuable work experience that could make them more marketable in other positions or to break through in their current position and gain their overdue respect.

Finally, for seven of the eight participants, *doing what I gotta do*, meant getting along with everybody in the workplace as a way to blend in with their fellow co-workers. Participants determined that they would do whatever was necessary to be successful and at times that meant *doing what they gotta do* to maintain their positions. This mentality feeds into what Bell (2000) explained as interest convergence in CRT. This is where the participants felt they had to blend in and mesh with their White counterparts. All of the participants expressed this type of mentality as a way of getting by and realizing success within student affairs. They did not see this as a negative or positive, to them, it was just the way things were. In order to blend in and mesh with their White counterparts, they utilized Social capital (Yosso, 2005). This meant that participants utilized their relationships with other people of color, mentors, and colleagues to help them to remain grounded within themselves and not to lose their identities while they immerse within White society.

Participants expressed their challenges in the second part of this question as: having to choose between *self-care vs. doing their job*, facing *isolation*, and *White privilege and not knowing their rules*. These three challenges had to do with how participants understood culture and race in its proper context to better navigate the institution. For five of the eight participants, choosing between *self-care* and *doing their job* was a daily exercise. They felt the challenge did not come from them participating in *self-care*, more so, it was an issue concerning doing the work. They felt that they were undervalued and underappreciated in comparison to their White counterparts despite the extra work they sometimes participated in such as advising organizations, serving on search committees, and being a mentor to students of color. They could say no to those

things, but participants felt that if they did not do it, no one else would. This was a source of cultural taxation (Fujimoto, 2012; Tierney & Bensimon, 1996; Turner, 2008) and insufficient compensation for participants (Barksdale, 2007). Permanence of race and Whiteness as property ties into this area as the five participants pointed out, that they are doing additional duties that are not asked of their White coworkers such as advising affinity student groups, being asked excessively to be on search committees, or being asked to be ambassadors for outreach to the African American community (Decuir & Dixson, 2004; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

Participants ascribed several things to *self-care* such as: working out, going to a mental health provider, quiet time, listening to gospel music, and praying. These five participants utilized Spiritual Capital as a way to navigate this space. Despite the pressure of doing additional duties, being underappreciated, and unappreciated, these participants found the courage and conviction to move forward and to do so with professionalism. They did this by believing in a power higher than their own. All five participants expressed a connection to spirituality, which included the activities listed above, but also attending church services and having faith in their purpose and decisions.

Seven of the eight participants expressed facing *isolation* on the job in two ways, either there was a lack of critical mass of African American male student affairs administrators or African American administrators in general (Holmes, 2003); or they were socially isolated by their department, office, or team. In many ways, *isolation* starts to happen, and participants felt like they were not valued or validated at work. Their White co-workers often made them feel like they should be happy to be there, that they should take whatever they were given. It often was a demoralizing situation. This

isolation of the participants dealt with racism, tokenism, isolationism, and even subpar working conditions (Barr, 1990). Again, CRT tenets, Permanence of Race and Whiteness as Property, are brought to the forefront as White co-workers enjoy a workspace in which they control and give admittance to only those that they deem as worthy of being equal partners which is often not people of color (Decuir & Dixson, 2004; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). The seven participants were determined to get through these issues in the workplace, and they utilized Resistance capital in order to do so (Yosso, 2005). These participants “plugged” into the historical legacy of their parents and historical figures who have fought for social justice and equality for all (Yosso, 2005). They leveraged this support, information, and drive for social justice to continue to be a positive force for good and change on their staffs regardless of the fact that they were being isolated oftentimes just because they are people of color. Utilizing Resistance capital allowed them to work toward dismantling inequality within the PWI and to fight for equal rights within their space (Yosso, 2005).

The lone participant that did not feel isolated expressed that he did not feel isolated because he flipped the dynamic in his mind. He did not expect his White coworkers to welcome him or make him feel special. He utilized his support system i.e., his family, his mentors, and his fellow African American co-workers to get a sense of belonging. He believed his experience (10 years) played a role in his way of thinking. In fact, he stated:

I'd worked at three different institutions and at each one I encountered the same B.S., so when I got my current position, I actively cultivated relationships and routines that did not depend on my White co-workers' approval. I know who I

and what I offer...when I begin to slip into that please the “White people mode”, I just seek out my support groups.

All eight participants expressed dealing with *White privilege and knowing their rules*, the participants often run into these invisible barriers that kept them from accomplishing their goals, hopes, and dreams. Those barriers often kept people of color from reaching their full potential, while their White counterparts breeze through with no such obstacles. Participants expressed what they called unwritten rules that affected their day-to-day. Those rules were often known by their White colleagues, while the participants found themselves being slapped on the hand or even ostracized for violating these rules that are not even a part of university policy. *White privilege and those unwritten rules* often subjected participants to systemic issues such as debasement filters and cultural taxation. They also experienced just plain old racism and tokenism (Barksdale, 2007; Gardner, 2014; Holmes, 2004). This is the epitome of Whiteness as property and Permanence of Race as it highlights the advantages of being White and the inherent racism in U.S. society (Decuir & Dixson, 2004; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Further, it shows the hard climb that people of color must make in order to feel whole within their workspace.

All eight participants expressed frustration when discussing this theme, and they had different ways of coping and dealing with it. Five of the eight participants utilized familial and social capital to navigate their workspace (Yosso, 2005). They relied on their support systems and mentors to make it through tough times and incidents of that were meant to strip them of their dignity. Participants explained how having a mentor helped them to see themselves as not being alone in their struggle, but also offered them

tangible and sage advice on how to deal with the issues they found themselves encountering. Oftentimes, this turned the situation into a teachable moment for the participant, instead of it being a barrier. The other three participants utilized Resistance and Navigational capital to move through their space (Yosso, 2005). In the words of one participant, they just kept “chugging along”. They utilized their knowledge and skills in social justice to fight for a fair shake within the workplace. That included challenging the status quo and calling attention to the hostile and unfair treatment that they were receiving within the office.

A majority of the experiences that participants pointed to were tied to advancing their careers despite the issues they encountered within the workplace. The remaining six themes had to do with participants having or attempting to have a sense of professionalism and stability within student affairs. For all eight participants, *maintaining professionalism* meant being professional in all aspects of the job even when they encountered barriers such as racism, tokenism, or isolationism (Barksdale, 2007). Participants understood that they did not have the luxury to be “normal”. They had to be above and beyond “normal” as they were often the only people of color in the room and unfortunately served as ambassadors of their race whether they wanted to or not. This ties into the CRT tenet, Whiteness as Property, as it assumes that the right way to be professional was to act like their White coworkers (Decuir & Dixson, 2004; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Participants understood that in order to be seen as professionals they had to maintain a certain image that projected professionalism. At times, that meant stripping themselves of certain identity and personality traits. It meant they could not be themselves. For instance, one of the professionals spoke about being one person when he

is around his family and another when he is at work or with co-workers. He expressed how the act was exhausting, but necessary to survive.

For all eight participants, *maintaining professionalism* meant dressing one level above their position, being extra prepared for meetings, and having to always be “on”. This is the mentally exhausting part as they knew that a misstep could be costly to them. So, they were constantly on guard and in character when at work. Though they have to actively work at doing these things, participants did not see it as a burden. In fact, most viewed it as something that was just natural to them. They grew up communicating and acting this way as their parents taught them, “how to act in public”. This mindset reflects how participants used Linguistic and Familial capital to navigate professionalism in the workplace (Yosso, 2005). The fact that participants pointed to how they utilized their tone of voice, facial expressions, even their posture reflected how they were utilizing Linguistic capital to push through a situation that was mentally exhausting (Yosso, 2005). Further, Familial capital was showcased by participants because they were utilizing and leveraging skills that they learned earlier in their lives before they even set foot within the office environment (Yosso, 2005). They were utilizing both sets of capital to sooth and ease the minds of their co-workers which in turn allowed them to progress in their career.

Four of the eight participants discussed a unique concept captured as *managing their brands*. They saw this as keeping up proper professional appearances with their White co-workers. They felt this gave them a sense of racial pride and projected a positive image within themselves and to those that they represent. Participants understood that they had to be clear about who they were, what they do, and take as much control of their career as possible by branding themselves as thought leaders in their chosen area of

student affairs. Further, it meant making themselves visible, and communicating their personal value and what they stand for with consistency. Viewing this through a CRT framework, it coincides with both tenets of Whiteness as Property and Permanence of Race, but it meshes best with Interest Convergence. This is because participants felt they had to be just like their White counterparts to be a part of the office environment (Decuir & Dixson, 2004; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). They had to brand themselves as someone who was a step above professional just to be viewed as a capable and competent member of the team. Oftentimes, this meant trying to adhere to what they felt their White co-workers would deem professional. For African Americans, this type of behavior is often termed as “acting White” and is seen as a negative within the African American community, but for some administrators, it was seen as a necessary step in their climb up the career ladder. This is Interest Convergence because the administrators were developing brands that made them more palatable to their White counterparts as they were taking White modes of professionalism and perfecting them to brand themselves.

This constant attempts to brand themselves was a tiring exercise as it required participants to go above and beyond just to be a “regular” member of the team. Four of the eight participants expressed that their routines for branding themselves such as going above and beyond what is asked to be accomplished, presenting a conferences on topics within their purview, pursuing a doctorate degree, partaking in professional development to strengthen their skills and resume, and being over-prepared for meetings, programs, and activities had opened doors for them that they felt would not have been opened had they just existed and maintained the status quo. They utilized Aspirational capital and Navigational capital in their pursuit of building a brand (Yosso, 2005).

They first focused on their hopes and dreams of moving up in the field. Next, they were persistent in their passion to achieve success in accomplishing those hopes and dreams (Aspirational). Finally, they utilized Navigational capital by sharpening and perfecting skills and abilities that they know are valued in the student affairs realm such as presentation and networking skills, professionalism, and the ability to mold and guide student leaders (Yosso, 2005). Participants used their knowledge of student affairs protocols and policies and combined them with an outstanding work ethic to create a student affairs administrator that had the respect and admiration of their co-workers and White counterparts.

All eight participants described using a form of *code-switching* as a way to maintain their professionalism and *manage their brands*. They felt that *code-switching* helped them to gain more respect among their White counterparts. Some had been *code-switching* so long and so well, that sometimes they did not even realize they were doing it. Some of the participants expressed that *code-switching* was not easy, though it got easier as time progressed. It required a constant awareness and work. *Code-switching* was seen as a valuable skill essential to moving successfully through higher education. But underneath that, there was a sense of respectability politics and judgment. This illustrates Whiteness as property, as participants felt like the way they walked, talked, and acted was not good enough to be perceived as professional amongst their White peers (Decuir & Dixson, 2004; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). It also added stress from fellow African American co-workers who did not practice *code-switching*. A couple of the participants said that they were accused of being “suck-ups”, “step and fetch its”, uncle Toms, sell

outs, etc. because they utilized this as a mechanism to move forward in their career. They were accused of turning their back on their Black identity in order to move ahead.

The eight participants utilized a couple forms of capital to ease the mental burden and racial guilt that sometimes comes with code-switching. They walked a delicate line and it could be mentally draining. Code-switching is essentially the participants utilizing Linguistic capital to ease the minds of their White co-workers by speaking and acting in a way that is more in line with the White majority (Yosso, 2005). This meant watching their tone of voice, being intentional about their postures, and ensuring that their facial expressions reflected positivity. They also used Navigational capital to leverage skills such as: mediation, relationship building, and team building to move forward in their careers (Yosso, 2005). Even though code-switching requires work and can be a delicate situation for participants, they found themselves excelling at it and using it to advance in their field.

Six of the eight participants talked about *Relationships (Support Networks and Mentors)* and how they played a huge role in their success on the job. These relationships not only helped them in navigating the institution, but they also gave them a set of tools to succeed and excel in their careers. In Chapter 2, there is an explanation of why these relationships are important to African American male student affairs administrators. Burke and Carter (2015) explained how relationships with established members of the institution, whether they are African American or any other race, enables connections to be formed to the institution. These relationships provide a foundation of support and information that would otherwise be non-existent. Further, it gives them the knowledge base of established professionals to help them to understand how to be professionals

themselves. This ties into CRT counter-storytelling as these established professionals are providing a narrative to the participants that highlights their successes in the field and how to navigate the field (Decuir & Dixson, 2004; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). These narratives oftentimes run counter to what participants are experiencing or have heard concerning being African American in student affairs.

The relationships prove to be essential because it provides a network of support and a pool of potential mentors that can help participants to navigate the decisions and day-to-day grind of their jobs. Six participants utilized Social and Navigational capital to continue to advance their careers through the barriers of White privilege (Yosso, 2005). Participants outlined how they utilized their social contacts to gain access to spaces that they typically would be unable to access. That means utilizing mentors for information on how they achieved the success that they have achieved. Using those contacts to “put in a good word” or be a reference for a new position that advances their careers. It helped them in avoiding the pitfalls and barriers that their mentor and those that they network with may have encountered. Student Affairs can be, and oftentimes, is a hostile environment for African American male student affairs administrators. Utilizing Navigational capital, such as weekly meetings with their mentors and network of supporters, understanding the environment in which they are working in and accepting it for what it is, and not taking the unsupportiveness and hostility personally, helped participants to navigate these educational spaces that may be detrimental to their well-being because they have such a strong net of support helping to hold them up (Yosso, 2005).

Five of the eight participants expressed a *Know When to Hold 'em, Know When to Fold 'em* attitude when it came to their positions. Participants expressed their understanding that their job was one that required a sense of balance. They understood that there were times when they had to stand for their beliefs and their convictions. Additionally, there were times that they had keep quiet and swallow their thoughts. This also meant knowing when they had reached the end of the line concerning their current position and it was time to move to a different opportunity or institution. This mentality goes together with Whiteness as Property and Permanence of Race (Decuir & Dixson, 2004; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). This is because participants understood that their careers were oftentimes not in their hands. They could not come onto the job and have a bad day, have a breakdown, or speak passionately about issues because they were not given the grace to do those things. If they did, they could lose their jobs, lose standing, get written up, or be labelled difficult which could mean the end of their career as student affairs is a small field and reputations can easily be ruined with a well-placed word. Their White colleagues on the other hand can partake in such behavior and get away with it. Whereas a passionate display by a person of color would be deemed hostile, this same display by a White coworker would be deemed as passionate advocacy which is viewed as positive.

Five participants talked about how possessing the *Know When to Hold 'em, Know When to Fold 'em* mentality had caused them stress as they sometimes had to let things pass or swallow their thoughts because of how it would be perceived. They had to withhold their opinion even if it was the correct one and they had to leave an institution in which they had established a great support base, because they had reached the glass

ceiling and were being overlooked for positions that were going to less qualified White colleagues. Yet, they utilized Aspirational capital in order to see these things in a positive light and as a necessary step in their careers. They leaned on those hopes and dreams by creating vision boards, networking at other institutions, and cultivating a brand outside of the institution in order to combat negativity that could potentially come from their co-workers. This also ties into their Spiritual capital because three of the five participants expressed that they have faith that “God will fight their battles” and that the decisions that they make are ultimately “a part of God’s plan” (Yosso, 2005).

All eight participants explained *Why They Stay* as a matter of resilience and persistence. Those skills were brought forth as the way to success for African American male student affairs administrators. Participants outlined how having these skills helped them to be successful in their careers. In Chapter 2, a definition was established for perseverance. This definition was established as an individual phenomenon that focused attention on the individual goal or goals of an administrator reaching his or her specific goal attainment on the job. While, Reivich, and Shatte (2002) expressed how vitally important resilience is by outlining how the level of resilience, the ability to persevere and adapt when things go awry, determines the happiness and longevity of success at work. This outlook of being persistent and resilient ties into the CRT tenet Permanence of Race because it shows how racism is an intricate part of American and higher education society (Decuir & Dixson, 2004; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Some of the participants viewed things through a deficit lens of just trying to survive in the workplace. They were not looking at excelling or achieving, but they were arriving to work every day with their

focus on surviving another day under the assault of a culture and environment that does not value their worth.

However, participants utilized all seven forms of cultural capital in order to showcase *why they stay* at their current institutions. They joined the field with the hopes and dreams of being at the top of this field and helping students (Aspirational) along the way (Yosso, 2005). They utilized many types of methods to persist including forming strong relationships with mentors (Social), utilizing coping mechanisms such as code-switching to navigate the space (Linguistic & Familial), using their experiences and abilities to obtain success when possible (Navigational), plugging into their parents, community, and historical legacy of engaging in social justice to speak truth to power (Resistance), and finally, believing in and putting faith in a power greater than themselves [Spiritual] (Yosso, 2005). Some of the participants took on a thriving mentality, to them, the adversity at work presented them with an opportunity to become a better version of themselves. They worked to build and manage a brand by going above and beyond on assignments, they sharpened their skills and exhibited a level of professionalism that could not be questioned by dressing for the position they want and not the one they had, by always being prepared for all situations, etc. These participants did not overlook the toxic culture but instead used it as motivation to be a better version of themselves. They used it to rise above what threatened to wear them down. Some of the participants expressed that when they ran into barriers and fell into pitfalls...they did not give up or throw in the towel but used it as a lesson learned. Some of the participants, however, became discouraged and frustrated with the field.

Implications for Practice

This study is crucial because it gives PWIs an awareness of the issues that African American male student affairs administrators face in their day-to-day duties within their institutions while also providing critical insights into actions that those PWIs can take to increase their quality of life their campuses.

- According to the research and the findings, the Vice President of Student Affairs, Dean of Students, and Chief Diversity Officer should co-plan a yearly orientation/welcome social for all new African American male student affairs administrators to help them gain a connection to the institution (Jackson 2002, 2008).
- The Vice President of Student Affairs and Chief Diversity Officer should create a mentoring program designed to connect African American male student affairs administrators to established employees that can help them transition to the institution (Barksdale, 2007).
- The Provost, Vice President for Student Affairs, Academic Deans, and Chief Diversity Officer must create a Grow Your Own program where they nurture young African American male student affairs administrators, African American graduate students within the institution higher education program, and promising African American undergraduate students (Flowers, 2003).
- The Vice President of Student Affairs must be creative in their approach to offering competitive incentive packages that will entice African American

male student affairs administrators to come to their institution (Jackson, 2001).

- The Provost and Vice President of Student Affairs must be diligent in offering robust funding and opportunities for professional development (Jackson, 2001; Singh & Williams-Green, 1995).
- The President, Provost, and Vice President of Student Affairs must be creative in developing a career plan that offers growth and advancement opportunities (Barr, 1990).
- The Provost, Human Resources, Vice President of Student Affairs, and Chief Diversity Officer must create trainings for all search committees to help them avoid implicit bias and debasement filters (Sangaria, 2002).
- The Vice President of Student Affairs and supervisors must be aware of and help African American male student affairs administrators avoid cultural taxation by being intentional about what is allowed outside of their day-to-day work (Fujimoto, 2012; Tierney & Bensimon, 1996; Turner, 2008).
- The Vice President of Student Affairs, Chief Diversity Officers, and supervisors must be honest with new hires about the climate of the institution and the barriers that they could possibly face coming into a PWI. This goes a long way toward helping them to not be blindsided by unrealistic expectations from the institutional community (Jackson, 2001).
- Utilize the Chief Diversity Officer and African American male student affairs administrators to recruit undergraduate students, graduate students,

and other potential African American male student affairs administrators. This embeds them into the University community and can increase the recruitment of African American students while also utilizing their network to bring in additional administrators to diversify the staff. This helps create critical mass (Holmes, 2003).

- The President and Provost must provide a planned, concrete institutional commitment to diversity as leaders of predominantly White institutions must project and support a “philosophy of fairness” that displays to African American male student affairs administrators that they are an appreciated and integral part of the institution (Flowers, 2003).

Recommendations for Future Study

The study used semi-structured interviews to investigate the successes and challenges of African American male administrators at a predominantly White institution in the southeastern United States. This study has contributed to the scholarship of African American male student affairs administrators and new developments worth considering for future studies on African American male career advancement. Upon completion of the study, the following recommendations for future research are made:

1. To study the successes and challenges of African American female student affairs administrators to determine whether African American females are more marginalized in student affairs than African American male.
2. To explore the persistence strategies of entry level African American administrators, both male and female, at PWIs in the southeastern United States.

3. To explore the differences between African American males and females in terms of how they differently navigate the successes and challenges of being in a PWI.
4. To explore how mentorship influences the persistence of African American student affairs administrators at a PWI.
5. To explore the persistence strategies of African American student affairs senior level administrators in PWIs.
6. This study took place in the southeastern United States. Thus, the location determined the context of this study in terms of how African American males are viewed. However, conducting this study in a different region would present a different contextual perspective which should be explored.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to explore the successes and challenges of African American males in student affairs in a predominantly White institution in the southeastern United States. The focus was to explore the experiences of these administrators in a PWI. As a group, study participants were all student affairs administrators at various institutions throughout the southeastern United States. Eight participants engaged in two extensive in-depth interviews resulting in 18 hours of transcribed data that contain significant insight into the successes and challenges of African American male student affairs administrators in PWIs in the southeastern United States. The findings of the study not only revealed the successes and challenges that these administrators face on a day-to-day basis, but it unearthed the importance of mentorship, persistence, and resilience to an individual's career advancement and success in student affairs.

Critical Race Theory and Community Cultural Wealth Theory were integrated into the study to maintain the outsider-within stance and outsider knowledge of African American male student affairs administrator experiences at a PWI in the southeastern United States. The viewpoints of African American male administrators in their own voices provided critical insights into actions that PWIs in the southeastern United States can take to increase quality of life and bring value to the voices and presence of communities of color and the margins, where this population is found, on predominantly White campuses. It is critical that the voices in the margins are given the same respect as the dominant group. It is not just about being inclusive but ensuring that the inclusiveness is woven into the fabric of the institution. This ensures that the institution's ability to provide excellent and efficient services to all its constituents.

Thus, the research study may have implications for both researchers and practitioners in predominantly White institutions in the southeastern United States. The findings, when kept in context considering the locale and history of the locale, can prove to be helpful when determining policy or procedures that may contribute to establishing an institution that is based on inclusive excellence and equity. The findings of this study provide a counter-narrative to the dominant discourse concerning the treatment of and opportunities for African American males in student affairs and higher education, and to some extent, other people of color. Moreover, this study provided participants with an opportunity to reflect on their careers as administrators working at a predominantly White institution in the southeastern United States.

In closing, as mentioned in the study, racial demographics are rapidly and radically changing in the United States. The minority populations are exploding, and this

will soon begin to drastically change the complexion of universities across the country. Higher education and institutional leaders must be prepared to guide their universities through this change. Also, the leadership must be prepared to embrace and cater to the growing multiracial society. In order to do so, change must begin within the institution itself. New policies and procedures must be developed to ensure the inclusiveness of all students, faculty, and staff. In addition, institutions must include people of color in the decision-making process. They should also listen to their experiences, which requires courage as these conversations can be hard to accept for institutions, as they often depict the institution in a light that is different from what the dominant population sees. Bringing multicultural voices to the table, listening to those voices, and implementing policy and procedure changes based from those conversations will place PWIs in a position to move forward with the confidence that they are prepared to not only embrace the multicultural future of the institution, but can provide a nurturing environment for all of its constituents, especially its administrators.

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APPENDIX A

PARTICIPANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION FORM

Chosen Alias: _____ Interview Phone# _____

1. List all degrees that you have attained and in what areas (begin with highest degree attained).
2. Please list your current position title: _____
3. What other positions have you held in student affairs?
4. How many years have you worked in student affairs? _____
5. How many years have you worked at your current institution? _____
6. Did you attend a predominantly White institution for undergraduate or graduate school? _____
7. What is your ultimate goal in this profession?
8. Tell me about yourself

APPENDIX B

PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Introductory Questions

- Tell me a little bit about yourself and why did you choose to be a university administrator.
- Describe your professional and academic preparation towards your current administrator position?
- What is a typical day for you in your position within the institution?
- Describe your working conditions, i.e. compensations, resources, hours spent on the job, support, and etc.

What challenges do African American male administrators face at a predominately White institution?

- Are there any personal or organizational barriers that you could identify that would halt your progress as an administrator? Explain.
- If you were to give advice to a newly arriving African American male administrator, what would you tell him about what he can expect?
- What sacrifices, if any, have you made to become an administrator at a PWI?
- What are your thoughts when you learn of the departure of an African American male administrator from the institution?
- Have you experienced feelings of separation or isolation from your peers during particular events or activities?
- How do you internalize being an African American male in a position that's predominantly held by White males and females?
- What type of stressors do you experience on the job as an administrator?

What strategies do African American male administrators use to persist at their predominantly White institution?

- What do you contribute to your successful navigation at this institution?
- What strategies contribute to sustaining your position in this institution?
- Describe for me your day-to-day persistence strategies and tactics that you use daily?
- If you could, what actions would you advise the University president to take in order to develop a better representation of working African American male administrators at your institution?
- What skills are required for African American male administrators to persist in their position?
- What factors do you feel has had the greatest impact on your longevity and advancement as an administrator?

Closing

- Is there anything else you would like to add?

APPENDIX C

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL LETTER

THE UNIVERSITY OF
ALABAMA[®] | Office of the Vice President for
Research & Economic Development
Office for Research Compliance

July 10, 2018

Allen Sutton
Department of ELPTS
College of Education
The University of Alabama
Box 87032

Re: IRB # 18-OR-249 "The Successes and Challenges of African American Male Student Affairs Administrators in Predominantly White Institutions in the Southeastern United States"

Dear Mr. Sutton:

The University of Alabama Institutional Review Board has granted approval for your proposed research. Your application has been given expedited approval according to 45 CFR part 46. Approval has been given under expedited review category 7 as outlined below:

(7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

Your application will expire on July 9, 2019. If your research will continue beyond this date, complete the relevant portions of Continuing Review and Closure Form. If you wish to modify the application, complete the Modification of an Approved Protocol Form. When the study closes, complete the appropriate portions of FORM: Continuing Review and Closure.

Please use reproductions of the IRB approved informed consent form to obtain consent from your participants.

Should you need to submit any further correspondence regarding this proposal, please include the above application number.

Good luck with your research.

Sincerely,



Carriato T. Myles, MSM, CIM, CIP
Director & Research Compliance Officer
Office for Research Compliance

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