Black Scholars' Burden: An examination of life and career experiences of African-American faculty at a PWI

A Dissertation submitted
to the Graduate School
Valdosta State University

in partial fulfillment of requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

in Leadership

in the Department of Curriculum, Leadership, and Technology
of the Dewar College of Education and Human Services

December 2020

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ABSTRACT

In this narrative study, the researcher examined African-American faculty members' experiences in their efforts to earn and sustain roles as university faculty members. Previous researchers indicated that African-American faculty members are underrepresented at a southeastern U.S. university research institution, holding fewer than six percent of the faculty positions compared to sixty percent of their White counterparts (Lite Report, 2019). Critical Race Theory and Black Feminist Thought were the theoretical frameworks for this qualitative narrative inquiry. Seidman's (2006) three-step interview model served as a guide for interviews with six African-American faculty members at a predominantly White institution (PWIs). Four major themes emerged from the data analysis: burden of Blackness, politics of isolation and omission, paradox of diversity at a PWI, and extended roles and responsibilities of African-American faculty in PWIs. Participants used grit augmented by family encouragement to overcome barriers, including racial stereotypes and extended faculty roles. The participants in this study shared valuable, diverse instructional and advising perspectives that may benefit all faculty in higher learning institutions. Additionally, outside of their research and teaching responsibilities, the participants devoted additional time and effort to support, mentor, and serve as role models for underrepresented student populations at their university.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

When I began this doctoral journey, I had no idea of the challenges that I would encounter. It is because of God's Grace and Mercy that I have been able to finish this race. I owe all my successes to God. As Luke 1:37 says, "For with God nothing is impossible." God has placed the right people in my life to turn the dream of earning a doctorate degree a reality.

I would like to show my deepest appreciation to my chair, Dr. Rudo Tsemunhu, for your patience, your guidance, and your continuous support during the process. To the rest of my amazing committee—Dr. Ronnie Green, Dr. William Truby, and Dr. Donald Leech—I can't thank you enough for advice, support, and feedback during this process. Each of you has made me a better writer and researcher.

To my participants, I could not have completed this journey without you. Thank you for your courage and willingness to share your stories. You answered the call and I am forever indebted to each of you.

To my family, closest friends, sorority sisters, coworkers, and VSU cohort members who encouraged me, pushed me, motivated me, and prayed for me: I cannot thank you enough. Each of you supported me throughout this entire process; you made me readjust my crown and pick myself up when I wanted to give up. To my mother—my rock, my queen: You have supported every dream and aspiration that I have always had since I was a little girl. To my dad, I cannot believe God called you home before you could see your baby girl earn this degree. I thank you for always supporting me and making me laugh when I got stressed and overwhelmed. Daddy, I miss you and I will honor you in all that I do. To my big little brother, I do not know where to begin. You are and have always been one of my biggest supporters. I love your past the stars, baby brother! To my husband, thank you for always supporting my goals. To my daughter, my miracle baby: Everything I do is for you. I dedicate this to you. I hope that my tenacity and resilience prove to you that you can accomplish any goal you set for yourself. I love you so much, baby girl. Thank you for your patience and understanding as I worked toward attaining this goal.

I will close as I began, giving God all the honor, glory, and praise for all HE has done in my life and for my future blessings. One of my favorite gospel songs simply says, "I am grateful for the things that He has done, I am grateful for the victories we've won!"

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Overview

Preceding the American Civil War, most African-Americans were enslaved and had little to no formal higher education (African American Registry, 1994). To provide academic and career opportunities, three institutions in the Northern United States offered elementary and secondary education (U.S. Department of Education, 1991), providing academic and career opportunities. These schools were the Institute for Colored Youth (now Cheyney University), founded in Pennsylvania in 1837; Lincoln University, founded in Pennsylvania in 1854; and Wilberforce University, founded in Ohio in 1856. These institutions were the first of many historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) opened throughout the United States to provide a structured education system to African-Americans (African American Registry, 1837; U.S. Department of Education, 1991). Despite their founding in the northern states, HBCUs became more prevalent throughout the United States during and after the Civil War (Lewis, 2019), with over 100 such institutions in 2016 (Hall, 2016).

From the founding of the first HBCU in 1837 until the early 1900s, African-Americans had access only to elementary and secondary education (U.S. Department of Education, 1991). When postsecondary and higher education opportunities emerged at the beginning of the 20th century, the focus was on training teachers, clergy, and political leaders (National Museum of African American History and Culture, n.d.). Although

HBCUs made education available to African-Americans, Whites were responsible for founding, owning, and operating many institutions because they had the financial resources to support these efforts (Slater, 1998). Initially, White professors taught most of the academic courses, with Black faculty eligible to teach only trade courses; however, this restriction gradually relaxed over time (Slater, 1998).

Denied access to teach at PWIs, African-Americans could only teach at HBCUs or "racially segregated state-operated black colleges in the southern states" (Slater, 1998, p. 97). In 1849, Charles Reason made history as the first African-American male professor at New York Central College, a PWI. In 1852, Grace A. Mapps became the first African-American female professor at Cheyney University (Cheyney University, 2009a; 2009b).

After the American Civil War, Congress enacted several laws providing educational opportunities for African-Americans (Harris, Figgures, & Carter, 1975; U.S. Department of Education, 1991). One of the most significant legal decisions was the Second Morrill Act in 1890, which required creating land-grant institutions for African-American students in southern states. In 1896, *Plessy v. Ferguson* established separate-but-equal policy to enhance African-Americans' public education system (U.S. Department of Education, 1991). This decision strengthened the persistence of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Legal Defense and Education Funds for African-Americans to attend segregated universities legally. The revolutionary 1954 U.S. Supreme Court *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling followed, declaring "separate but equal" unlawful (Hatfield, 2019). Despite this victory, it took nearly 7 years for the first two African-American students, Hamilton Holmes and

Charlayne Hunter, to gain admission to the University of Georgia (Hatfield, 2019). Even though many Georgia state officials, citizens, university leadership, and faculty were not pleased with desegregation, many quickly favored the integration so schools would remain open (Hatfield, 2019). Following the admission of African-American students at the University of Georgia were turmoil, riots, and legal battles, leading Georgia Tech's president to desegregate the institution without a court order in September 1961 (Institute Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, 2019; Hatfield, 2019). Under this leadership, Georgia Tech admitted its first three Black male students: Ford Green, Ralph Long, Jr., and Lawrence Michael Williams (Institute Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, 2019; Hatfield, 2019).

To comply with *Brown v. Board of Education* and the Civil Rights Act of 1964, most universities and colleges began to admit African-American students; however, the outcome was not always positive for African-American educators and administrators (Oakley, Stowell, & Logan, 2009; Wiggins, 1966). Before desegregation, African-Americans taught and led most southern schools that served African-American students; however, these instructors soon found themselves obsolete, underrepresented in all education levels (Education Next, 2018; Oakley et al., 2009).

The law did not require desegregation for faculty in higher education institutions as in K-12 education settings (Wiggins, 1966). Until 1968, there was no evidence of African-American faculty at any university research institution in a southeastern state (University of Georgia, n.d.). In 1968, Richard Graham became the first tenured African-American male faculty member at the University of Georgia. In 2001, Dr. Dorothy Yancey became the first African-American female tenured faculty member at Georgia

Tech (Georgia Tech Alumni, 2009). From a historical perspective, African-American faculty representation at a university research institution in the U.S. Southeast held steady at just over five percent between 2000 and 2006 (University System of Georgia, 2006). In 2007, there was a slight increase to more than six percent African-American faculty representation. National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) statistics from 2018 showed seven percent of university faculty positions held by African-Americans (University System of Georgia, 2018).

Problem Statement

African-American faculty members are underrepresented at a southeastern U.S. university research institution, holding fewer than six percent of the faculty positions compared to sixty percent of their White counterparts. By the 1960s, African-Americans had invested considerable time in pursuit of obtaining advanced college degrees, which would prepare them to enter their desired careers (Allen, Teranishi, Dinwiddie, & Gonzalez, 2000). African-Americans believed in the importance of education, knowing that it allowed them to succeed in the workplace (Allen, Teranishi, et al., 2000). However, aspiring college and university faculty often faced historical, cultural, and social barriers, preventing them from obtaining faculty positions (Allen, Teranishi, et al., 2000). Several types of discrimination, both societal and organizational, contributed to the lack of career advancement for African-American faculty (Lafreniere & Longman, 2010; Patton & Catching, 2009).

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to determine if African-American university faculty members at a university research institution in a southeastern U.S. state encountered

barriers in their efforts to become university faculty members, and if they did, what strategies they used to overcome the barriers.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

RQ1: What were the life experiences of selected African-American university faculty members prior to becoming university faculty members at a university research institution in a southeastern U.S. state?

RQ2: What barriers, if any, did selected African-American university faculty members at a university research institution in a southeastern U.S. state encounter in their efforts to become university faculty members?

RQ3: If barriers were encountered, what strategies did select African-American university faculty members use to overcome the barriers at a university research institution in a southeastern U.S. state?

Significance of the Study

African-American faculty members are underrepresented at a southeastern U.S. university research institution, holding fewer than six percent of the faculty positions compared to sixty percent of their White counterparts. The purpose of this study was to determine if African-American university faculty members at a university research institution in a southeastern U.S. state encountered barriers in their efforts to become university faculty members, and if they did, what strategies they used to overcome the barriers. Aspiring university faculty, university and college leaders, and university board members gained important insight on the topic of faculty underrepresentation.

The findings from this study could be beneficial to colleges and universities and state and local leaders. Data analysis showed the unconscious biases in hiring practices for African-American faculty, the barriers experienced by African-American faculty, and the strategies developed to overcome the obstacles. Institutional leaders can use this study's findings to determine if the same barriers exist in other institutions and utilize similar techniques to overcome these barriers. These findings promoted cultural awareness for a more tolerant work environment, increasing racial harmony and facilitating more confident, productive employees. Moreover, the information gathered from this study could serve as a resource for university hiring practitioners to diversify their faculty departments. University diversity departments could use this study's findings to frame conversations with stakeholders, identifying and addressing barriers to African-American faculty seeking to obtain and retain faculty positions.

As in Warde (2009) and Butler (2013), the faculty in this study entered a nonjudgmental place where they could freely share their thoughts and stories. Based on these conversations, this research provided a deeper understanding of how race affected African-American faculty members' career experiences. Participants' stories highlighted these issues and how they had adversely affected African-American faculty's career progression at a university research institution in a southeastern U.S. state.

The findings contributed to the limited body of existing empirical research specific to the experiences of African-American faculty members (Robinson-Moore, 2008). Relevant literature presented double oppression, discrimination, and unfavorable treatment of African-American men and women who worked in university settings (Barksdale, 2007; Heggins, 2004; Lafreniere & Longman, 2010; Warde, 2009; Wilson,

1989). Ramsey (2003) and Jones, Hwang, and Bustamante (2015) described the ongoing struggle of women of color, noting a need to conduct more research on the invisibility and unfair treatment of African-American women who worked in higher education. Additionally, Hooker and Johnson (2011) suggested the need for further research on African-American male faculty's career experiences. This study contributed to the need for research on the career experiences of African-American faculty. The findings provided a deeper understanding of why African-American faculty still encounter systemic oppression in higher education institutions. Additionally, this research served as a framework to outline strategies for African-American male and female faculty to reach their desired career goals in academia.

Theoretical Framework

This study had two theoretical frameworks pertinent to African-Americans' issues: Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Black Feminist Thought (BFT). Bell and a group of legal scholars in the mid-1970s sought to address marginalization and the relationship between "race, racism, and power" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 2). The outcome of the Civil Rights Movement was waning, indicating the need for something else to address the legal issues of race and marginalization among nondominant groups (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). CRT focused on race and how it significantly influenced marginalized individuals' livelihood (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Hiraldo, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1998). In 1995, Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) found CRT rooted and centered on the legal aspects of equality and racism, without a clear focus on education issues. Consequently, they expanded the theory to focus on issues related to many facets of education (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). One of the goals in using CRT was to help

higher education institutions understand the importance of diversity and fair treatment of all members (Hiraldo, 2010). CRT supported the notion of marginalization, with many variables affecting the overall life experiences—or, in this case, career experiences of marginalized groups (Patton, McEwen, Rendón, & Howard-Hamilton, 2007).

BFT (Collins, 2004) provides a lens to address racism and marginalization in the African-American community. With BFT, women have the opportunity to validate their experiences (Grant & Ghee, 2015). I focused on the issues of racism, marginalization, and oppression. This theory was a means to understand why African-American women struggled for centuries due to double oppression: being Black and being a woman—or, in the case of this study, being Black and being a woman in a PWI. With a focus on marginalization, BFT was appropriate for this study, giving African-American women a voice to tell their stories and, ultimately, develop their self-identity in academia (Harris, 2007; Howard-Hamilton, 2003).

Summary of the Methodology

A qualitative, narrative research design approach was the methodology used for this study. Six African-American faculty shared their stories highlighting the barriers they encountered in their efforts to become faculty members at a university research institution in a southeastern U.S. state. The participants discussed how they overcame identified barriers and became faculty members.

Qualitative study allows researchers to investigate and become more knowledgeable of issues affecting individuals or stigmatized groups (Creswell, 2013). Narrative research design gives participants the chance to define their life experiences through storytelling (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2009). Solórzano and Yosso (2002)

suggested that counter-storytelling offered researchers the chance to tell people's untold stories and experiences. I relied on the tools and strategies of Creswell (2013), Gay et al. (2009), Solórzano and Yosso (2002), Seidman (2006), and Valdosta State University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) to plan and guide this study.

The participants were African-American faculty from a university research institution in a southeastern U.S. state. Purposeful sampling was appropriate to select the most qualified participants. Data collection entailed using multiple techniques, including interviews, researcher memos, and university documents. To effectively analyze the data, I used coding, categorizing, and connecting strategies. Ensuring validity included taking precautions by identifying researcher bias, recognizing reactivity during participant interviews, allowing participants to review interview transcripts for accuracy, and triangulating the data. I made provisions to identify any ethical issues that could have arisen during the study, making all necessary accommodations to create a safe space for participants.

Limitations

Some factors outside of my control can interfere with a study (Gay et al., 2009). Due to the nature of this study, several limitations influenced the results. Although this topic was significant, some participants experienced anxiety sharing their stories about such a sensitive subject. As a result, they may not have been entirely truthful about their experiences, especially related to adverse situations they might have encountered as faculty members at their institution.

Another limitation was the sample size. I solicited six African-American faculty experiences who worked at a university research institution in a southeastern U.S. state. However, the findings could have been more generalizable with additional participants.

A final limitation that could have affected the study was my subjectivity and bias toward the subject. As an African-American woman, I had thoughts relative to this topic. As an employee of a PWI, I had seen, firsthand, the invisibility of African-American faculty. To prevent researcher subjectivity from influencing the results, I journaled my thoughts to recognize and minimize bias.

Definition of Key Terms

Critical mass: Critical mass occurs when one ethnicity is more present in an environment than another.

Dominant culture: Dominant culture is the ethnic group in the majority or having influence over other groups in a setting.

Institutional racism: Institutional racism refers to different forms of racism occurring in organizational settings (Clair & Denis, 2015).

Marginality: Howard-Hamilton (2003) defined marginality as the "outsider within status" (p. 21), where women of color are not the dominant culture and are limited in the contributions they can make.

Mentoring: Mentors foster relationships that assist individuals with personal and professional growth and provide tools to succeed.

Predominantly White institution: This refers to academic institutions where the student and faculty populations are principally White.

Tenured faculty: This refers to a professor who has received a permanent or full professor position within the university.

Underrepresentation: Underrepresentation occurs when one ethnic group represents only a small percentage of the organization's population.

Chapter Summary

The visibility of African-American faculty in U.S. colleges and universities remains significantly low compared to White faculty (Patton & Catching, 2009). The researcher explored African-American faculty's career experiences to understand the barriers faced in their efforts to become faculty members at a university research institution in a southeastern U.S. state. Additionally, the participants shared the success strategies they used to overcome obstacles.

A qualitative, narrative research approach included purposefully sampling six African-American faculty. The participants were candid and open while sharing their lived experiences at a university research institution in a southeastern U.S. state. The theoretical foundations were CRT and BFT, which applied to the issues encountered by African-American men and women concerning their experiences with discrimination and racism in the workplace. African-American faculty face significant challenges, such as invisibility and isolation, thus indicating the need to explore members of this population (Alexander & Moore, 2008b). Despite significant study of the career obstacles and barriers of African-American faculty in higher education (Becks-Moody, 2004; Mitchell-Crump, 2000; Patitu & Hinton, 2003), literature exploring the barriers and strategies of African-American faculty and how they have successfully navigated their careers was essential (Jones et al., 2015).

Chapter II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

"Teaching while Black" (Patton & Catching, 2009, p. 714) describes the racial experiences faced by African-American faculty in higher education. This metaphor was an extension of the phrase "driving while Black," indicating the profiling African-Americans endure for driving in areas where some people felt they did not belong. Teaching while Black refers to African-American faculty's racial profiling, often made to feel out of place and not qualified to teach in higher education (Patton & Catching, 2009). A cliché is that African-American faculty are underrepresented because they are underqualified (Knox, 2019). However, degree-earning statistics prove African-American faculty in the United States have the educational credentials needed to teach at higher education institutions (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018).

Considerable research on career advancement for African-American faculty in higher education showed insurmountable career obstacles and underrepresentation for many African-American faculty (Alexander & Moore, 2008a; 2008b; Grant & Ghee, 2015; Henry & Glenn, 2009). There is a dearth of African-American faculty, both male and female, in higher education institutions throughout the United States (Bartman, 2015; Knox, 2019). This study explored the career experiences of select African-American faculty employed at a university research institution in a southeastern U.S. state.

Edwards and Ross (2018) highlighted African-American faculty's concerns regarding their experiences at research-based PWIs throughout the United States, finding

that marginalization and isolation significantly affected the population's representation. This study involved exploring how African-American faculty members are underrepresented at a university research institution in a southeastern U.S. state, holding less than six percent of the faculty positions compared to the sixty percent held by Whites (Lite Report, 2019). Table 1 shows the 2018 percentages of Black and White faculty represented at the research institutions in the southeastern U.S. state (University System of Georgia, 2018).

Table 1

2018 Percentages of Black and White Faculty at Research Institutions in a Southeastern U.S. State

Institution	Black faculty (%)	White faculty (%)
Research institution 1	5.7	68.4
Research institution 2	2.6	65.4
Research institution 3	14.4	68.7
Research institution 4	4.9	70.9

Several researchers explored African-American male and female faculty's career experiences independently (Collins, 2001; Hazelwood, 2014; Heggins, 2004); however, this study addressed both genders' experiences to identify any discernable differences similarities in their career experiences. Despite incorporating both genders, however, there was a greater emphasis on the experiences of African-American female faculty, as many scholars argued that African-American women's experiences differed significantly from men's (Cropsey et al., 2008; Martinez, O'Brien, & Hebl, 2017; Wheeler & Freeman, 2018).

The purpose of this study was to determine if African-American university faculty members at a university research institution in a southeastern U.S. state encountered

barriers in their efforts to become university faculty members, and if they did, what strategies they used to overcome the barriers.

The following research questions guided the study:

RQ1: What were the life experiences of selected African-American university faculty members prior to becoming university faculty members at a university research institution in a southeastern U.S. state?

RQ2: What barriers, if any, did selected African-American university faculty members at a university research institution in a southeastern U.S. state encounter in their efforts to become university faculty members?

RQ3: If barriers were encountered, what strategies did select African-American university faculty members use to overcome the barriers at a university research institution in a southeastern U.S. state?

I addressed the historical underrepresentation of minorities in faculty positions at U.S. colleges and universities to identify barriers that had adversely affected the African-American faculty's career experiences. I was equally interested in determining any strategies African-American faculty used to overcome and succeed in higher education institutions. This study was significant in many ways. Through the experiences and identified barriers of African-American faculty, aspiring university faculty, university and college leaders, and university board members can gain important insight into their underrepresentation.

For decades, African-American faculty have faced racial disparities and institutional racism at PWIs in the United States (Dade, Tartakov, Hargrave, & Leigh, 2015; Supiano, 2015). Some African-American faculty find it challenging,

uncomfortable and intimidating to work at a PWI due to the lack of support and resources available for career success and growth (Wingfield, 2015). African-American faculty held less than ten percent of faculty positions at the university of study (USG by the Numbers, 2019). According to these statistics, a large percentage of African-American faculty have been marginalized and may continue to encounter discrimination as it relates to career opportunities, retention, growth, and inclusion in higher education (Dade et al., 2015; Wingfield, 2015). One way to clearly understand some African-American faculty encounter obstacles is to give them a platform to share their experiences. Stanley (2006) indicated it was imperative to give voice to African-American faculty regarding their experiences working in PWIs. In this study, I used a qualitative, narrative research approach, which allowed the selected participants to provide their perspectives based on their experiences as African-American faculty at a university research institution in a southeastern U.S. state. This methodological approach enabled participants to tell their stories through interviews and other data collection methods (Dade et al., 2015).

This study provided insight into the professional lives of African-American male and female faculty employed at a university research institution in a southeastern U.S. state through the analytical lens of CRT and BFT. The literature review began with a search of terms related to the study topic, used independently, and in various combinations. The terms were *African-American male and female faculty, predominantly White institutions, African-American female faculty career obstacles and strategies, history of African-American male and female faculty, White female faculty, marginalization, mentoring for African-American male and female faculty, diversity in higher education, recruitment and retention of African-American faculty, self-identity*,

and *critical mass*. The databases accessed were ERIC, PROQUEST, and GALILEO, with the academic search engine Google Scholar also used. The literature review covers the following topics: theoretical frameworks guiding this study; research method; African-American male and female faculty in higher education; career experiences of African-American faculty; barriers encountered by African-American faculty in higher education; success strategies used by African-American faculty; importance of African-American faculty; and recruitment, retention, and diversity in higher education.

Theoretical Frameworks

Critical Race Theory

CRT and BFT guided this study. Many African-Americans have experienced race and gender issues throughout their personal and professional lives, as indicated by these theories. CRT applies to both males and females, with BFT specific to the experiences of African-American females.

CRT emerged in the 1970s, created by a group of legal scholars from highly diverse backgrounds to focus on legal issues related to marginalized groups—specifically, African-Americans and the Civil Rights Movement (Patton et al., 2007). Believing there had not been significant progress in race relations for African-Americans due to the Civil Rights Movement, Taylor (1998) heralded CRT to dispute the dominant culture's ordinary customs. Taylor maintained that CRT "openly acknowledges that perceptions of truth, fairness, and justice reflect the mindset, status, and experience of the knower" (p. 122).

Not long after CRT's development, two of the scholars, Ladson-Billings and Tate, sought to highlight racism in higher education institutions specific to the experiences of

students and staff of color (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Patton et al., 2007). Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) were instrumental in identifying racism, oppression, and marginalization in higher education institutions. They developed CRT further to highlight these issues and bring them to the forefront.

Scholars understudied the experiences of African-American students and staff encountered in higher education institutions (Patton et al., 2007); thus, adding education to CRT was critical. As a result, people of color struggled with negative educational and employment experiences. Introducing education as a construct of CRT entailed developing three propositions to explain the issues. Two propositions supporting this study were "race continues to be a significant factor in determining inequity in the United States" and "understanding White property, privilege, and advantage" (Patton et al., 2007, p. 46). Ladson-Billings and Tate believed race was a contributing factor to African-Americans' inequities faced in higher education institutions, especially PWIs.

Several researchers have used CRT as a framework to highlight the issues encountered by African-American faculty (Levin, Walker, Haberler, & Jackson-Boothby, 2013; Patton & Catching, 2009; Stanley, 2006). Stanley (2006) conducted a qualitative narrative study using CRT to examine faculty of color's career experiences at PWIs. Participants were 27 faculty of color from various minority ethnic groups and several institutions who taught in various disciplines. Stanley proposed faculty of color had minimal opportunities to share their experiences and had, in many ways, been silenced. Based on the participants' narratives, Stanley identified six themes beneficial to recruiting and retaining faculty of color: teaching, mentoring, collegiality, identity, service, and racism.

Jayakumar, Howard, Allen, and Han (2009) adopted a quantitative approach using CRT to investigate African-American faculty's underrepresentation despite the growing populations of African-American students on PWI campuses. The distinct differences and experiences between African-American and White faculty showed that, although underrepresented, African-American faculty had more responsibilities than their White counterparts (Jayakumar, Howard, Allen, and Han, 2009; Louis et al., 2016). To understand the reasons for this underrepresentation, Jayakumar et al. (2009) surveyed over 37,000 faculty from about 400 higher education institutions to examine the variables of faculty retention, racial climate, background characteristics, institutional characteristics, college environments and experiences, and faculty beliefs, values, and attitudes. The findings indicated that racial climate had a potentially negative effect on African-American faculty growth and retention, with a likely positive effect on White faculty experiences. Jayakumar et al. also found similarities between both racial groups, with each reporting some satisfaction with salaries, freedom in their work environments, and the contribution of valuable research. Overall findings showed that to improve the racial climate within higher education institutions, African-American faculty needed to be a part of the transformation efforts organized to increase faculty recruitment and retention. Jayakumar et al. found that African-American faculty could transform PWIs in various ways, including serving as mentors and role models to students and nontenured faculty.

Black Feminist Thought

Patricia Hill Collins, a professor of African-American studies, devised BFT to examine the concerns of marginalization faced by African-American women in academia

(Grant, 2012; Howard-Hamilton, 2003). Collins (2004; 2007) found that oppression and marginalization were prominent in higher education institutions, specifically PWIs. Henry and Glenn (2009) used BFT to confirm similar experiences women encountered.

Grant (2012) identified four themes that supported BFT and validated the unique experiences of African-American women: (a) lived experience as a criterion of meaning, (b) use of dialogue, (c) ethic of caring, and (d) ethic of personal accountability. The first theme focused on the knowledge African-American women possess based on their lived experiences. The second theme indicates how African-American women should build relationships with like-minded individuals to communicate the commonalities in their experiences. According to the third theme, researchers should use compassion to understand the experiences faced by oppressed groups. Finally, the fourth theme shows that personal experiences, beliefs, and ideologies could influence the overall experiences of African-American women (Grant, 2012; Howard-Hamilton, 2003).

BFT shows that African-American women struggle to occupy spaces not necessarily intended for them (Howard-Hamilton, 2003). According to Crocco and Waite (2007), society did not feel African-American women could hold certain positions in higher education; instead, the women found their places in society restricted and minimized to servant-type roles rather than leadership positions. Howard-Hamilton (2003) noted this type of oppression and marginalization occurred for African-American women who worked at PWIs because they were not a part of the dominant group; it was difficult for people to submerge themselves in a culture into which they do not fit. Collins (2004) and Howard-Hamilton referred to the marginalization of African-American women as the outsider-within status. Wilder, Jones, and Osborne-Lampkin

(2013) highlighted many challenges, including invisibility and exclusion, encountered by African-American female faculty in higher education.

BFT is significant to study African-American females' experiences in PWIs (Grant, 2012; Grant & Ghee, 2015; Henry & Glenn, 2009). Grant (2012) conducted a qualitative study using BFT as a theoretical framework to explore the significance of mentoring for African-American female students in educational leadership. Grant felt BFT best supported the notion of the myriad obstacles African-American female faculty encountered in their attempts to obtain tenure-track positions. Grant argued that African-American women are outsiders in academia who remain overlooked. This invisibility, or outsider status, occurred due to the cultural differences between African-American women and the dominant group. Grant highlighted the experiences of African-American doctoral students who studied at PWIs and how mentoring could prepare them for faculty positions in higher education. The study was significant because it provided readers a clear interpretation of African-American women's experiences as they prepared for faculty positions. Grant used a narrative research approach and purposeful sampling. Study participants were African-American women who attended a PWI as students, had a desire to obtain faculty positions at a PWI, and had been recipients of mentoring as doctoral students. Findings from participant interviews indicated that mentoring was an important strategy and a "method of empowerment" (Grant, 2012, p. 108) for career growth for African-American women who wished to advance to tenure-track faculty positions at PWIs.

Grant and Ghee (2015) used a qualitative autoethnography approach and the framework of BFT to explore the effects of mentoring for African-American female

doctoral students who desired to teach in higher education institutions. The researchers also investigated how mentoring affected the career progression of an African-American female faculty member at the same university. Autoethnography is a practical design for gathering data on the life experiences of participants. BFT was an appropriate framework because it allowed African-American women to connect with other African-American women to see if they had encountered similar challenges in their careers. The findings indicated how influential mentoring was for African-American female doctoral students and faculty at PWIs. Grant and Ghee suggested that future researchers focus on strategies contributing to the successful recruitment and retention of African-American faculty at PWIs. The researchers also recommended that higher education institutions overhaul their mentorship programs.

Henry and Glenn (2009) conducted a qualitative study using both BFT and CRT as theoretical frameworks. The scholars addressed "the impact of systemic racism and the lack of critical mass on the success of Black women working in higher education settings, particularly in Predominantly White Institutions" (Henry & Glenn, 2009, p. 2). The study was specific to the underrepresentation of African-American women and the barriers they encountered at PWIs. Henry and Glenn provided both individual and institutional strategies to help African-American women overcome obstacles throughout their careers, including mentoring, spirituality, and professional organizations' involvement. The institutional strategies developed included connecting through programming and technology. The researchers pointed to a need for further study to identify strategies to minimize the challenges African-American women encountered in higher education institutions.

Research Method

This qualitative study helped gain a deeper understanding of African-American faculty's career experiences at a university research institution in a southeastern U.S. state. This study had a narrative research design and a counter-storytelling technique, with six African-American faculty given a platform to share their stories and career experiences. According to Grant and Simmons (2008), narratives can paint a clearer picture of participants' experiences. Requirements for participation were that individuals (a) were African-American with an earned doctorate, (b) had at least 2 years of faculty experience, and (c) were currently or previously employed at a university research institution in a southeastern U.S. state. I used semi structured interviews to gather rich data.

African-American Females Faculty in Higher Education

Education represents power and priority for African-American women (Crocco & Waite, 2007). Many obstacles prevented African-Americans' educational attainment and career success, particularly during the Jim Crow era (Crocco & Waite, 2007). In a 2001 study, Gregory found that several African-American women who earned doctorate degrees desired employment in education to have a platform for sharing their knowledge and experiences and demonstrating success to minority students. Due to their gender, many African-American women have found themselves ostracized and characterized as unworthy (Davis, Reynolds, & Jones, 2011).

Society has often marginalized African-American women, perceiving them as a threat (Seo & Hinton, 2009; Smith & Crawford, 2007). Seo and Hinton (2009) considered the prejudice and stereotypes African-American women faced through a myth

called Modern Mammy. Mammy has a negative connotation in the African-American community, suggesting subservient behavior. This image applied to African-American women who worked in higher education because, in most cases, women of color were in positions without power, often reporting directly to a White man or woman.

Sanchez-Hucles and Davis (2010) noted African-American women faced stereotypes and prejudices that prevented them from advancing in their careers. According to Seo and Hinton (2009), African-American female professionals had to be "tough, independent, smart, devoted, nurturing, caring, and a team player" (p. 207). Carroll (2017) indicated there had not been a significant change in employment opportunities for women of color for years, and obstacles remained in the way of their overall success.

Conversely, in their analysis of several studies, Crocco and Waite (2007) noted African-American women did not allow racism, sexism barriers, or limited opportunities to keep them from accomplishing their educational and career goals. According to Solomon (1985), there were limited options for women to receive a formal education, leading many to assume women were feeble-minded and incapable of attaining the same intellectual levels as men. In connection with slavery's outcome on the African-American community, this thinking served as motivation for African-Americans to pursue their education (Crocco & Waite, 2007).

The first woman of any race to earn a bachelor's degree in the United States did so in 1840 (*U.S. News & World Report*, 2009). In 1862, Mary Jane Patterson, a former slave, was the first African-American to graduate college, earning a bachelor's degree from Oberlin College and becoming a teacher (Edwards, Beverly, & Alexander-Snow,

2011; Garner, 2010). In 1866, Sarah Jane Woodson Early became the first African-American female professor at Wilberforce University in Ohio (Page, 2015). The first three PhDs awarded to African-American women were in 1928 and 1929 (Crocco & Waite, 2007). Among the notable achievements of African-American women in the early 20th century were attaining postsecondary degrees in education. Despite facing barriers to becoming professors, several African-American women became college and university deans due to their perseverance.

Women had made significant strides in obtaining formal education but still faced barriers to achieving their desired roles within the university setting (Featherman, 1993). African-American female faculty have had some career growth success, but they are still underrepresented in full-time and tenured faculty positions (Gregory, 2001). As education evolves and more women of color earn college degrees, it is critical for them to obtain faculty positions in higher education institutions because they serve as role models to African-American students (Bartman, 2015).

African-American Males Faculty in Higher Education

African-American male faculty representation has traditionally been scarce in higher education research institutions throughout the United States (Brooks & Steen, 2010; Heggins, 2004). There was little growth in the percentage of African-American faculty until the 1970s, following an increased demand for African-American studies and the requirements of newly enacted federal laws (Heggins, 2004). According to Brooks and Steen (2010), the low African-American male faculty presence warranted further exploration.

Before 1849, African-American males did not have the opportunity to teach at any of the highest-ranked U.S. colleges and universities (Slater, 1998). Prior to the Civil War, most colleges and universities were PWIs restricted from hiring African-Americans to teach. Even after the Civil War, the highest-ranking U.S. PWIs continued to deny faculty positions to several notable African-American males. The exclusion of African-American male faculty from PWIs came to an end in 1849, when Charles Reason became the first African-American man at New York Central College. There was almost a 20-year gap before the next African-American male received a tenured faculty position at a PWI centuries (Slater, 1998).

African-American male faculty have faced racial exclusion for centuries (Slater, 1998). Slater hypothesized it would take hundreds of years before the percentage of African-American male faculty at the highest-ranked U.S. PWIs would rise above the national average of African-American faculty, which was about five percent. The latest data from NCES (2018) showed that just under five percent of faculty nationwide were African-American men, perpetuating their underrepresentation.

Turner and Grauerholz (2017) used qualitative research to explore the invisibility of African-American male faculty in PWIs, taking an in-depth look at 10 African-American men's career experiences at a large research institution. The men reported feeling isolated from other Black male professionals. Participants said they had their credentials consistently questioned and their positions of authority challenged or ignored. Finally, the participating African-American male faculty had experienced tokenism and the cultural taxation associated with it. Overall, the participants felt like racism was a large factor in their experiences.

Career Experiences of African-American Faculty

Researchers have long recognized the severe shortage of African-American faculty employed at U.S. colleges and universities (Gregory, 2001; Henry & Glenn, 2009; Hughes & Howard-Hamilton, 2003; Turner, 2003). According to the NCES (2018), African-Americans held less than ten percent of all faculty positions, with seventy percent of roles held by Whites. These statistics indicated growth from the early 1990s, when African-American faculty possessed less than two percent of full-time teaching positions at degree-granting institutions; even so, there has been little progress for African-American faculty in higher education (Gregory, 2001; Louis & Freeman, 2018). Tables 2 and 3 show the faculty positions held by both African-American and White faculty in higher education institutions, according to the 2018 NCES report.

Table 2

Percentages of Women in Faculty Positions in Degree-Granting Higher Education Institutions From 2018

Type of position	Total	White females	Black females
Professors	62,189	49,029	2,914
Associate professors	73,053	53,139	4,914
Assistant professors	94,746	61,708	7,294
Instructors	55,875	39,492	4,609
Lecturers	25,078	18,171	1,216
Other faculty	77,589	47,038	5,450
Total	388,530	268,577	26,397

Table 3

Percentages of Men in Faculty Positions in Degree-Granting Higher Education Institutions From 2018

Type of position	Total	White males	Black males
Professors	123,569	96,178	4,091
Associate professors	86,082	61,665	4,282
Assistant professors	86,493	53,673	4,334
Instructors	42,923	30,679	2,616
Lecturers	19,891	14,637	904
Other faculty	84,631	47,177	3,124
Total	443,589	304,009	19,351

Barriers of African-American Faculty at PWIs

Becks-Moody (2004) stated, "Laws such as Title VII, The Equal Pay Act, Title IX, The Equal Opportunities Amendment, and policies related to Affirmative Action were enacted to ensure women and minorities were fairly considered for employment and educational opportunities" (p. 1). However, as early as 1974, researchers have shown the underrepresentation, racial disparities, and barriers African-American faculty members encounter throughout their careers while working at PWIs (Alexander & Moore, 2008a; Edwards, Clark, & Bryant, 2012; Higginbottham, 1981; Moore & Wagstaff, 1974; Turner, Myers, & Creswell, 1999). Historically, due to personal and institutional racism, African-American faculty have faced unique barriers to success in higher education institutions, specifically PWIs (Grant & Simmons, 2008; Griffin, Pifer, Humphrey, & Hazelwood, 2011).

An analysis of several studies provided substantial evidence to show how race and gender barriers created significant limitations on career trajectory and productivity for African-American faculty employed at PWIs (Eagan & Garvey, 2015; Scott, 2013;

Shavers & Moore, 2014; Wilson, 1989). Turner et al. (1999) identified six barriers affecting the career trajectory of African-American faculty. These were: isolation and lack of mentoring, occupational stress, devaluation of minority research, the token hire, racial and ethnic bias in recruiting and hiring, and racial and ethnic bias in tenure and promotion practices and policies.

African-American female faculty have struggled at PWIs because of race, gender, and negative perceptions of their value to higher education institutions (Harley, 2008). Cruz-Soto (2017) found that African-American male faculty at PWIs struggled with isolation, invisibility, and race. Heggins (2004) highlighted how African-American male faculty faced different challenges than White male faculty, including isolation and a limited number of African-American faculty with whom they could connect. Killough, Killough, Walker, and Williams (2017) found that although the number of African-American students has increased, there are not many African-American faculty at PWIs to welcome them. The researchers noted that African-Americans represented less than six percent of faculty at PWIs but eleven percent of students. Killough et al. also found a lack of employment opportunities and retention for African-American faculty because of the unwelcoming environment at many PWIs.

As shown in the literature, African-American faculty members face multiple barriers in their attempts to attain career growth in higher education. Some scholars have attributed the limited number of African-American faculty in higher education institutions to decisions to leave higher education to pursue other career opportunities (Ellinas, Fouad, & Byars-Winston, 2018; Gardner, 2012; Ginther & Kahn, 2004; Martinez et al., 2017). Gardner (2012) conducted a mixed-methods study at one

university to identify the causes of female faculty attrition. Out of the thirty-four percent of faculty who were women, almost nineteen percent of them left compared to less than two percent of male faculty. Interviews with 11 participants showed that women departed their higher education careers for various reasons, including the organization's overall climate, lack of support and resources, and the challenge of balancing work and family responsibilities.

Martinez et al. (2017) conducted a mixed-methods study to examine the gender differences in faculty turnover at PWIs. Their sample comprised 498 faculty from six institutions who voluntarily left their colleges and universities to pursue career opportunities in and outside academia. The three factors of turnover explored were harassment/discrimination, family-related issues, and recruitment and retention offers. Although both genders encountered problems that led to their departure, their experiences were different. Martinez et al. found that although male faculty had negative experiences, female faculty expressed more discrimination, lack of work-life balance, and retention.

Trower (2001) claimed women left their higher education positions because they encountered more challenges than men specific to balancing family and career responsibilities. Trower proposed that women had a greater responsibility for balancing their home and work lives. Many female faculty chose not to pursue tenure-track positions because of the time commitment needed to succeed in their academic careers. Another common reason female faculty avoided tenure positions was the need for flexibility.

Critical Mass

A common barrier associated with the success of African-American faculty at PWIs was the lack of critical mass (Hughes & Howard-Hamilton, 2003; Stanley, 2006; Trower & Chait, 2002). Critical mass occurs when there is a significant representation of a specific population or ethnic group (Johnson, 2011). Wilder et al. (2013) and Davis et al. (2011) identified an absence of critical mass of African-American faculty at higher education institutions. Dade et al. (2015) argued critical mass affected the success or failure of African-American faculty. According to Hughes and Howard-Hamilton (2003), African-American faculty members had a more positive work environment when they did not feel isolated on college campuses. Davis et al. (2011) noted that a lack of critical mass minimized same-race mentoring opportunities for African-American faculty. Gasman, Kim, and Nguyen (2011) contended critical mass could involve White members of the university culture who were committed to diversity and inclusion of African-American faculty and what they offered to the university's success. In addition to helping faculty members succeed, critical mass was equally vital for students (Johnson, 2011).

From a feminist perspective, Henry and Glenn (2009) suggested universities needed to employ more African-American women to help other African-American women succeed. African-American women struggled without the necessary support of Black female faculty. Henry and Glenn suggested a critical mass shortage of African-American females in higher education institutions; thus, African-American women lacked support networks, which could help them achieve their desired career goals. Along similar lines, Bartman (2015) asserted that university leaders and hiring personnel

should implement new approaches to create a welcoming environment for African-American women and address the lack of critical mass.

Marginalization

Affirmative action policies were a means to provide equal employment opportunities for underrepresented minority groups, focusing on women (Affirmative Action Overview, 2014). Even with the implementation of these policies, some scholars have found little change for African-American faculty members in higher education, who remain underrepresented and marginalized (Castro & Corral, 1993; Turner et al., 1999). Alfred (2001) speculated marginalization and segregation would always be a part of African-American faculty's experiences in most PWIs. Allen, Epps, Guillory, Suh, and Bonous-Hammarth (2000) feared that the underrepresentation of African-American faculty, both male and female, might worsen over time, as these populations would remain sparse in higher education. Thus, some African-American faculty struggle and remain marginalized in their quest to achieve career success at PWIs in the United States (Allison, 2008; Castro & Corral, 1993). Although African-American faculty continue to invest in their education to be competitive in academia, many of them remain invisible and undervalued, unable to accomplish their career goals (Turner et al., 1999).

Wingfield (2015) noted that African-American faculty had been encountering the same obstacles and barriers faced by W.E.B. Dubois throughout his career, which included "exclusion, marginalization, and the consistent message that, as a black person, he was not suited for the academy and that his ideas were unwelcome" (p. 3). Griffin (2012) suggested that African-American faculty had to balance multiple responsibilities, including their research, limiting opportunities for tenured faculty positions. Tasked with

various duties, African-American faculty sometimes struggled to focus on their research, leading administrators to overlook them for promotions (Griffin, 2012; Shealey, McHatton, McCray, & Thomas, 2014). Allison (2008) argued it was challenging for African-American faculty to succeed because they became overcommitted with the additional responsibilities added to their workload. In many instances, African-American faculty at PWIs needed to perform duties well beyond teaching, including counseling and advising students and adjunct faculty and overseeing student clubs and university committees (Wingfield, 2015). Tuitt, Hanna, Martinez, del Carmen Salazar, and Griffin (2009) identified the marginalization of African-American faculty employed at PWIs who often found themselves judged when they researched topics focused on other marginalized groups or race.

African-American faculty of both genders are subject to marginalization; however, some scholars argued that women faced more difficulties (Allison, 2008; Crocco & Waite, 2007; Diggs, Garrison-Wade, Estrada, & Galindo, 2009). Many African-American women who work in higher education have struggled to obtain prestigious, high-paying jobs because White men, White women, and men from other races occupied those positions (Smith & Crawford, 2007). Patitu and Hinton (2003) found that African-American women continue to encounter issues, with little improvement over the years. Findings from the present study showed how African-American women have struggled and competed for faculty positions in higher education yet remained a marginalized group.

It is difficult for African-American women to succeed in settings where they are not the dominant culture because administrators do not consider them strong enough to

have a voice within the organization (Howard-Hamilton, 2003). According to Jackson (2008), it was not uncommon for African-American women to find themselves overlooked and required to work in environments without the tools they needed to be successful. Bilimoria, Joy, and Liang (2008) suggested that organizations needed to make significant changes to create a more positive work climate for African-American women if marginalization is to subside. Developing new policies and procedures promoting diversity could provide more visibility for African-American women.

Crocco and Waite (2007) discussed a 1942 study by Marion Cuthbert, which suggested some African-American women were responsible for their marginalization and encountering specific barriers. According to Cuthbert, individuals' perceptions and confidence in their abilities, based on personal experiences and challenges, created a mindset of marginalization. One suggestion by Evans (2007) was for universities to develop mandatory employee workshops focusing on race so individuals could have a deeper understanding of the importance of diversity and abide by the standards set forth by the institution. Tuitt et al. (2009) argued that to welcome and support African-American faculty, PWIs needed to create institutional change, develop new processes to benefit African-American faculty's overall experiences, and demonstrate their commitment to creating an inclusive environment.

Strategies Used by African-American Faculty

This section presents success strategies used by African-American faculty in higher education. There is a discussion of the importance of self-identity and the need for mentoring.

Self-Identity of African-American Faculty

African-American faculty members must deal with race and gender issues as employees of higher education institutions (Harris, 2007; Mathews & Johnson, 2015). In addition, they struggle with defining their individuality (Diggs et al., 2009). Levin et al. (2013) conducted a qualitative study using CRT and social identity theory to explore the double consciousness—what they called the divided self—of minority faculty in community colleges and how personal and professional identities affected minority faculty's experiences. Participants were 36 faculty of color from four community colleges. The research questions guiding the study were: (a) What are the narratives of community college faculty of color that both describe and explain their experiences in and understanding of their institution as faculty of color? (b) In what ways do faculty of color articulate "double consciousness"? (c) What evidence is there in the narratives of faculty of color of depersonalization or a condition of divided self? and (d) What do these narratives tell us about the social and professional identities of faculty of color? Through participant storytelling, Levin et al. identified the presence of double consciousness, which led to depersonalizing individual identities for career success. Lewin et al. argued that "depersonalization leads to a divided self" (p. 324) and caused faculty to struggle with which identity to use.

They also found it was difficult for faculty of color to develop professional identities due to institutional barriers. Students need the presence of African-American faculty; therefore, Levin et al. concluded it was imperative for faculty of color to understand their personal and professional identities and develop strategies to succeed. Laden and Hagedorn (2000) discussed how faculty used multiple identities to adapt to the

culture at higher education institutions where they were the minority. They suggested the identities of faculty of color were similar to the Greek god Janus, who has two faces or sides. In the first face, African-American faculty displayed fulfillment and contentment in their careers and organizational climate, whereas the second face showed discontentment and dissatisfaction. Faculty of color might need to shift their identity to interact with other cultures and achieve success in academia (Harris, 2007; Jackson, 2008; Laden & Hagedorn, 2000). It is difficult for marginalized groups to succeed in higher education when not granted the same membership benefits and opportunities as the dominant culture (Laden & Hagedorn, 2000).

African-American faculty have adopted coping strategies and mechanisms to survive and succeed in dominant cultures (Harris, 2007). It is vital for faculty to find a balance, preventing the dominant culture's stereotypes and behaviors from defining who they are. Despite a keen awareness of the microaggressions at PWIs, African-American faculty make conscious efforts to change their behaviors to avoid additional attention or ridicule from their White counterparts (Louis et al., 2016).

Mentoring

Several researchers have found African-American faculty using mentoring as a strategy to combat the barriers affecting career growth at U.S. colleges and universities (Diggs et al., 2009; Grant & Simmons, 2008; Heggins, 2004; Henderson, Hunter, & Hildreth, 2010; Holmes, Land, & Hinton-Hudson, 2007; Tillman, 2001; Walkington, 2017). Mentoring is a strategy that falls under the theoretical framework of BFT (Henderson et al., 2010; Walkington, 2017). Henderson et al. (2010) conveyed this commonality:

> The combined use of Black Feminist Thought and peer mentoring supports and values equity, provides an opportunity for the engaged parties to respect each other's individual power, expertise, and knowledge, and allows one to address the intersecting realities of the Black women's experience within the academy and beyond. (p. 34)

Henderson et al. (2010) posited that mentoring leads to better career opportunities and longevity for African-American female faculty. Using BFT as the theoretical framework, Holmes et al. (2007) described various benefits of mentoring. Building reciprocal relationships with colleagues in similar roles provides access to information otherwise unavailable. Mentees could benefit from having a confidant, a person with whom to share professional concerns who can facilitate admittance to more extensive networks. Holmes et al. used purposeful sampling to identify 11 African-American female faculty who taught at PWIs. Data collected from one-on-one interviews were sufficient to answer three research questions: (a) What is it like being a Black woman at a predominantly White institution? (b) Describe your mentoring experiences; and (c) What suggestions would you give to other tenure-track faculty women related to mentoring that might assist them in preparing for promotion and tenure? Their findings showed a significant need for mentoring among graduate students and faculty involved in the tenure process. Holmes et al. concluded that mentoring could be an effective strategy for retaining African-American faculty who teach within PWIs.

All faculty can benefit from mentoring. However, Henderson et al. (2010) emphasized the importance of mentoring African-American women faculty at PWIs due to the barriers they faced due to the intersection of being Black and female in higher

education institutions. Grant and Simmons (2008) conducted a qualitative study using CRT as a theoretical framework to explore the importance of mentoring for African-American doctoral students and faculty who experienced barriers in PWIs. They used experience narratives to explore one African-American female doctoral student's life experiences and one African-American female faculty member at separate PWIs. The purpose of the study was to answer two research questions: (a) How does mentoring affect African-American female doctoral students and African-American female tenure-track professors' success at PWIs? and (b) What specific factors around the mentoring experiences of an African-American female doctoral student and an African-American female tenure-track are most influential to their success at PWIs? Grant and Simmons (2008) hypothesized that mentoring African-American female faculty should extend beyond a simple pairing with African-American female mentors. To provide African-American female faculty the opportunity to develop mentoring relationships with both genders and other cultural groups, Grant and Simmons suggested PWIs create unique experiences and diverse mentorship programs. Based on the findings, the researchers identified a need for innovative mentoring techniques to address the obstacles African-American female faculty encountered at PWIs.

Louis and Freeman (2018) centered on the importance of mentoring for African-American male faculty members at PWIs. In a qualitative scholarly personal narrative study using CRT with a counter-storytelling approach, Louis and Freeman explored the effectiveness of mentoring for two African-American men who transitioned from student affairs to faculty positions. The researchers noted the underrepresentation of African-American male faculty and how mentoring was important in new instructors'

matriculation. Louis and Freeman supported CRT as the most appropriate theory to explore the social constructs of race and its effects on the environments of underrepresented groups. Based on the participants' narratives, four themes emerged: (a) mentors as sources of social capital, (b) accessibility of mentors, (c) surprising development of a cross-cultural mentoring relationship, (d) importance to mentor Black males. Even though both participants had White female faculty mentors, they felt it was imperative for African-American males to have mentors of the same gender and race. The participants assigned equal importance to "attain[ing] social capital and professional skills" from mentors of various cultures (Louis & Freeman, 2018, p. 32). Louis and Freeman claimed mentoring was one of the most valuable strategies of career development and success, suggesting that leadership should be a more significant component of the African-American man's mentorship process. Moreover, they recommended more departmental dialogue regarding the experiences of African-American male faculty.

According to Lynch-Alexander (2017), universities need to look beyond developing a mentorship program, being more strategic and innovative to increase support opportunities for minority faculty. Bartman (2015) noted that, in many cases, African-American faculty sought individuals from other cultural groups for mentorship due to a severe shortage of African-American female faculty in academia.

Importance of African-American Faculty

The presence of diverse faculty in U.S. higher education institutions is essential to student development and overall campus climate (American Council on Education, 2012; Bartman, 2015; Trolian, Jach, Hanson, & Pascarella, 2016). The more than 2.5 million

African-American students enrolled in U.S. higher education institutions in 2018 found a limited number of African-American faculty (The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education, 2018). Student populations at U.S. colleges and universities continue to become more diverse, indicating the importance of diverse faculty (Van Ummersen, 2005). Allen, Epps, et al. (2000) surmised the lack of African-American faculty could affect overall degree completion rates for African-American students. Moreover, researchers indicated that such a dramatic imbalance between diverse faculty and diverse students could affect student learning outcomes (Van Ummersen, 2005).

Carroll (2017) conducted an autobiographical study of the micro-invalidations she encountered as an African-American female faculty member at a PWI. The guiding theoretical framework was CRT and institutional betrayal theory. Carroll argued African-American female faculty made significant contributions to higher education institutions worldwide through their academic work, service to students, and dedication to the institution as a whole. Regardless of these contributions, African-American female faculty continued to be underrepresented and isolated. Institutional betrayal occurs when an institution commits or allows misconduct against individuals who expect to be protected and supported as a member of the institution (Freyd, 2013). Carroll (2017) provided recommendations to improve the climate for African-American female faculty. First, because institutional betrayal is endemic to U.S. colleges and universities, it requires understanding within the context of interest convergence. Second, change is not possible until schools view institutional betrayal as a harmful social construct. Third, Carroll identified intersectionality and anti-essentialism as essential for any intervention to remove racism and betrayal from a college campus. Fourth, the researcher argued for

the promotion of the unique voices of faculty women of color. Overall, Carroll suggested institutions needed to create a diverse environment in which African-American female faculty could be successful.

In their report on faculty diversity, the American Federation of Teachers (AFT; 2010) suggested the scholarly investigation of cultural diversity led to favorable learning experiences for students. Madyun, Williams, McGee, and Milner (2013) highlighted one of the authors' experience, as Williams discussed the limited number of African-American faculty she encountered while attending college. Most influential was an African-American female professor who served as a role model and encouraged Williams to pursue a career in academia.

Kerby (2012) noted diversity on campuses benefited students of color and allowed all cultures to learn from a diverse faculty. Patitu and Hinton (2003) argued African-American women are valuable to higher education because of the wealth of knowledge and experiences they can offer, particularly when serving as examples and role models for African-American students. Patitu and Hinton contended African-American female faculty played a vital role in developing White students, allowing them to go beyond the fallacies to see and experience African-American women's intelligence. Tuitt et al. (2009) also noted African-American faculty had a significant influence on the overall student experience.

Four African-American professors who have taught at PWIs, Madyun et al. (2013) explored the importance of African-American faculty in higher education. They emphasized the need for faculty of color to create a culturally competent learning environment for students. Madyun et al. suggested that African-American faculty's

visibility could inspire and encourage students to embrace intercultural competence, defined as the capability to connect and interact with other cultures. Despite a significant increase in African-American student enrollment, there continues to be a limited number of African-American faculty employed in higher education institutions. Growth in the diversity of faculty in higher education, specifically African-American female faculty, was minimal.

Madyun et al. (2013) focused on the need for students to embrace different cultures and the contributions African-American faculty brought to the overall learning experience. They also posited that African-American faculty's presence and contributions could prepare all students for success in a multicultural world. Each of the authors shared her experiences as African-American female faculty at a PWI, providing strategies and recommendations for both students and faculty to recruit more faculty of color. To support their idea of developing intercultural competence, Madyun et al. highlighted two theoretical frameworks—" self-authorship and cultural capital" (p. 70)—providing a deeper understanding of faculty and students' roles. Self-authorship occurs when individuals develop their ideologies of the world instead of submissively agreeing to outside interpretations (Madyun et al., 2013, p. 70). Developed in 1977, the cultural capital theory pertains to individuals' abilities to identify how they will benefit from any given situation.

Madyun et al. (2013) believed faculty and students could use their personal experiences to understand the importance of African-American faculty and their value to the academic landscape. The researchers recommended institutions commit to diversifying their faculty by hiring and retaining more African-American instructors.

Madyun et al. conveyed the need for intercultural competence training, providing the faculty with tools to better understand how to communicate and identify individuals' needs from other cultures. Finally, the researchers suggested that support from other campus departments, such as student services, could be advantageous to faculty.

Goldstein Hode, Behm-Morawitz, and Hays (2018) conducted a mixed-methods study to examine the influence of culturally competent learning environments for students from various ethnic backgrounds. They used transformative learning theory to frame their research, focusing on the learning environment and outcomes in an online environment. The sample of 162 participants enrolled in a free, online, 4-week course. The three research questions were: (a) Do participants show an increased belief in the value of diversity in an educational institution? (b) Do participants show an increased understanding of social privilege? and (c) To what extent do participants report an increased openness toward learning about people from different identity groups and cultures? The purpose of the study was to gain faculty perspectives about the effectiveness of an online diversity course. The findings indicated a need for faculty participation in diversity courses to learn more about the importance of cultural competence and how it could enhance students' learning experience.

Several scholars have highlighted the unique viewpoints female faculty bring to the classroom (Diggs et al., 2009; Johnson, 2011; Madyun et al., 2013). Johnson (2011) examined the significance of a diverse faculty in law schools, finding that female faculty served as role models for female students. Evans (2007) analyzed African-American female faculty's underrepresentation in the United States, exploring their experiences during the tenure process. At the beginning of the 21st century, there were more than

170,000 full-time tenured faculty, with less than two percent representing minority women (Evans, 2007). Universities that hired more tenured African-American faculty created more meaningful educational experiences for students; thus, Evans encouraged universities to create inclusive and diverse campuses by recruiting more students and faculty of color, thus changing the campus culture. Evans advocated for a campus-wide collaborative effort to increase awareness of the benefits provided by a diverse faculty.

Jones and Osborne-Lampkin (2013) explored Black female faculty's success and the professional development they received early in their careers. The researchers used purposeful sampling to recruit seven women for a focus group interview. Three conceptual themes emerged from the data: community, confidence, and action. Jones and Osborne-Lampkin encouraged universities to create a safe space for African-American scholars, to allow them to build self-confidence through their research, and to develop a roadmap for successful growth in their academic careers. They recommended adequate training to help African-American faculty succeed in the classroom. The researchers also asserted that increasing African-American representation on college campuses could help create a healthier campus environment, in turn, boosting the recruitment of minority students.

Organizational Culture and Policies

Gasman et al. (2011) suggested the underrepresentation of African-American faculty was a direct result of the recruitment strategies used. Gregory (1998) noted that the low percentages of African-American faculty extended beyond recruitment strategies to include retention strategies. Diggs et al. (2009) claimed that although recruitment and retention were ongoing for colleges and universities, African-American faculty remained

underrepresented at PWIs. In this section, I explored the recruitment and retention of African-American faculty.

The Recruitment of African-American Faculty

Although African-Americans were earning more advanced degrees qualifying them to teach in higher education, their credentials had not afforded them the same growth opportunities as their White counterparts, especially not at prestigious PWIs across the United States (Trower & Chait, 2002). Due to the ongoing underrepresentation of African-American faculty, historical policies, such as affirmative action, did not significantly change African-American faculty's academic career landscape, especially those who are women (Trower & Chait, 2002). Rather, African-American faculty growth remained stagnant, with an increase of less than one percent from 1995 to 1997.

Diggs et al. (2009) conducted a qualitative study using CRT to analyze the tenure process for three African-American faculty and their mentor, a tenured African-American faculty member. They used purposeful sampling to select focus group participants, with the following research questions guiding their study: (a) What do the participants identify as supports for and the barriers to them during the tenure process? (b) How do faculty of color process and experience the diversity and equity activities of PU and the Department of Education? and (c) How do diversity and equity activities contribute to the professional growth and development of participating faculty of color? Although the institution supported African-American faculty, Diggs et al. found the climate was not diverse and did not provide many opportunities or events supporting the minority faculty. U.S. higher education institutions continued to face obstacles in recruiting African-

American faculty. Therefore, Diggs et al. recommended more research to better understand African-Americans' experiences throughout the recruitment process. This study provided compelling evidence and support for how marginalization, racism, and sexism constrained African-American faculty recruitment and tenure process.

Some PWI leaders have attributed their low numbers of African-American faculty to a limited candidate pool of qualified candidates (Trower & Chait, 2002; Turner et al., 1999; Wingfield, 2015). Wingfield (2015) declared this an excuse because African-American faculty hold similar positions at HBCUs. In contrast, Kelly, Gayles, and Williams (2017) identified poor institutional climate as the reason for limited African-American faculty recruitment.

Kelly et al. (2017) used CRT to frame a study on African-American faculty retention practices a prominent PWI research institution in the United States. They identified several recruitment initiatives, which had no effect on the faculty turnover rate. Across two focus groups, 19 participants attributed their hiring to aggressive recruitment efforts; however, they had to prove their abilities upon hire. Kelly et al. also found the faculty did not stay at the university due to lack of support. The researchers recommended that PWIs work toward diversification to increase the representation of African-American faculty.

Beyond the discussions by university leadership regarding the importance of faculty diversity have been student conversations. African-American students have been frustrated with the invisibility of African-American faculty at PWIs, often using their right to protest to get university leadership's attention (Gumpertz, Durodoye, Griffith, & Wilson, 2017; June, 2015; Kelly et al., 2017). Efforts to recruit faculty of color became a

priority for many colleges and universities as the benefits of diversity were no longer a subject of debate (Gasman et al., 2011).

The Retention of African-American Faculty

For decades, faculty retention has been a substantial concern in colleges and universities across the United States (Lynch-Alexander, 2017). African-American faculty experience more frequent turnover in academia than do instructors of other races (Lynch-Alexander, 2017). Universities should focus as much attention on minority faculty retention as they do on minority student retention.

Factors traditionally affecting African-American faculty retention are marginalization, isolation, overall experience, and inadequate resources (Alire, 2001; Jones et al., 2015; Tuitt et al., 2009). African-American faculty often experience considerable obstacles in their pursuit to become tenured faculty, specifically at PWIs (Alire, 2001; Jones et al., 2015). Griffin (2012) suggested the obstacles African-American female faculty encountered were much different than those faced by their White female counterparts or other minority groups. Consequently, many chose to leave higher education to pursue other career opportunities (Timmons, 2012).

Using a sample of 166 medical school faculty, Cropsey et al. (2008) examined attrition and retention among African-American faculty who attended medical school. Their analysis confirmed the underrepresentation and stunted growth of African-American faculty over more than two decades. Cropsey et al. alerted universities to the negative institutional environments driving many scholars from their education jobs. The reasons identified for faculty leaving academia were chairmen/departmental leadership issues (30.8%), career/professional advancement (29.8%), low salary (25.0%), and

personal reasons (25.0%). The severe underrepresentation of minority faculty has required many colleges and universities to dedicate more time, energy, and resources to hiring African-American faculty; however, school leaders often did not realize the importance of retaining these personnel (Piercy et al., 2005).

To enhance the teaching experiences of minority faculty, Piercy et al. (2005) recommended universities dedicate time to develop programs and provide realistic opportunities and strategies to encourage retention. By developing recruitment and retention programs for African-American faculty, universities can improve campus diversity (Piercy et al., 2005). Piercy et al. piloted the Benchmarking Retention Project to analyze underrepresented faculty experiences who were not tenured. Project participants were 15 leaders from some of the highest-ranked universities in the United States, with interviews conducted to collect data. Piercy et al. recommended adopting strategies and practices to improve retention programs for minority faculty, including committed and sustained mentorship, the development of a supportive and collegial community, leadership opportunities, participation in program planning, a means to lodge and address complaints, and inclusiveness in retention programs.

Alire (2001) found a significant problem with student and faculty retention at Colorado State University, where the lack of African-American faculty directly correlated with the limited African-American student presence. Although the institute had systems to enhance minority student recruitment, there were no efforts to recruit and retain faculty of color. As a commitment to diversity and retention of minority faculty, Alire developed the New Beginnings Program to keep African-American faculty in junior faculty positions. This free, volunteer program's objective was to provide resources and

strategies to promote success and encourage African-American faculty to remain at the institution. Alire recruited senior-level African-American faculty to serve as mentors to the junior-level faculty. In addition to providing support in academic areas, the senior-level faculty were responsible for educating the junior faculty on the tenure-track process. Beyond the program's success, Alire suggested PWIs needed to understand the barriers African-American faculty encountered. With this knowledge, university leaders could create programs to promote inclusiveness and provide support.

Diversity in Higher Education

Diversity in education has been a much-debated topic since the end of World War II, especially in the 1960s, when African-Americans fought for equal rights (AFT, 2010; McMurtrie, 2016). The AFT (2010) argued that diversity on college campuses was essential. Similarly, Evans (2007) noted that diversity created a healthy and robust campus environment. AFT proposed that growth in minority graduate students was needed to address the lack of minority faculty. Collins and Johnson (1988) expressed similar concerns about the limited availability of qualified minority faculty due to the lack of minority students in colleges.

Students will assume the roles of faculty members in the future (Evans, 2007). Limited minority faculty significantly affects the development of a multicultural curriculum across several subject areas (Collins & Johnson, 1988). Alire (2001) argued that the recruitment and retention of minority faculty directly affected the recruitment and retention of minority students. According to the AFT (2010), having a representation of minority faculty and student groups on college campuses was essential, benefiting the entire college experience. Mayhew, Grunwald, and Dey (2006) recommended leaders at

higher education institutions make diversity a priority for their campuses. McMurtrie (2016) indicated campus diversity and inclusivity influenced the entire university population, including students, staff, and faculty.

In recent years, university leaders have refocused their attention on creating more diverse environments for students, faculty, and staff by reviewing their campus climates and taking significant steps to improve their diversity initiatives (Gasman et al., 2011). The ACE (2012) shared four reasons diversity was vital for colleges and universities, as it (a) enriched the educational experience, (b) promoted personal growth and a healthy society, (c) strengthened communities and the workplaces, and (d) enhanced America's economic competitiveness. ACE asserted that universities and colleges would fail if diversity was not a priority.

Patitu and Hinton (2003) found the need for universities to hire and retain more African-American women for several reasons, including diversity and new perspectives. Patitu and Hinton claimed a diverse population of employees could increase the level of diversity in the student population. Likewise, Hylton (2012) encouraged universities to become more diverse and increase the number of African-American female employees. Edwards et al. (2012) examined the African-American female faculty representation in schools of social work at PWIs in the United States, finding that African-American female faculty represented less than one percent of full-time faculty. Edwards et al. contended that the School of Social Work's overall purpose was to create a diverse environment, promoting wellness and a better quality of life for employees and students alike. However, the schools' purpose did not align with their commitment to diversity.

Development of Diversity Initiatives

Toward the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st, many college and university leaders made efforts to create more diverse campuses by hiring additional minority faculty, including African-American women (AFT, 2010; Collins & Johnson, 1988; Gasman et al., 2011; Kayes, 2006). Carroll (2017) conveyed the need to create a safe and welcoming climate for African-American female faculty because their presence leads to student success. The researcher encouraged universities to change the faculty landscape to increase African-American female faculty's representation and avoid hiring only White male faculty.

Due to the changing demographics in U.S. society, many university diversity departments created opportunities for the campus community to become aware of factors affecting various ethnic and minority groups (Piercy et al., 2005). Collins and Johnson (1988) highlighted significant strides made by Eastern Michigan University to recruit more diverse faculty. Leaders at Eastern Michigan realized the use of Affirmative Action hiring practices did not yield the desired results, as officials were still hiring significant numbers of White faculty. Eastern Michigan adopted new methods to create a more diverse instructor population. Kayes (2006) suggested colleges and universities increase diversity in their hiring practices by providing adequate training to their search committees, educating them on recruiting diverse faculty. To create more growth opportunities for African-American female faculty, Carroll (2017) and Killough et al. (2017) emphasized the need for higher education institutions to develop more retention strategies. Kayes (2006) argued university leaders at PWIs continuously discussed plans and developed initiatives to hire more minority faculty; however, to achieve this

objective, they had to recognize the biases and stereotypes affecting how search committees made hiring decisions.

To enhance diversity on college campuses, Evans (2007) suggested that higher education institutions develop programs to create effective hiring processes for African-American female faculty. Evans recommended consultation with outside organizations that addressed race and gender relations to create a more diverse work environment. Similarly, Tuitt et al. (2009) emphasized the importance of university leadership making a conscious effort to develop programs to address African-American faculty's needs and gain a greater understanding of these faculty's overall teaching experiences and the hurdles they encountered. Although Tuitt et al. identified a need for university leadership to create more minority faculty programs, they believed minority faculty were equally responsible for promoting inclusivity and identifying strategies and resources to enhance their teaching experience.

Chapter Summary

This literature review addressed the barriers some African-American faculty have encountered at PWIs, highlighting proven success strategies for retaining and promoting African-American faculty. There is a significant concern regarding the ethical dilemmas affecting African-American faculty in U.S. colleges and universities (Wood, 2008). The presence, or lack thereof, of African-American faculty, has long been a prominent issue in higher education (Antonio, 2002; Louis et al., 2016). African-American faculty face challenges to career progression, including oppression, discrimination, sexism, prejudice, and stereotypical behavior (Barksdale, 2007; Eagan & Garvey, 2015; Lafreniere & Longman, 2010; Wilson, 1989). Racial discrimination and systemic racism contributed

to the barriers and limited career growth faced by African-American faculty throughout their higher education careers (Grant & Ghee, 2015; Henry & Glenn, 2009).

Chapter III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

African-American faculty members are underrepresented at a southeastern U.S. university research institution, holding fewer than six percent of the faculty positions compared to sixty percent of their White counterparts. Fries-Britt and Kelly (2005) identified this discrepancy to be an ongoing issue in academia. Wheeler and Freeman (2018) contended that although African-American faculty are qualified for tenured positions, they remain underrepresented in academia. The purpose of this study was to determine if African-American university faculty members at a university research institution in a southeastern U.S. state encountered barriers in their efforts to become university faculty members, and if they did, what strategies they used to overcome the barriers.

The following research questions guided this study:

RQ1: What were the life experiences of selected African-American university faculty members prior to becoming university faculty members at a university research institution in a southeastern U.S. state?

RQ2: What barriers, if any, did selected African-American university faculty members at a university research institution in a southeastern U.S. state encounter in their efforts to become university faculty members?

RQ3: If barriers were encountered, what strategies did select African-American university faculty members use to overcome the barriers at a university research institution in a southeastern U.S. state?

Researcher Design and Rationale

A qualitative narrative design was appropriate to conduct this study. By using a qualitative approach, a researcher can obtain a specific view of the social issues marginalized people encounter (Creswell, 2013). The narrative design allows for the presentation of participant experiences and stories from their perspectives in the form of a story, or narrative (Gay et al., 2009). Narrative research is a written interpretation of the data gathered from participant interviews and interactions. Fries-Britt and Kelly (2005) found narrative research appropriate for highlighting the stories of African-American faculty. In this study, a narrative approach allowed me to identify significant problems in higher education.

I relied on counter-storytelling in conjunction with CRT and BFT. This technique allowed participants to counter the existing mainstream narratives regarding the experiences of African-American faculty. A fundamental aspect of CRT and BFT is storytelling, with researchers making African-Americans comfortable enough to share their experiences. Hiraldo (2010) discussed how counter-stories could change a university's culture by providing all minority stakeholders the opportunity to express their experiences with marginalization. Moreover, counter-storytelling can contribute to university leaders' motivation to go beyond the normal scope of diversity and create an inclusive environment in which all stakeholders feel valued.

Solórzano and Yosso (2002) identified three types of storytelling: "personal narratives, other people's stories, and/or composite stories" (pp. 32-33). This study's storytelling approach was personal narratives, with the stories gathered directly from participant interviews. Counter-stories can be beneficial to a university environment because they allow marginalized individuals to share their campus experiences (Hiraldo, 2010). Higher education institutions can draw upon counter-stories to develop diversity programs and better experiences for marginalized groups. Howard-Hamilton (2003) suggested African-Americans must be the voices of their own stories, taking back their narratives from people not in their situations or unfamiliar with their cultural norms and values. Collins (2001) and Wheeler and Freeman (2018) posited African-American faculty in academia have different career experiences than their White counterparts, in part based on a lack of societal respect. African-American faculty's unique personal and career experiences have created a different narrative, inspiring them to share their stories with one another and the world.

For African-Americans to change perceptions others have about them; they must describe their own stories and their truths instead of allowing others to define who they are (Howard-Hamilton, 2003). CRT and BFT are appropriate frameworks for encouraging African-Americans to tell their stories. Grant and Ghee (2015) expressed the powerful influence African-American faculty could have on each other when they connected and shared stories about their higher education experiences.

Research Setting

The setting for this study was a higher education research institution in a southeastern U.S. state. Twin Rivers University is a pseudonym assigned to ensure the

confidentiality and privacy of the participants and the university. The institution was in a metropolitan area with a diverse population of almost six million citizens (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018).

Historically, this state has received recognition for "chartering the country's first public university, in 1785" (Georgia Budget & Policy Institute, 2017, p. 4). The university system consists of 26 public institutions of higher education, including research universities, comprehensive universities, state universities, and state colleges, which offer a variety of 2- and 4-year degree programs (University System of Georgia, 2019). Table 4 shows the student enrollment numbers of each university type (USG by the Numbers, 2019).

Table 4

Student Enrollment Numbers for University Systems Colleges and Universities from 2014-2018

University type	Enrollment numbers
Research universities	133,261
Comprehensive universities	86,772
State universities	65,758
State colleges	42,921

Higher education is vital in the southeastern state and is essential for citizens to advance in their careers and earn higher salaries (Georgia Budget & Policy Institute, 2017). Almost fifty percent of the state's residents aged 25 years and older hold either a bachelor's or advanced degree (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018). Unemployment rates are significantly higher, and salaries are substantially lower for individuals without a higher education degree.

The Georgia Budget & Policy Institute (2017) report showed that African-Americans represented almost half of the university system's student population, a number expected to increase significantly by 2045. As the African-American student population grows, there must be a commensurate increase in African-American faculty to meet the diverse student body's needs. To address and explore these concerns, I recruited African-American male and female faculty who worked at Twin Rivers University. The researcher based the selection of this university system on statistics indicating that out of almost 12,000 faculty, only 9.6% were African-American (male or female) compared to more than seventy percent who were White (USG by the Numbers, 2017).

This study involved exploring African-American faculty's experiences to obtain faculty positions at Twin Rivers University and what strategies they used to overcome obstacles. Purposeful sampling is appropriate to identify participants meeting parameters necessary for the study (Maxwell, 2013). Using purposeful sampling provided an opportunity to select individuals with whom to cultivate valuable and trustworthy relationships and rich data. Gay et al. (2009) suggested that developing trusting relationships is a fundamental aspect of the narrative research methodology. Fostering productive alliances with the participants encouraged them to provide detailed, thoughtful responses, which helped answer the research questions.

Participant Selection

According to Patton (2002), purposeful sampling provides rich data. I sought to recruit six to eight participants because having at least six interview participants is sufficient to generate substantial data and avoid sample saturation. Small samples in qualitative research can produce reliable outcomes, with data quality being more

important than quantity (Mason, 2010; Patton, 2002). Participants had to be African-American with an earned doctorate who had at least two years of faculty experience or had previously taught at Twin Rivers University. To identify and recruit participants, I shared a flyer (see Appendix A) and an invitation letter (see Appendix B) with African-American faculty members at the institution. Next, I asked colleagues and associates working in higher education institutions in the university system to distribute the information to their personal and professional networks.

The flyer and invitation letter contained specific details about the study and my contact information. Upon expressing interest, individuals received a preliminary participant profile form (see Appendix C) to complete via e-mail to determine if they met the specified requirements. After reviewing the preliminary participant forms, I e-mailed each qualified participant to schedule a 10- to 15-minute onboarding call. During this call, I provided a formal welcome, described in detail the study, and asked if the individual had any questions. Finally, I read the informed consent (see Appendix D) aloud, with each participant providing verbal agreement.

Data Collection Procedures

I served as the primary instrument to collect and analyze the data. An African-American woman and first-generation college student, I have worked in higher education for almost 11 years, with much of that time at a PWI. I have experience working in degree programs and focusing on student and faculty support and had personally witnessed the underrepresentation of African-American faculty in academia. As an African-American female interested in a faculty career, I was interested in exploring

African-American faculty's career experiences, emphasizing African-American female faculty experiences.

Interviews

One-on-one interviews were the primary means of data collection, with other sources used for triangulation. The six participants took part in unstructured interviews with open-ended questions. Interviews are one of the most appropriate forms of qualitative data collection, allowing participants to reflect on their experiences, share their stories, and disprove stories told by dominant groups (Maxwell, 2013). Storytelling is a critical component of CRT and BFT, the theoretical frameworks for this study (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Howard-Hamilton, 2003). CRT and BFT allow space for participants to tell their stories to provide a clear perspective and broader context of their experiences (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Howard-Hamilton, 2003).

I used Seidman's (2006) three-step interview model, conducting three interviews with each participant. Each interview lasted 60 to 90 minutes, sufficient time to ensure the data collected aligned with the research questions. During the first interview, the participants answered questions about their personal experiences, including their upbringing and cultural influences. During the second interview, the participants shared information about their professional experiences. Finally, the third interview was a chance for participants to discuss their institution's organizational climate and encapsulate their thoughts about their involvement in this study. (See Appendix E for the interview questions.)

The two methods used to interview participants were face to face and teleconferencing. Face-to-face interviews took place for five participants at various

locations in a quiet setting; teleconference occurred for one participant using FreeConferenceCall, which provided a toll-free number to share with the participant. One of the benefits of the FreeConferenceCall service is a recording option, which allowed me to capture all three participant interviews. These methods provided scheduling flexibility for the participants and me. Interview scheduling was in accordance with the participants' availability and preference.

I developed an interview protocol, identifying points to discuss with the participants before beginning the interview. An interview protocol from a similar study (Colbert, 2013) served as a template for this research. The interview protocol provided guidance to discuss the informed consent, the purpose of the study, confidentiality, and the interview process.

At the beginning of the first interview, I read the informed consent aloud, after which participants were to say their full names, the date, and the statement, "I have heard the informed consent, and I agree to participate in the study." To accurately capture the data, including participants' informed consent, I used an audio recording device or teleconference software to record each interview. Furthermore, I created an observation sheet to record any observations during the interview.

Management of all participant data was through computer software programs, such as Microsoft Word and Excel, with all data stored on a USB flash drive. All electronic files and the USB device were password-protected to maintain the confidentiality of all information. I also printed hard copies of the interview transcripts and secured them in a locked cabinet. This process ensured a backup copy of all participant documents if the electronic files had become corrupted or unusable.

According to Maxwell (2013), recording and transcribing interviews is essential during qualitative research and prevents the misinterpretation of data. Rev.com transcribed the interview recordings, after which I provided the participants with a copy of their transcripts. This procedure allowed participants to confirm the correct capture of their stories, making any corrections or adding any information they had omitted.

Memos

Memos are an integral part of the data collection process, allowing me to reflect on any observations made during the interview process (Maxwell, 2013). Memo writing was another form of collected data. After each interview, I used memoing to document immediate thoughts or observations. The memoing journal also helped to kept track of any changes that occurred throughout the study.

Data Analysis Procedures

Data analysis is the sorting and interpretation of all data collected during a study (Hahn, 2008; Maxwell, 2013). Qualitative research produces large amounts of complex data, requiring significant organization (Hahn, 2008). Qualitative researchers can use several strategies to analyze their data (Hahn, 2008; Maxwell, 2013; Wong, 2008), with memoing, coding, categorizing, and connecting among the most common (Maxwell, 2013). Another means is to conduct an in-depth analysis of the components of the data collected throughout the study (Hahn, 2008; Maxwell, 2013; Merriam, 2002). Due to the nature of qualitative research and the abundant data gathered, researchers must start analysis at the beginning of the study instead of waiting to complete data collection (Maxwell, 2013; Merriam, 2002). Early organization and review significantly reduce the time it takes to analyze the data (Maxwell, 2013).

For this qualitative study, I utilized the strategies outlined by Maxwell (2013), Hahn (2008), and Seidman (2006), which included coding, categorizing, and connecting strategies to construct themes. As suggested by Merriam (2002), I analyzed data simultaneous to working on the study. Analysis began with thoroughly reading all documentation, including researcher memos, interview transcripts, and any other forms of information collected (Maxwell, 2013). Next, I listened to the recordings multiple times to analyze the raw data from each interview and begin transcribing, coding, and constructing themes (Maxwell, 2013).

After this process, I started to code the data. Coding is a way to break down large amounts of raw data to answer the research questions (Hahn, 2008). I implemented the three-level coding strategy developed by Hahn (2008; see Figure 1).

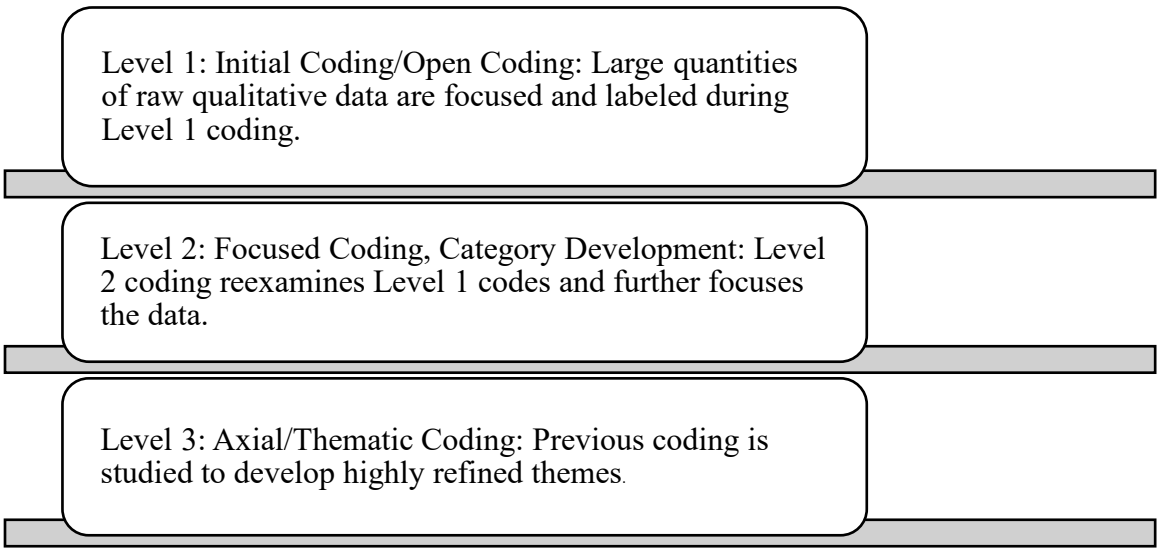

Figure 1. Levels of coding.

Finally, I categorized and connected the data. Categorizing the data allowed me to fracture the information and look at similarities between each interview. According to Maxwell (2013), researchers obtain the most meaningful information from interviews using Hahn's procedure. Categorizing data and creating matrices allowed me to evaluate

the findings. This step provided a clear view of how all the components work together. After categorizing the interview data, I conducted a narrative analysis to link and connect similar experiences among the participants.

Validity

Maxwell (2013) defined validity as "a commonsense way to refer to the correctness or credibility of a description, conclusion, explanation, interpretation, or other sort of account" (p. 122). To ensure the study was valid, I had to determine what, if anything, could have gone wrong throughout the process. The first step was identifying my biases and reactivity. Next, I examined other common threats to validity, which included "intensive long-term involvement, transferability, member checking, searching for discrepant evidence and negative cases, and triangulation" (Maxwell, 2013, p. 126-128).

Researcher Bias

In many instances, researchers conduct studies to explore phenomena that are of direct interest to them. Because of this interest, bias can emerge and, if not identified, influence the study in several ways (Maxwell, 2013; Peshkin, 1988). The researchers' responsibility is to acknowledge and accept any subjectivity they might hold throughout the process (Peshkin, 1988). Although researchers cannot eliminate their biases, they can recognize and set them aside to avoid tainting the data or interpretation (Maxwell, 2013). Peshkin (1988) encouraged researchers to actively look for their subjectivity to conduct the study without bias. Peshkin developed a process outlining how researchers could identify their "subjective I's," which are occurrences of negative or positive thoughts or feelings.

As an African-American female employee at a PWI, I had career experiences deeply rooted in race and racism. I recognized I could not completely remove any preconceived notions about the experiences the participants may have encountered. I presumed many African-American faculty had been victims of racism, discrimination, and marginalization in one form or another. Therefore, to identify my biases, I developed "subjective I's" throughout my research and wrote identity memos to monitor any thoughts or feelings arising during the study (Peshkin, 1988).

Reactivity

I was unable to remove myself from the setting in which this study took place. One approach I took to reduce reactivity was to conduct one-on-one meetings with participants, so they understood my experiences at PWIs. I did not impose my personal beliefs on them or influence them in any way. Instead, I conveyed that they had a voice and could share their experiences with me.

Intensive, Long-Term Involvement

I conducted three 60- to 90-minute interviews with each participant. By doing more than one interview, I believed I could establish my genuine commitment to this research and my desire to help the participants share their stories and experiences.

Transferability

In qualitative studies, the researcher aims to produce findings and conclusions, both generalizable and transferable to other settings (Maxwell, 2013; Merriam, 2002). A researcher can increase transferability by providing rich, thick descriptions of the setting and the procedures used to conduct the study (Merriam, 2002). By providing detailed

descriptions, I improved readers' and researchers' ability to transfer these results to their situations.

Respondent Validation/Member Checking

Member checking is one way to prevent misrepresenting the data (Maxwell, 2013). Member checking allows the participants to review the data collected from them for accuracy, offering a chance to correct discrepancies. Therefore, after transcribing the recordings, I provided participants with a copy of their transcripts. In this way, they could validate the data and ensure their stories were accurate. This method also gave participants a chance to expound on any of their answers during the interviews.

Searching for Discrepant Evidence and Negative Cases

Maxwell (2013) suggested having another person review the study's conclusions to check for discrepancies in the data. My dissertation chair compared the themes I developed against the interview transcripts to confirm I had interpreted the data correctly. Thus, I was able to avoid any discrepant evidence or defects.

Triangulation

According to Gay et al. (2009), triangulation entails using various sources to cross-check the study's data. I used interviews, personal memos, and university policy documents as forms of data. According to Fusch, Fusch, and Ness (2018), methodological triangulation involves using various data collection methods in the same study. Triangulation involved reviewing the similarities and differences in the participants' responses to each question and checking interpretations against the researcher-created memos.

Ethical Issues

Qualitative research's subjective nature necessitates discussing any ethical challenges that could have surfaced during the research process (Orb, Eisenhauer, & Wynaden, 2001; Sanjari, Bahramnezhad, Fomani, Shoghi, & Cheraghi, 2014). According to Sanjari et al. (2014), qualitative research is appropriate to describe experiences individuals have encountered throughout their lives. Because the participants involved in this qualitative study were human subjects, it was my responsibility to make adequate provisions to protect their confidentiality and avoid any ethical violations. I remained transparent, addressing any potential ethical issues, sharing detailed information about the participants' and my roles, and discussing the data collection process.

Although participants willingly took part in the study, they were likely not initially aware of the potential challenges that could have arisen. For example, responding to interview questions could have resurrected suppressed thoughts and memories, producing emotional reactions and discomfort. I notified participants of any potential risks in the informed consent. It was critical for me to build a professional rapport and trust with participants, so they did not withdraw from the process based on reliving uncomfortable moments (Orb et al., 2001).

I took several steps to minimize ethical concerns. First, I completed the IRB process required by Valdosta State University, which entailed Human Research Ethics (CITI) training and the submission of the Protocol Exemption Form (see Appendix F). After receiving IRB approval to proceed with the study, I began the participant search, sharing a flyer and an invitation letter with a network of college professionals.

Individuals who expressed interest then completed a preliminary participation profile (see Appendix C) to determine if they met the outlined criteria.

Once selected, participants received more information about the study and had the opportunity to ask questions about the process and their roles. I explained there was no compensation for time or travel. Participants were able to select either face-to-face or teleconference interviews, and they could decide to commit to the study or withdraw before the data collection process began. I reviewed the informed consent with participants, who then provided their verbal approval to take part in the study. Additionally, participants received an overview of the rules for the study (see Appendix G).

The six faculty members did not want Twin Rivers University to identify them as participants in a study that exposed some of the issues they had encountered as African-American faculty at the university. I promoted anonymity and confidentiality by assigning pseudonyms to the participants and the institution. A researcher can never promise complete anonymity but should make every attempt to keep private their personal information and their organization's name.

To further alleviate ethical challenges, I documented the steps taken to collect, store, and destroy the data (Sanjari et al., 2014). Each participant was fully aware of the types of data collected, which included audio-recorded interviews, interview observation sheets, and researcher memos. Data management was with Microsoft software programs, with all file's password-protected and saved on a USB flash drive. All written materials remain stored in a lockbox.

Participants received a copy of each of their interview transcripts to verify the correctness and address any possible misrepresentation issues. Following the interview transcription and participant transcript review, I deleted all digital recordings of interviews. All other data will remain securely stored for the length of time required by the IRB, with subsequent destruction.

Chapter Summary

CRT and BFT, the theoretical foundations for this study, were appropriate to focus on the marginalization of African-Americans and their career experiences based on gender and ethnicity. I used a qualitative narrative design to explore six participants' experiences. Collected data were from participant interviews and researcher memos and observations. To analyze the data, I used coding and categorizing strategies developed by Hahn (2008) and Maxwell (2013) to develop themes. Ensuring the validity of the study required that I identified any personal biases before and during the collection of data. Furthermore, participants received a copy of their interview transcripts to ensure accuracy. By conducting this study, I hoped to provide a platform for African-American faculty employed at Twin Rivers University to share their experiences regarding issues they may have encountered in their journeys to obtain and retain faculty appointments.

Chapter IV

RESULTS

Narratives of African-African Faculty Members

The lack of African-American faculty presence at PWIs in the United States has long been a significant challenge (Allen et al., 2000). There was a need to understand the career experiences of African-American faculty better (Modica & Mamiseishvili, 2010). The purpose of this study was to determine if African-American university faculty members at a university research institution in a southeastern U.S. state encountered barriers in their efforts to become university faculty members, and if they did, what strategies they used to overcome the barriers. Qualitative narrative inquiry was appropriate to gain a deeper understanding of participants' career experiences. I conducted interviews via face-to-face or a teleconferencing platform with the participants to collect data for the study. All participants opted for face-to-face interviews except one, who preferred to meet by phone. Guiding the interviews were open-ended questions, which provided the opportunity for participants to ask clarifying questions or elaborate on answers when desired. Participants received a copy of their interview transcripts to review, allowing them to confirm the accuracy of their words and meaning.

The findings of the study addressed the following research questions:

RQ1: What were the life experiences of selected African-American university faculty members prior to becoming university faculty members at a university research institution in a southeastern U.S. state?

RQ2: What barriers, if any, did selected African-American university faculty members at a university research institution in a southeastern U.S. state encounter in their efforts to become university faculty members?

RQ3: If barriers were encountered, what strategies did select African-American university faculty members use to overcome the barriers at a university research institution in a southeastern U.S. state?

In this qualitative narrative study, I examined six African-American faculty members' career experiences at Twin Rivers University. Purposeful sampling facilitated selecting of six African-American male and female faculty at Twin Rivers University to participate in the study. I sent an e-mail invitation to all African-American faculty employed at the institution, inviting them to take part and to share the participant flyer and invitation with other college professionals in their networks. Any individual interested in participating in the study completed a preliminary participant profile form (see Appendix C) to determine if they met the required criteria. Demographic information provided on the form included current faculty level, number of years at Twin Rivers University, date of earning their doctorate, field of study, and tenure status. Upon verifying the criteria, I informed qualified individuals they were eligible to participate and provided them with detailed information regarding the interview process. Participation in the study was voluntary and unpaid. I read the informed consent to each participant, who then gave verbal agreement of their willingness to participate. Additionally, I provided a physical copy of the informed consent to each participant. Finally, to ensure confidentiality, I assigned pseudonyms to each participant and the university.

Guided by Seidman's (2006) three-step interview model, the interview process was a series of three 60- to 90-minute interviews. Interviews took place in a face-to-face setting or via conference call, as was most convenient for the participant. One-on-one interviews included the participant and me, with each conversation audio recorded for accuracy. I developed a set of open-ended questions, which I read to the participants, asking them to provide detailed responses to the questions and expound on answers, as needed. Additionally, I created field notes before, during, and after each interview to include in the data analysis.

Each interview had a distinct purpose. During the first interview, participants provided information about their personal life experiences, including their childhood, education, and religious and cultural beliefs. During the second interview, the participants discussed their career experiences in higher education. The third interview was a chance for participants to share information regarding the hiring process and organizational climate at Twin Rivers University. I analyzed data from all interviews, with my findings presented in this and subsequent chapters.

Participant profiles gave a narrative overview of each participant's life experiences, including childhood, education, and career experiences. The participants were all faculty members at Twin Rivers University, but not all at the same levels. Participants were two African-American female faculty and four African-American male faculty. Table 5 presents the basic information on each participant.

Table 5

Participant Demographic Profiles

Pseudonym	Gender	Age range (years)	Years at institution	Tenure status
Faith	Female	40–50	3	Nontenured
Michael	Male	40–50	16	Tenured
James	Male	40–50	12	Tenured
Dee	Female	40–50	8	Tenured
Joe	Male	60–70	33	Tenured
Christian	Male	30–40	10	Nontenured

Participant Narratives

Faith

I met Faith years ago at a networking event. Faith knew I was working on a doctoral degree; when provided details about the study, Faith showed an immediate interest in participating. As an African-American faculty member, Faith was excited to share her career experiences. I interviewed Faith in her office, located in the center of campus. Twin Rivers University is in the heart of a southern metropolitan city surrounded by several start-up companies and major corporations. Faith's office was in a multistory building that included classrooms, student labs, academic services, and common areas for students to study and congregate. Due to Faith's office location, I used the campus transit to travel to her office for all our interviews. Faith's office was very neatly organized, with two large computer monitors, typical office supplies, a bookshelf containing several faculty handbooks, a whiteboard with several to-do lists, and many knick-knacks around the office.

Faith grew up in a small, poverty-stricken southern town where the population was predominantly African-American, and for the most part, everyone knew everyone. For most of the people who lived in the rural neighborhood, education was not a high priority. Most people worked on the farm or in the fields. Faith shared how antiquated the school system was, stating, "When I was growing up, there were actually two elementary schools in my town, in my district": one predominantly African-American and one mostly White. Faith discussed the diversity of her K-12 education, stating that the population was "99.9% Black. I can count the number of White people." She lived in a neighboring town and used the public-school bus system to commute to school every day.

As Faith reflected on her K-12 experience, she remembered how racist it was, with the "White school" remaining segregated until the early 2000s. She blamed African-American parents for being passive in the face of blatant discrimination toward their children. She stated, "What strikes me even still is that I don't remember anyone challenging that system. I don't even know what brought the system down. It's not in existence today. It was still in existence at least until the early 2000s."

Although many in her community did not highly value education, Faith loved it from an early age. She yearned for academic success and excelled in all her classes, especially math and science. Her peers and teachers affectionately regarded her as a "star student." She admitted, "School has always held a certain—a special place in my heart. That's where I've always felt I could be myself, when I was around academics." Faith found motivation to strive for academic excellence by being the first in her family to earn a college degree.

Faith grew up in a single-parent household, the youngest of nine children. Her mom was a no-nonsense hard worker and a provider who instilled religious values in her children. Reflecting on these values, Faith said, "One thing she taught me was about prayer." From an early age, religion and spirituality provided a moral compass throughout her life. Faith shared, "My mother—she introduced me to God, but she couldn't give me a relationship with Him. That was something that I had to explore on my own, and that is what I did." Faith continues to live a selfless life committed to serving others. She asserted, "I always tie success to service, and I always tie success to sacrifice and just being selfless."

As the youngest child of nine siblings, Faith may have benefited from their advice on day-to-day life experiences. Faith shared an anecdote that showed the special relationship she had with one of her oldest brothers. She felt he had significantly influenced her life, contributing to her success as a child and now as an adult. With a smile, Faith said, "He has really invested time and energy into me. . . He's the one who would— When I got my certificates on awards day, he held them. He held them for me; he kept them. And he gave them to me when I graduated from college."

As Faith grew older, she was increasingly drawn to education and a career of teaching. She noted, "The academic setting has always been my place of comfort, where I have felt the most at home, where I have felt like I thrive the most." Faith eventually became both a secondary school teacher and a college professor. She had worked as a professor at an HBCU and a PWI, although she enjoyed mentoring students at both institutions. Her enthusiasm was evident when Faith spoke about mentoring, caring for, and developing students at both types of institutions. She stated,

> I've always told them this on the very first day of class. I said, "I am your biggest cheerleader." I want them to know that I really am rooting for them. I'm accessible to them if they need to come to me to talk to me about something, whatever the case may be.

In addition to her classroom instruction at the HBCU, Faith felt a special sense of responsibility for her African-American students' welfare. She assumed a mother-figure role for these students, whom she believed are the future of the Black race in America. She said, "I almost felt like I had a greater responsibility for them because these are Black women, future leaders." Faith observed that the HBCU students treated her with more respect than those at the PWI. Unlike their peers, HBCU students always acknowledged faculty as "Doctor," whereas at a PWI, students and non-Black faculty members called her by her first name. It is important to note this may be a cultural phenomenon having nothing to do with respect. Faith's experience at the PWI empowered her to experiment with different teaching styles. She stated, "I prefer the teaching environment here, simply because . . . it doesn't have anything to do with the rigor, but it has a lot to do with autonomy."

As a PWI professor, Faith experienced the burden of being a Black woman; she felt the professional bar was always higher for her than for her peers. She constantly felt the need to prove herself to the students; sometimes, she wonders if they believe she is qualified or knowledgeable enough to teach them, and if they understood her ability to do so effectively. Because of all this pressure, Faith became apprehensive and anxious when teaching such a diverse student population. She sometimes doubted her ability to be successful, questioning whether she was good enough to do the job. Faith shared, "I was

a little bit more self-conscious, I guess, because I felt like, 'Oh my gosh, they know a lot already and they are going to challenge me.' And especially being a Black woman." Faith noted one of the challenges with students was "really and truly establishing credibility with them."

Despite her feelings of isolation in a White- and male-dominated profession, Faith was grateful to be in a position where she could make a difference to all students. I could sense her struggle with the burden of representing Black people, and especially Black women, in institutions of higher learning. Faith expressed, "I feel proud, but at the same time I also feel that weight, that pressure that anytime I say something, they aren't just hearing me but they're hearing the entire Black race."

Part of her success in a predominantly White environment is the ability to code-switch. She shared,

> Oh . . . code-switching. I have learned, unfortunately, that I cannot be all of me all the time when I am not around people who look like me, because I feel like there's . . . I feel like with it comes [the] responsibility of explaining or, again, now I'm the representative for every Black person that ever walked this earth.

Regarding issues of diversity, Faith felt "invisible" on campus. She lamented how the idea of diversity was just "lip service." The institution did not make much effort to recruit more African-American faculty. Faith believed that African-American faculty members' presence is vital to the overall college experience because they bring "diverse ideas," which enhance the college experiences for all key university stakeholders. One of Faith's goals was to increase the presence of African-American faculty at the university.

She discussed collaborating with other instructors to improve the presence of African-American faculty. She explained, "Now I am working on a grant where we work with African-American underrepresented minority postdocs, and our goal is to funnel them into faculty positions."

As I reflected on my time with Faith, I was convinced she was devoted to education and service. Although there were challenges for African-American faculty members at PWIs, she was grateful and took pride in her role. She proclaimed,

> I still take great pride in being able to walk onto this campus every day and be this Black person with a PhD in Engineering . . . teaching and working and operating and influencing at one of the most prestigious schools in this nation. And I'm like, "I get to be here."

Michael

I did not know Michael before this study. He responded to the e-mail invitation I had sent to African-American faculty at Twin Rivers University. Michael was a tenured faculty member with over 10 years' experience. He also served in a leadership role in his department.

Michael and I met in a breakout room at the college for each of our interviews. The Business School offers undergraduate and graduate student's programs, with several classrooms, conference rooms, and administrative offices. Michael and I met in the student breakout room, a small room sparsely furnished with a table and four chairs. The room was dimly lit, with a whiteboard and flipchart paper on the walls. Typically, students had meetings and study sessions in the breakout rooms. When we met, we

quickly exchanged pleasantries and briefly spoke about the study and his valuable participation.

Michael grew up in the Midwest in a two-parent home with three siblings. Michael's father was college-educated and worked in the court system, and his mother was a stay-at-home mom. Michael was very proud of their parenting and regarded them good role models for him and his siblings. Michael's parents were "strict but not strict," meaning they allowed their children some leeway to be kids and explore the world. They were stern but empowering, encouraging Michael and his siblings to explore, "always pushing us to be out at the edge both academically as well as socially and all kinds of other stuff—stuff that I know other children were not allowed to do we got to do."

Michael credits his freedom as a child to his ability to make good decisions as he matured. Michael had a bold childhood characterized by lots of outdoor adventures. He shared, "A perfect day is summer; it was always summertime." He thoroughly enjoyed playing outdoors, building engines, racing, and hunting. As much as Michael enjoyed his childhood adventures, education was very important in his family, with everyone expected to earn As and Bs. Although he was good at math and science, Michael dreamed of being a musician. He said,

> When I started out in high school, I was going to be a music major. I played instruments when I was a kid and I was going to win the scholarship . . . and that's how I was going to go to college. I was going to play in the orchestra or something for a living.

In his junior year of high school, Michael had the opportunity to attend a college tour hosted by his local NAACP chapter. The trip changed his future career trajectory.

He stated, “That’s when I made my pivot to go be an aerospace engineer.” Therefore, he decided to go to college and pursued a bachelor’s, Master’s, and PhD in Engineering. After college, Michael began his career as a faculty member at a prestigious PWI in the South. He expressed the transformation in the following vignette:

> You go from being a graduate student to being in charge of the graduate students, go from being a student in the class to teaching the student in the class . . . go from spending other people’s money to having to raise money. Those are incredibly big changes. [You] go from being someone being developed to someone who has to still be developed but [is] developing others.

As a faculty member, Michael perceived himself as a role model for the students he encountered and tailored his instructional methods to meet their different cultural needs. He was more relaxed when he taught the undergraduates, which he jokingly called “entertain[ing] them for an hour.” He assumed a more serious instructional approach with his graduate students, whom he felt required more academic rigor as they prepared for high-level PhD careers. Michael took on a “big brother” mentor role to his African-American students, some of whom came from challenging backgrounds, helping them to explore their identities as Black men and women and navigate their future careers. Some of his African-American students came from different socioeconomic backgrounds, which affected their self-esteem. Michael explained, “Only the Black kids don’t think they can.”

Michael had held different roles and responsibilities within the university. Above all, he was a faculty member and occupied a leadership role. Second was his informal role as a mentor to his students—referred to as “invisible labor”—which he used to

inspire and advocate for them. Although seen, this type of labor is considered invisible because institutions do not typically value it with the currency they use to reward faculty work, such as reappointment, tenure, and promotion. In an article in *The Chronicle* (Editorial Board, 2019), underrepresented faculty take on job responsibilities outside of the realm of what they came on board to do. They must serve as mentors to underrepresented student populations. According to *The Chronicle* (Editorial Board, 2019), "There is no additional compensation for professors who end up taking on this labor. Additionally, often their obligations to students are overlooked when being reviewed for career advancement" (para. 3).

Michael advised his African-American mentees to work harder than their White peers to earn professional recognition and accolades. He shared his advice to African-American advisees:

> "This system is not designed for you to win, okay? When you're in the room, people are going to look to see if you know how to answer all the questions. They're not going to ask everybody else, but it's you they're going to ask all the questions. So, I have to make sure when you walk out, you're Doctor So-and-So and that you can answer the questions. Otherwise, you will not get the promotions because they will vote that you're incompetent. So, this is the time for me to train you."

Michael experienced racism from his White students who typically did not acknowledge Black faculty's underrepresentation at the university. He discussed the racist dynamics he dealt with regularly, saying, "The Black kids are like, 'Oh, there is one here. I haven't seen one of them in X number of semesters.' And the White kids are

like, 'Oh, okay, haven't seen one, either.'" Michael was motivated to work hard by the African-American students who proudly embraced him as a faculty member and strove to impress him.

Although Michael enjoyed aspects of his job, he acknowledged encountering a whole host of challenges. For example, he found his African-American students stereotyped as being cognitively inferior by fellow White faculty. Overwhelmed with frustration, Michael recognized he could not take on this challenge single-handedly. With a deep sense of hopelessness, he admitted, "I can't address them all."

Michael also complained about people making assumptions about him before knowing what position he holds at the university. He gave an example of a student who, mistaking him for a low-ranking staff person, cursed at him, only to apologize after he realized Michael would be his professor the next semester. Michael was often the recipient of insults by people who judged him solely by the color of his skin. He stated, "There are a lot of assumptions about who I am when they see me, long before they know what I do." The racial undertones made it difficult for Michael to teach effectively under the circumstances when "colleagues and administration do not recognize you for good teaching; they could care less."

Michael complained that his institution was not making enough effort to hire minority faculty and keep them. Worse still, he did not think the institution's status would change by hiring minorities and then denying them opportunities to affect the learning environment with new ideas positively. Michael said, "You have to let them get here and then bring their ideas to the table versus just assimilate." He experienced a

pervasive sense of marginalization as he struggled to assimilate in his institution, lamenting,

> Assimilation does allow you to learn the systems, but it doesn't guarantee acceptance. And assimilation keeps people of color from working together because they're busy assimilating. . . Whereas if you try to assimilate, you're always trying to learn the rules and operate by the rules, and you never get the advantage of the rules of the hook-ups that you have in your culture or how those work; you can never leverage those. So, you have to leave all your cultural assets behind and to pick up some subset of theirs without being able to bring yours to the table anyway.

Michael appeared to accept the racial status quo and gave up hopes of assimilation. He shared his thoughts:

> People of color will have to say that the current system does not Favors them and [the] efforts that they put into it do not have the best outcomes. They will have to say, "How am I going to be competitive on a global scale?" And that's what I need to be training for, not [to] be accepted and assimilated unto the local scale.

Michael believed that if the university did not leverage African-American faculty's ideas, the institution should "just bring in White people if you want them to look Brown and be White. That's different than being Brown and looking Brown." In his opinion, there were not many strategies in place to increase the number of African-American faculty. Michael declared, "It's like, well, this is what we've been doing. This is how much we invest. This is the number we get." He believed diversity was important

if it allowed minority faculty to be physically present and have the opportunity to bring their diverse ideas and perspectives. They must be able to contribute holistically to make a significant difference.

Michael strongly believed his institution was not ready to embrace African-American faculty meaningfully, creating true diversity with all cultures celebrated. He proclaimed, "The institute is designed to work without people of color; it doesn't require them." Michael acknowledged that African-American faculty brought different perspectives because of their race, but the university "would be just as competitive" without African-American faculty. He argued, "We have yet to bring value to the institutions. We are here, but we don't bring all of our values." Michael also discussed that African-American faculty members had to be mindful of the type of research they conducted, saying, "It can't be too outside of the box because it might not be respected."

Although Michael shared some of the challenges, he appeared to have found his comfort zone in a not-so-friendly environment. He felt secure in his research and his students' development. He was passionate about his research and about mentoring and investing in his students. Michael professed, "You cannot make a better investment than in your students when it comes to your time. Even your research stuff—you have to do the excellent research, but understand you have to combine that with the development of a person, not just to research in isolation."

James

James was a tenured faculty member with more than 16 years' experience teaching at Twin Rivers University. I met James in his office for all three of our interviews. Each time I visited; it was very quiet; not many people were at work because

the meetings were early in the morning. The receptionist greeted me and then, shortly after, James came to escort me to his office. As we approached his office, we passed several offices, classrooms, and student study rooms. The building felt very sterile, without much décor. One of the first things I noticed as we entered James's office was a wall full of greeting cards, which I later learned were thank-you cards from students. James's lab coat, which had his name stitched on it, hung proudly in his office. There was something about that lab coat, which intrigued me and grabbed my attention during every visit. There was a book-filled bookshelf, stacks of student papers, a computer monitor, a laptop, and an office phone on his desk. I felt an instant camaraderie with James; he made me feel very comfortable, almost as if we had known each other for some time. Perhaps this was due to his desire to participate in my study and his willingness to speak honestly about his life and career experiences.

James grew up on the East Coast and moved to the South when he accepted the faculty position at the Twin Rivers University. He lived with both parents and his sister in a "middle-class, kind of normal lifestyle." James spoke highly of his family, saying, "My parents are really supportive people. They're really hard workers. They're both really big on education. They're both really big on figuring out what you want to do, working hard for it." James shared many captivating stories about his family and his childhood. He enjoyed traveling, especially during the summer months. With excitement, James expressed, "My happiest memory of being a child was actually over the summers. . . Usually for 2 weeks, [I would] spend time with both of my grandparents, both my grandmothers. . . I'd stay at their house and get spoiled and all that good stuff."

James' parents saw a college degree as key for their children's success. Regardless of obstacles to education, they encouraged their children to persist. They appreciated that acquiring education in the present day was no longer as challenging as it was during the Civil Rights era. James captured his parents' view of education in the following statement:

> It's critical. My parents . . . viewed everything through the lens. Rightfully so—so the Civil Rights era, right? For them, education, particularly higher education, it was the thing. . . The thing they remember the most—both have a higher education—is having to get on a bus . . . drive past all these universities . . . to get to where they could go to school. Not to where they wanted to go to school, not to where they might have had opportunity to go to school, but to where they could only go to school. . . You don't mess around with higher ed. You go to the right type of school. You go to the best school that you can go to, and you put yourself strategically in places to make your life better. That was just drilled in my sister's and my head. That really forms some of my opinions on higher ed today—honestly, just that.

When James was growing up, his parents and sister served as role models who were successful and passionate about education. He looked up to his sister, saying, "I got to see her develop and understand college." Lessons learned from his sister's success propelled and motivated him to think about his future more seriously. Thus, from an early age, James knew education was important and wanted to attend college. He

humorously related, "[The TV show] *A Different World* was on, so I was definitely pursuing college."

James did not always know his career aspirations, but he was captivated by science and science projects from a young age. He spoke about "doing projects at local universities to enter into these science fair competitions. Everyone else was doing the volcano thing, which was fine. I was the one that was looking at genetic differences and strains of Lyme disease bacteria." That was when James realized he wanted to be a researcher.

James was a proud husband and father who highly valued family bonds. He appreciated his family and career for keeping him grounded, saying,

> It's what informs my values. It's what informs my day-to-day. It's what I put all of my interest in, really. Work is work. That's fine. Science is great and on and on and on, but at the end of the day, science doesn't define how I value the world, how I value my interest in others.

James was content pursuing the career he valued the most: teaching and research. He stated, "I love my job. I mean, the teaching and the research is great. I love interacting with students of all ages, all ranges, undergrad and grad. It's fun to be in this kind of environment." His greatest love was forging meaningful professional relationships with all students. He tried to emulate professors who had significantly influenced his career as a faculty member, either through their positive or negative feedback. He said, "[These] people got me to really to understand the whole reason why this thing works. . . You can do research, you can do all this other stuff, but at the end of the day, universities are about students, period."

James asserted those faculty members "got me to understand the value of actually connecting with individuals." James was committed to the development of his students and enjoyed seeing them succeed. He expressed how emotional it could be when students correlate his teaching to their success. James was profoundly humbled when one of his students told him "it was because of being in my class that she felt she could do research." He emphasized, "That was really just emotional for me. It's really powerful" when students provide such kind of feedback, especially years after he has taught them. He valued having the opportunity to influence students' lives in the classroom and prepare future researchers in his lab.

As an African-American man, James had educational and career trajectories characterized by "highs and lows for sure." His journey started in graduate school with other people who looked like him. He lamented, "There were no other Black students enrolled at the time [and] there were no Black faculty in any of the departments related to the program I was in." Early in his career, James had the opportunity to work in the U.S. medical research industry, which was always a goal. James said, "I was thrown into a lab that had no Black people in it, I believe ever, in its 30-year existence." As the only Black person in a predominantly White environment, he experienced different macroaggressions from fellow students and faculty. Sometimes others mistook him for "the janitorial staff," not recognizing him for who he was. James was inherently irritated by the lack of respect or acknowledgment of his position at the university. He summarized his overall career experiences as "up and down. These high notes and these really frustrating moments where you know your race proceeds you." He was particularly disappointed with the "look of surprise" from students when they realize he

is their professor. He encountered racially "interesting issues" with his White male students but recognized, "I know sometimes people don't always like the fact that they got a Black professor in an environment."

James had mixed feelings about his experiences as a tenured faculty member, saying, "I think that there have been positives to being a Black male doing this kind of research. But those positives also have a negative component in several regards." In addition to his passion for research and mentoring students, he enjoyed working with his colleagues, collaborating with them to create unique learning experiences for students. He and several colleagues developed a working group focused on highlighting race and racism in biomedicine, inviting "some really interesting speakers to talk about social justice aspects about medicine. . . [We] had some tremendous conversations, some very difficult conversations around how race impacts biomedicine." In this endeavor, James intertwined social justice and diversity into his lessons to promote an inclusive learning environment. He also committed to providing his students a diverse lab, stating, "We've had overall good success in making sure that our lab is super diverse."

James felt invisible, denied "a seat at the table" when the university discussed diversity issues. He felt slighted when Twin Rivers University leadership claimed to be "doing pretty good in terms of diversity and hiring," when, in fact, they were not culturally sensitive on issues of diversity. James expressed his disdain for such comments but failed to get institutional leaders to see his point. He constantly felt like the only voice for diversity. He stated, "I don't like being the Black guy who's going to always have to talk about Black folk. I get tired of being that person." With the macroaggressions and microinequities in the workplace, James felt "strangled and died a

little bit" every single day. He struggled to be the only person representing all Black people, lamenting,

> You don't see what's absent in this room, as well? It's always a reminder that there are very few Black people in the school, in the college, and it's like you always have to remind people of the obvious. . . Almost makes it feel like you're just not even seen as a need.

James carried the burden of representing all Black people at the university and being the go-to person for minority outreach. He felt constantly treated as the default diversity guru who

> Always get[s] asked to do outreach to minority populations. Even on committees, [I get] triaged into the minority stuff. That becomes your minority thing somehow. The pain of that is it often comes as a diminishment to the research study you contribute.

All this stress makes him feel less valued. He declared, "I feel like a lot of situations, people don't really care about what I do from a research point of view."

James recalled some coping advice from one of his graduate advisors, who encouraged him to embrace his role as the "representative." The advisor told him,

> "You're going to be asked to do a lot because you're a Black man. And whatever university you go to, unless it's an HBCU, you are going to be very much a minority and people are going to ask you. . . Start saying no. Say no. And if you do say yes, understand that you really actually hold a lot of power in that room because you have to be there." And she was 100% right.

James wanted to be in the meeting room, be at the table, and contribute to the decision-making process. He became frustrated when university leadership dismissed his ideas to develop programs yet readily accepted ideas from White colleagues. Although he tried to fight back, these situations created an "awkward" and uncomfortable atmosphere. James stated, "That's probably one of the feelings that I feel most often in the faculty side of things, is you say things and you're totally missed. You're not in the room for that reason."

James voiced concern about the lack of career progression for African-American faculty compared to his White colleagues. He understood there was not an equal playing field for African-American faculty specific to research. James cited discrimination in funding, arguing, "Funding lines are terribly different for Black and White people in science, terribly different. You're at a huge disadvantage. And if you're a Black woman in the sciences, you're at a tremendous disadvantage in terms of getting research funding." James found it "painfully evident" that equal opportunities do not exist for African-American faculty to explore their capabilities. He explained,

> The tragedy is that it's a compounding problem because you don't get those opportunities unless you've demonstrated that you're a great scientist . . . and you can't demonstrate you're a great scientist in the field unless you're getting the grant money to support that.

James did not like how his institution focused on research rather than developing instructors, a disparity that constrained his passion for teaching. He shared, "You're not really allowed that room; you're more focused on research. It's more about the dollars in, dollars out." He believed that the unequal weight given to research and teaching had

gradually destroyed the art of teaching at the institution. Some instructors, he said, "Don't care about teaching. They really just genuinely don't care" because they are more focused on their research. James continued, "They don't like it. They don't want to do it, and they're going to do it because they've got to do it, but they are going to do a crappy job." He was worried the students suffer because "they don't always learn the content well" and faculty members "grade on a curve" to avoid giving failing grades to most of their students.

James struggled with the contrast between the lack of diversity among faculty and the student body's diversity. He described how "odd it was to be in a place that felt very diverse on one level, but not on the other level." This situation did not qualify as being "diverse on any level. I feel like I work in a monolith. Honestly, I'm just kind of a unique person in a very flat space."

Despite all his experiences with race and racism, James believed the fight for justice was not over. He thought African-American faculty's presence was significant, noting how they can "exert their power and be a thorn" to agitate university leaders, making them understand how "poorly they are responding" to the issues related to faculty diversity. He saw opportunities for "agitation that makes people think, 'Why on earth are we doing things in this way? Is this logical?'"

James felt he represented a "two-horned" unicorn as the first Black investigator in the institution, which put him in a unique position to change race relations at his university. He believed the "Black faculty members in the sciences" could wage the racial war to make university leaders front-runners for faculty diversity. James was

aware he might not live to enjoy the gains of his racial struggles but was willing to hand down the responsibility to the next generation. He shared,

> I want it to be very clear that diversity is important, and that Black and brown people can do just as good a job as anyone else. But importantly, I don't want—and I know this can be a little controversial at times, but it matters a lot to me—I don't want potential Black faculty members down the line thinking that the only place for them is an HBCU. I do not want that to happen. There are too many unique opportunities and PWIs that really needs to be taken advantage of by Black professionals that are coming along.

James was a dedicated champion for diversity in his professional networks. He had extended his fight for racial justice into his community to bring his community leaders to the table where important decisions happened.

Dee

Dee was a tenured faculty member who had been at Twin Rivers University for over 8 years. In addition to her faculty responsibilities, Dee served on several committees within the university. I met Dee in her office, located in one of the oldest colleges on campus. This building is home to several different academic departments, classrooms, student break rooms, labs, auditoriums, and faculty offices. The hallways were bare of any elaborate décor. There was no visible signage in the building, so it took me a little while to locate Dee's department. Once I entered her department, I noticed a shift in the appearance of the office. The lobby area was much more appealing than the rest of the building. Everyone I encountered on this visit was very pleasant. Upon

entering Dee's office, I observed several accolades, college degrees, and artwork on the walls. She had large bookcases filled with books, photos, and other keepsakes. On her desk were two computer monitors and her cell phone. Dee also had an area set aside as a coffee and tea station. She enjoyed tea and drank it during all the interviews.

During our first meeting, Dee suggested that many African-American faculty members were aware of my study but were not willing to participate due to fears about anonymity. Some faculty members were concerned that they would reveal their identities through their stories due to the small population of African-American faculty on campus. I observed Dee's hesitance and unease to provide details about her experiences at this institution. I sensed an organizational culture characterized by fear, evidenced by Dee's wariness to share her experiences as a Black faculty member.

Dee grew up in the South with both parents and one of her sisters but had many experiences with her family in the Caribbean. She attributed her successful upbringing to the great values of perseverance she got from her parents, who maintained high expectations and expected her to soar. She shared, "They always wanted us to be better and surpass their successes." Dee was proud of her father's achievements despite many constraining circumstances preventing him from finishing his education. Her parents made no excuses and assumed the best. She recalled her father clearly stating, "Let me be clear. Like Barack, 'I expect you to do better than I did.'" Her mother urged her and her sister to "do as much as you can for as many people as you can for as long as you can." Because of these expectations, Dee "was always looking to do something."

As a child, she loved imitating her father performing male-ascribed chores, such as cutting the grass or painting. She recalled, "At school, if my teachers had a messy

desk, I would organize it for them." She was obsessed with neatness. Growing up, Dee enjoyed "summer camp with kids that I trusted dearly and still do . . . strong, familial connection, and a sense of belonging and support."

In addition to all the fun, Dee highly valued her education as "the most important thing." She explored and took "advantage of opportunities as they presented themselves. [I] just wanted to change the world." She was passionate about her desire to help people understand things: "Whether [as] a university professor or a classroom teacher or a city counselor, it was being the facilitator of knowledge transfer and, thus, power transfer." As a student, Dee was committed to doing her absolute best to excel, and she was determined to break barriers. In middle school, she was advanced in math and wanted to take a high school math class. Dee challenged her counselor, refusing to accept the excuse that no student had ever done it. She insisted she "can be the first one" to take an advanced-level math class, and she was successful in accomplishing that goal. She proclaimed, "I think that's poignant of just my drive throughout school." Through Dee's stories, I learned she was zealous and persevered in everything she envisioned for herself. She was a very successful student. She received proclamations, had the opportunity to be on *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, and was on a teen summit. Dee earned a bachelor's degree, two master's degrees, and a PhD.

Dee was a wife and mother who cherished her family and put them first. She used religion as a moral compass "to guide people toward a common practice." Above all, Dee prioritized relationships. She declared, "Religion is not important; relationship is. Being in a space where we can practice relationship is very important and not just important with one another, but relationship with Christ."

Dee attributed her academic achievements to several teachers, professors, and advisors who had inspired her to find success. She noted, "They all helped me to do my best, even when I didn't think I could." Dee was appreciative of the mentoring, which encouraged her to be successful. She beamed when she shared that many of them were still a part of her "village," a group instrumental in her decision to become a faculty member. Dee wanted to represent her community as a professor at a PWI. She shared,

> I became a faculty member . . . to have a bigger impact on education and the experience—the university experience for students . . . largely being at the table to ensure that the students whose voices are not heard or not queried or represented.

As a faculty member, she was committed to discovering "what the rules are." She stated, "I just want to know how do I win and how do I make sure that our people win, so we can make sure that there are equitable investments in people who need it." To sum up her feelings, she avowed, "I don't just teach; I impact student lives." Dee expounded on her thoughts in the following statement:

> Teaching is like an eighth of what I do. Because teaching is . . . input to someone else. What I think is that I educate communities of students and residents such that they have not just the content or knowledge, but they have the ability to execute. I'm an educator, not a teacher.

Dee set her own rules as a faculty member and valued the autonomy she had at the university. She shared, "I control my calendar. I go to the meetings I want to. I respond to the people I want to work with. I teach the classes I want to teach, but this job is the most flexible." However, she contended, "[The flexibility] also requires you to

navigate the game to stay in your space." She demanded respect and did not tolerate "work[ing] with people who don't share the same values."

As an African-American female faculty member, Dee did not let others intimidate her. She navigated her space by her boldness and directness. People do not question her teaching "because I don't let them. It's not theirs. It's my class, not yours." She continued, "If you questioned my teaching, you can have the class." Dee was very intentional about creating opportunities to collaborate with other faculty members in the university; therefore, non-Black professors pursued her to work on various projects. She maintained, "In some instances, it adds value to their proposal because there is diversity . . . and sometimes . . . you only have me here because I am Black. But it's like—you know what? I'm in the room; now I can benefit from this."

In terms of diversity, Dee was one of two African-Americans in her department. She insisted she did not feel isolated because the department had "decent diversity and most folks are pretty supportive of one another." She did, however, share some of the challenges she faced as an African-American faculty member. Dee had encountered gender microaggressions, including being asked to "take notes" because she was a woman. She had experiences with male colleagues asking her if she was pregnant.

Dee struggled to articulate race issues. She complained about the weight of being the "representative" for all Black people. Her students expected her to speak on behalf of all Black people on several issues pertaining to race and racism in America. She lamented, "I think the students, race-wise, are looking to me to answer what it means to be Black." She was "mindful of not having minority students be the mouthpiece for inequity, race conversations." She made it clear she did not "speak for the race,"

insisting that Black Americans were not a monolithic group and to stop treating them like one. As a minority professor at the university, she was always the "only Black person in the room" at meetings. This had become a "normal" experience for Dee and, although frustrated with the underrepresentation of African-American faculty presence at the university, she convinced herself, "You can't change the systems from the outside. Sometimes we have to be the only Black person in the room."

Dee had mixed feelings about the institution's efforts to recruit African-American faculty. She noted that the university had recruitment strategies, but "the units could be more, should show greater commitment to that type of recruitment." Dee portrayed her institution's halfhearted effort to recruit minority faculty:

> So, Cornell is super cold, far away, no cultural things to do in Ithaca. And their recruitment plan for minority faculty postdocs is phenomenal because they have to have a phenomenal plan to get people there. We're in . . . It's like, "You want to just come, hang out for the weekend, see if you like us?" That's not working. So, in some ways, we have to say, "You know what? Let's move away from the . . . context crutch and act like we're in Ithaca and really recruit people.

Her suggestion for leadership was to "look at places that have no minority faculty. What are their plans, because they do a good job recruiting people." In the same vein, Dee complained about different standards for tenure-promotion and scholarly publications between African-American faculty and their non-Black colleagues. As someone who has served and chaired various committees, she had seen firsthand the different standards. Dee challenged her colleagues, to help her "understand why we're

doing this in this instance, but the policy says this." She did not accept their response of "It's complicated"; instead, she chose to challenge her colleagues' behaviors, asking them to admit their role in this "complication." She fired back,

> "It's complicated" isn't good enough. How does this follow the rules that we've laid out for everyone? Oh, it doesn't. So, why did you do this? Oh, it wasn't you. It was the committee. Why did you sign your name to it? "Well, I had to." Just like all of Hitler's people had to kill the Jews? No, you're responsible.

As an African-American faculty member, Dee clearly understood the importance of African-American faculty and the contributions they make to the university. She expressed her sentiments in the following statement:

> The impact that we have on the conversation because we're in the room or we're asking questions . . . our mere presence impacts what is discussed, what's included, what's excluded, what ideas can and cannot be discussed, and how decisions are made. . . . It's just the presence creates awareness that the people who and the issues that just visually we represent are now being considered, because we're at the table, because we're in the second row.

Dee regarded other African-American faculty on campus as "family" because they checked on one another, supported one another, had social gatherings outside of work, and mentored and sponsored one another. She explained the difference between mentorship and sponsorship, as defined by one of her African-American colleagues: "Mentors advise you; sponsors stick their neck out for you."

Dee hoped people would remember her as one who lifted students and helped them achieve great accomplishments. She summarized this vision:

> I want to be remembered as the person who helped someone—that I helped a group, or I helped people realize a better tomorrow. It doesn't have to be that I helped with a planning specific thing, a disciplinary thing, but that I helped them be a better person in whatever that looks like where I helped improve an institution to serve more people.

Joe

A faculty member in my college introduced me to Joe, a tenured faculty member with over 30 years of experience at Twin Rivers University. Joe was eager to share "the good and the bad" experiences of his job as an African-American faculty member. In this study, I sought to give Joe a voice on the college experiences of African-American faculty.

I met Joe at his office for all three interviews. I had never before been to the college where Joe worked, so it took me a little time to find it. Upon entering the building, it was so quiet; I wondered where everyone was. No students were roaming the hallways, and I only saw one person who appeared to be staff. On the first floor, I noticed several announcement boards with information posted for the students. The building had offices for faculty and staff, but I did not see any classrooms. As I approached Joe's office, tucked in the corner on the second floor, I knocked on the door and heard him say, "Come on in, Michelle Robinson."

The first thing I saw was a big smile on Joe's face; he was so pleasant. Like many other participants, he was excited to speak with me. Joe and I established an

immediate rapport. I was excited to hear Joe's story as the one with the longest tenure at this institution. Joe was a self-proclaimed Southern man, a true gentleman, and very polite. He made sure to tell me he was "just an old Southern boy," very respectful of women, something his mannerisms confirmed. I will never forget that Joe said, "Hey, your name is Michelle Robinson, like Michelle Obama's maiden name." Joe and I laughed about that each time we met.

Stacks of paper cluttered Joe's desk; he had books and pictures throughout his office. I kept gazing at a display of the most influential African-American leaders in the United States. There were other African artifacts posted on the walls of his office as well as pictures of his children when they were younger. Joe referred to himself as a "jacked-legged" Christian because his beliefs had shifted since childhood, but he was confident that his gift of fatherhood was from God. He spoke very highly of his children and their accomplishments, which he attributed to God's mercy. His children were his greatest gift, a gift to be nurtured. He chose to work for a long time to provide for his children. He admitted,

> Had I not had children; I wouldn't be at [Twin Rivers University] . . . As a matter of fact, I would have gone somewhere else. . . My greatest fear has always been if God said, '[Joe], I gave you a great gift. Why didn't you nurture it?' What am I going to say?

Joe grew up in the South in the "'50's, '60s, and '70s" with his parents and five siblings. During that era, racism and segregation were prominent; he described it "as an infinitely racist place." Joe's family experienced economic challenges, but Joe asserted, "It was like you were poor on one hand, but rich in experiences." He continued,

> We were really poor. We didn't have indoor plumbing until I was probably 11 years old. . . But I was lucky because I came from one of them *Leave It to Beaver*-kind of 1950s families, right? Daddy went to work; Mama stayed home.

Joe labeled his father as a "workaholic" and his mother a "drill sergeant." As a chef, his father had to find work, which on many occasions meant traveling across the country. He used this opportunity to expose his family to a vast array of diverse experiences that Joe classified as "atypical for a Southern kid growing up in a Southern ghetto." Joe learned a lot about different cultures and developed a love for various types of music and food. With sincerity, he asserted, "I got a chance to experience things. I know a lot of rich kids who have never done the things that I have done." While his father worked, his mother tended to them at home and was "tough on" Joe and his siblings. Joe stated, "My dad was a CEO; my mom was the operations person. She ran the place, and with an iron fist." She took care of them and education was a priority. Joe stated, "Even though my mom never went to college, she was hell-bent on making sure her children got educated." Joe experienced "positive segregation" in the "first 5 years of elementary school," which he described as follows:

> Quite frankly, I probably enjoyed that time more than I did at any other time, because the one thing that I saw in the teachers there, even from a little child, they were very encouraging. . . So, it was a really nice experience.

Joe shared how education was "the most important thing. . . We got a whooping if we didn't do well." His family highly valued education, and his mom was adamant

that Joe and his siblings attend college. Joe was a stellar student throughout K-12 and postsecondary education. Although he was a high achiever academically, Joe wanted to pursue a career in sports. He shared his career aspirations, saying,

> Listen, I wanted to be a basketball player more than I wanted to eat. I was serious. That was my goal in life. I was going to be an NBA player. But I'll tell you how I got on the study bus, on the school bus. My momma made me study, so I had a fallback position.

Joe soon realized he was not "good enough" to be a professional athlete, so he shifted his career aspirations and became a college professor. He defaulted to a career in education because he "enjoyed college a lot and wanted to stay. . . I was good at economics, and I was the only econ major at the university." One of his professors also encouraged him to pursue a graduate degree, giving him a solid foundation in economics. Joe recalled, "He taught me money and capital markets, and he'd come in with nice shoes on and he looked nice. He just strolled in and [did] his thing, and that inspired me."

Joe credited much of his success to all the teachers who encouraged him along the way, "even the racist ones." Other teachers and coaches helped him overcome racist policies that could have hindered his academic achievements. He remembered one coach who stereotyped him as "not smart enough to be a quarterback" simply because of his race. Of this racism, he said, "It pissed me off to no end, and drove me to succeed."

Joe also experienced racial microaggressions from his peers. He recalled one pivotal incident when "another racist White boy [said] Black people didn't contribute to the gross national income." Instead of taking them personally, Joe used these racist

slights as motivation to push harder and prove he was equally good at everything he chose to do. He captured these sentiments, saying,

> So, I had success. And they encouraged me, and the whole deal. I'm going to be really honest with you. I'm probably one of the luckiest guys you'll ever meet, because I did run into racist White people who tried to discourage me. But the people who were important, they were nice to me, and they encouraged me.

After he earned his PhD, Joe immediately began his career as a faculty member at Twin Rivers University. He had previously taught at another PWI, so he was familiar with the culture. Joe had also taught at an HBCU and another university overseas. When I met Joe, he had been at Twin Rivers University for over 3 decades. For the last 10 years, Joe had been the only African-American faculty member in his department, which had come with some challenges. Like other participants in this study, Joe also experienced a profound sense of isolation as he navigated his faculty job single-handedly. He described his lonely experience, saying, "Listen, I felt isolated . . . in a lot of ways. . . So, I have been by myself." Joe emphasized the power of mentors, recognizing that if not for one Black faculty who helped him find his place in the department, he may not have made it. He stated,

> Now, there are a lot of Black people who've had success because they've had mentors and people to take care of them. I don't care what nobody say in this business; you can't make it without somebody taking care of you. Somebody has got to help you. I don't know anybody who could do it by themselves.

Joe was not shy about admitting the prevalence of racial discrimination in academia. He lamented, "I have experienced racism everywhere, particularly in my profession, because there are very few Black economists. And if you don't write things the way they want you to write it, you don't get it published." With anger, he described several occasions on which his White colleagues had crossed the line by "yelling at me" in faculty meetings. Joe made it very clear he did not back down from these challenges and did not tolerate their disrespect.

Joe's colleagues' lack of care and concern for the students, which was contrary to his work ethic, disheartened him. Joe had learned "teaching is about . . . taking something they know already and rearranging the pieces so they can learn this third thing that they don't know." He believed "teaching is about imparting knowledge." Joe expressed disdain for some of his colleagues, admitting,

> I hate most of my colleagues. I'm going to tell you why. They think it's time for them to show off how smart they are, which I absolutely hate. This isn't for you, dog. This is for them. You got to teach them.

Joe was worried about the problem of grade inflation, which he claimed was prevalent in his college. He believed it was a disservice to be dishonest about students' performance. He regretted having to curve his grades to avoid the backlash of failing half of his class. Joe suspected this problem might be the result of his department prioritizing research over teaching. He stated, "I didn't realize how marginal a place like this thought teaching was. They didn't care. As long as I sort of met some threshold, they didn't really care." In hindsight, he realized he "wanted to be good at it all," but in retrospect, he should have "paid less attention to teaching and do my research."

Joe disregarded the notion that universities are money-making organizations. This assertion was in sharp contrast to his belief that universities are educational institutions meant to develop people. He shared his thoughts:

> I think Twin Rivers University has inadvertently become a really good place, but it's because we have fabulous students—I mean, really good students. This is driven the quality of the institute, but under it all, you know what . . . it really is? . . . It's a good old White boy . . . organization. That's what it really is.

The notion of diversity was just "lip service" at Joe's institution "because it's in style. You supposed to be concerned about it, but they're not really concerned about it." Joe believed the lack of diversity was due to little or no effort to recruit African-American faculty. As a long-time member of the university, Joe provided a historical context of faculty recruitment strategies used from the 1980s to today. He argued,

> The university doesn't reach out anymore the way they once did. . . I think that was in the '80s . . .they were much more sensitive to this kind of thing then than they are now. . . I think, as time has gone on, there's no extra effort to recruit African-Americans.

Joe complained that the new recruitment strategies did not yield enough qualified African-American candidates. He could not understand how Twin Rivers University is situated in a predominantly Black metropolitan area— "probably sixty, seventy percent Black"—yet with "maybe six percent African-American [faculty] here." Joe thought successful faculty recruitment efforts should involve the university actively reaching out to potential applicants rather than just advertise and wait for responses. He believed the

current process was a sure way not to recruit qualified African-American faculty. Joe was extremely passionate about recruiting African-American faculty, as he remembered the university actively recruiting him. He described his hiring experience as "very positive." It was evident Joe had a desire for the university to make the same efforts it had "the first 15 years I was here."

Joe inherently believed the presence of African-American faculty is significant. He professed that African-American faculty give the university "a conscience" because once they have a seat at the table, they can "stick up for those people who are at the bottom of the structure. And I think that's— We make them; we at least make the argument. Now sometimes they ignore us. [But] we at least make the argument."

Joe expressed his commitment to teach, research, and educate students from all backgrounds. He exclaimed, "I would have loved teaching anywhere, though. . . I could have taught on the moon if they have classes there. I enjoy it. I enjoy engaging the students." Joe was a strong advocate and champion for African-American students who experienced academic challenges. Joe used tough love to teach African-Americans. He reported his drive for "training really good African-American students. When I find one that's really, really good, I just beat my chest over it because that's what we're looking for. We're looking to help the next generation get better."

Joe shared a story about one of his African-American students. The man was "terrible in my class," which led Joe "to show him some tough love." Years later, the student expressed his appreciation, telling Joe, "Had you not talked to me, I would've been lost." Joe acknowledged, "That's probably one of the most satisfying moments I've ever had teaching. To see . . . a kid I thought if he didn't get it right, he was going to be

in a bad way. But he got it right." Joe believed faculty who teach African-American students need cultural competence training to help them understand African culture so they can help students. He emphasized the importance of cultural competence when teaching African-Americans:

> I think our culture is really beautiful. Misunderstood, not encouraged. And just because you Black, that don't mean you can't be educated. You ought to be so that you can understand who you are and where you come from and all of that. Those are important things. And I don't care what research I do or what awards I get, I always . . . I don't ever want White people to get it twisted and think that I'm not Black because I am, to the core. And if you write something that suggest that I'm not, I'm going to be angry.

Joe hoped to make a positive impression on African-American students. He wanted to be a model for students to emulate the good and avoid the bad aspects of his life. He stated a desire that "some young Black guy sees himself in me, and that they can use my pitfalls to better themselves." He thought this research would provide university leadership with possible strategies to understand the experiences of their African-American stakeholders: faculty, students, and staff.

Christian

I had an engaging conversation with Christian over the telephone using FreeConferenceCall software. Christian was born in the North-Central part of Maryland, where he lived for the first 9 years with his parents and older brother. Later, his family moved to a predominantly White suburb in Maryland. The demographics of this new

neighborhood were glaringly different from the old one, which was mainly Black. Christian experienced a bit of culture shock moving from predominantly Black schools to mostly White schools. However, he soon acculturated and became "so whitewashed in a whitewashed environment."

Christian identified with his Blackness, but he had never experienced racism until he was in high school. This all changed when a teacher accused him and some of his White classmates of cheating. Whereas the others "got a slap on the wrist," he was severely punished and "kicked out" of the National Honor Society. He did not perceive this incident as a form of racist discrimination until his parents explained, "Christian, you got kicked out because you were Black, where these other kids were White did not get kicked out." At that point, Christian had an epiphany:

> If I time-traveled racism, when you grow up in a whitewash environment, you don't know that racism, prejudice, events are happening. So, you have to wait. Time has to— You look back on things like, "Whoa, that was pretty racist, that was pretty prejudiced, that was pretty problematic."

This was a pivotal moment in Christian's life because he realized that, regardless of where he lived, he was African-American. Christian reflected on this experience and shared, "I think what bothered me was not getting kicked out; it was not recognizing that I was being targeted as an African-American." Even with the situation, Christian acknowledged one of his greatest memories was "growing up around all Caucasians." So, when he began college, he did not experience a culture shock. He admitted,

> I think I was about maybe 19 or 20 when literally it hit me like a ton of bricks: "Hey, did you know you're Black?" I decided I've got to do

something to be more Black. . . I made the decision in that moment: "I'll pledge a fraternity."

Christian understood that moving to the suburbs was a decision his parents made to provide their family with a better life. He shared, "In their minds and in their eyes, providing a better life meant living in a certain community, having certain resources, having certain positions, and so that's why they really worked very hard in their careers." Christian stated, "I was a latchkey kid in the sense of my parents worked extremely hard to, 'give us a better life.'" He recognized "how hard they worked to try to advance in their careers so that we could live where we live."

Christian's parents had successful state jobs before his father got a more lucrative position with the federal government. Christian was proud of his parents' success. He expressed, "I think growing up, I considered them to be successful because we lived well, but I really didn't know how big a deal they were 'til they both retired." When his parents retired, he thought to himself, "You had a really great career; your kind of a big deal type of thing." Christian had a very comfortable, idyllic childhood and never lacked anything; it was like "being on vacation." He enjoyed access to all the luxuries a child could want, including being "literally . . . on the beach all day."

Christian's parents were "very passionate about education." They were both college-educated, with his mother having a bachelor's degree and his father a master's degree. Christian, who adopted his parents' passion for education, was "an extremely bright child" who "always excelled academically, always excelled athletically." He considered himself "kind of like the golden child." He boasted, "In high school, middle school, and elementary school, I was the smartest kid in the room. I was smarter than

everybody else." Christian's father gave him the impression that education level reduced the incidence of racial discrimination for Black Americans. Christian captured this argument in the following vignette:

> My father impressed upon me in a great way to get as many degrees as I could. Figure out what you wanted to do, go as far as you can in your field. He always made a relationship and a connection between degrees and opportunity. The more degrees you have, the more opportunity you're going to have. So, you want to have as many degrees as you can. He would always tell me, "If you can, go straight through. Don't work first because you'll enjoy the money and you won't want to go back to school."

Christian heeded his father's advice and earned four degrees—a bachelor's, two Master's, and a PhD—before beginning his career and family. He conveyed, "I love being in school. If I could go back and get another degree, I would. I'm very good. I became very good at being a student. I have a major love for learning."

As his father had predicted, Christian had many job options after college. He accepted a corporate internship and quickly learned he did not have the "disposition" to work in a corporate environment. Although Christian admired his father's work ethic and ability to provide for his family, he did not like how his father's job prevented him from spending more time with his family. Accordingly, Christian decided to follow a different career trajectory in academia. Christian asserted,

> I saw myself being like my dad, wearing a suit to work every day. For some reason, I've always been good with math and numbers and I've always been intrigued by finance. So, I just assumed that'd be doing

> something in finance . . . Wall Street, a banker. . . I thought I would have a wife, have kids, just have the American dream, but I would find a job where I wouldn't have to work the long hours that my dad worked because I remember him missing baseball games or being late, hurrying, rushing to get home, to get me to a baseball game.

His career in academia became a reality when a university teaching opportunity presented itself at his alma mater. Christian was "very interested in pedagogy and issues of the scholarship of teaching and learning." Most importantly, this opportunity positioned him to "impact some change in [the] environment." The job also enabled him to mentor minority youth, something he had missed while in college. He professed,

> I definitely wanted to come back, mainly because there was zero— I went through an entire undergraduate experience without having an African-American professor, male or female . . . so my underrepresented minority students are kind of drawn to me. Some of them even say to me things like, "I've not had a professor who was Black my entire time I was here."

Christian was a 10-year, nontenured veteran faculty member and advisor at Twin Rivers University. He had acquired a variety of professional experiences, including teaching and learning. He was a very religious man who credited "the favor of God" for all his career growth opportunities. He counted his blessings, including a promotion to a full-time position with better pay and benefits. As a Christian, he believed God blesses one to bless others. He stated, "Your gifts will make room for you." This prophecy had materialized in the form of his positive influence to improve other people's lives and help them find success.

Christian was a devoted husband and father; his family was his priority. Christian was determined as a young man to pursue a career that gave him the flexibility, he needed to be present in his children's lives. He admired his father's work ethic, but he made a conscious decision that his career would not interfere with the time he spent with his family. He stated, "In my whole mind, I just promised myself I would never do that to my kids. I'd always have a job where I was flexible enough." Christian shared, "I actually have two jobs, and in both those jobs, I have a supreme amount of flexibility."

In addition to his academic achievements, Christian was a respected church pastor with a strong connection to God. He had been able to connect his academic position with his church mission through his students. The following anecdote shows the intersection between his university job and his pastoral job:

> I think my favorite story is when students find out that I'm a pastor, and they come to my church. That really brings me joy. . . And that really means a lot to me. To see the two sides of my life cross in the way.

As an African-American professor, Christian was committed to "seeing African-American students succeed. Seeing the pride and the joy on their faces when they walk in and have a Black professor. Seeing them do things that they normally probably would not do." Christian empathized with the challenges African-American students experience at PWIs. He asserted, "It's hard being any type of underrepresented minority on this campus—well, particularly African-American." Christian was deeply committed to improving the Black experience on the campus through "a certain level of care and concern for them, that makes all the difference in the world to them." His students reciprocated by "work[ing] extremely hard, because they don't want to let me down

because I'm putting in all this effort to help them succeed." Christian lifted students who had been "demoralized for years," transforming their failure into success. He declared, "I take pride in . . . really bright kids. I'm not too proud . . . walking into a classroom and getting my slowest, dumbest kid who just doesn't understand anything, and motivating them and pushing them to the point where they get it." Christian believed building relationships with African-American students was key to their success. He explained,

> I'm back as a professor in the department that I went to as undergrad, so eighty percent of those jokers were my professors. It's interesting when you come back and you're like, "Yeah, I had you," and they don't even remember me, because that's how low of an impact and the low of a relationship we had.

Christian found his efforts at building relationships constrained by Twin Rivers University's prioritization of research, which he said was "probably the main difficulty" at the institution. The bias in favor of research over teaching was evident when he said, "In the 10 years that I've been here, no one has checked my teaching to make sure I am doing a good job." Professors at Twin Rivers University prioritized research over teaching to protect their jobs rather than help students. Christian stated, "You were busting your butt to publish and get papers out here so that you wouldn't lose your job. So teaching was secondary, if not tertiary." Consequently, faculty did not develop relationships with students. Christian remarked, "Here's how we know, because 6 years later, here's somebody who comes back to school, comes back . . . as your colleague, but you don't even remember that you were my professor 6 years ago."

Christian was continually fighting the racist notion that African-American students are monolithic. His peers struggled with the idea that all students come from different socioeconomic backgrounds and family structures. Thus, they do "not understand what true diversity and equity means. What it means to create an inclusive environment in your classroom. Not understanding the ways that they unintentionally are excluding underrepresented minorities, Blacks, females. That's been very, very difficult." Christian was working hard to make his peers "culturally competent for the sake of African-American students." He stated,

> Being able to open my colleagues' eyes to not treat all the students exactly the same. To understand that there is diversity in the classroom, and that part of being equitable as a professor is understanding you have a diverse group of students who have a diverse set of experiences and are entering into your classroom in many different ways.

Christian was equally concerned with the "implicit biases" of fellow professors who pretended to be sensitive and aware of racial biases but occasionally lost their guard and exposed their racist tendencies "in their interaction with students . . . at faculty meetings or staff meetings."

Christian was highly annoyed by some racist White students who questioned his ability to teach them. One brazen student once asked, "what qualifications do I have to teach him?" Like most racists, the student used the "natural talent" myth as a weapon against Black people. The student told Christian he "looked more like a basketball player than . . . a professor." Such racism led Christian to consider to "metaphorically quit, said

I was leaving Twin Rivers University, my alma mater that I love so much, and . . . going to teach math at Morehouse or someplace else."

Like all participants in this study, Christian carried the burdensome responsibility of supporting all underrepresented African-American students. He was the informal college counselor who handled situations involving "the underrepresented minority, particularly African-American males." This self-imposed obligation was an extension of the teaching and research responsibilities he took on with grace to support all his students, regardless of race; he never sent students from other nationalities to professors looking like them.

Christian thought Twin Rivers University was ill-equipped to promote genuine diversity, with all people treated with dignity. He stated, "The university is intimately concerned about getting diverse people, but not diverse modes of thoughts, diverse understandings." He argued that even if the school admits a diverse group of students, "if you do not . . . really create diverse experiences," they will leave unprepared and "go back into homogeneous environments, and the problems of our society just continue."

Furthermore, Christian claimed Twin Rivers University indulged in mere "lip service" regarding its effort to recruit minority faculty. He highlighted the absence of meaningful recruitment, such as having "boots on the ground, someone to implement the strategy." In fairness, Christian acknowledged other departments "where you have tenured faculty who are either underrepresented minority or tenured faculty who care about the hiring of underrepresented minorities. . . The strategies are implemented better . . . than departments where you don't have representation." The general excuse used by many of his colleagues in the department was "there's just not a lot of applicants." He

looked behind those words and knew this was not a genuine defense. Christian invalidated the excuse, saying, "We're a top-five school for undergraduate and graduate public education. So, there's no reason African-Americans would not want to come here."

As one of only three African-Americans in his department, Christian had witnessed African-American faculty candidates receive different treatment than non-Black candidates. He wondered, "Would this be acceptable?" if it had been a White candidate. He contended that all things being equal, African-American candidates should receive the same treatment as White candidates.

Christian had experienced many highs and lows in his faculty career. The lows included a toxic institutional climate that perpetuated racial and gender disparities against African-American students and faculty. Christian complained on behalf of campus sororities denied the same privileges as the male fraternities. He contended, "This is how ridiculous this institution is. Still, we have this kind of an understanding of binary gender, which is a problem for 2020, and a privileging of one gender over the other, and that's still the curse." Christian recommended that the university shift from being a "White-male dominated" institution that prioritizes research as a means of "bringing in money and catering to the elite" at the expense of teaching and nurturing "our students . . . our staff and . . . the other persons on this campus who don't do research. And finding a way, as Paul said, to be all things to all people, to do all things well."

As an African-American faculty member, Christian understood that he was in a unique position to create new opportunities for other African-American faculty.

Christian prayed for divine inspiration and power to use his position to work miracles and improve diversity at the institution. He remarked,

> I sit in a privileged position, but I don't sit there comfortably. I sit there with my faith telling me that this is probably divinely ordained, the providential that I have been given these opportunities. And so, I have a responsibility to fight, scratch, push, argue, demand that opportunities are also given to others. Which I feel very proud about because we've got two African-American faculty candidates. [We] hadn't had any in so many years, [and] this year, after a bunch of pushing, we got two.

Chapter Summary

Chapter 4 presented a narrative analysis for each participant. The passages were explorations of the lives and career experiences of six African-American faculty members who worked at Twin Rivers University. Within the narratives, I shared observations of each participant. In Chapter 5, I use these narratives as a foundation to conduct data analysis and develop themes.

Chapter V

DISCUSSION OF THEMES

In this chapter, I examine the life and career experiences of six African-American faculty members. Four themes emerged to show how the six faculty members described their experiences: burden of Blackness, politics of isolation and omission, paradox of diversity at a PWI, and extended roles and responsibilities of African-American faculty in PWIs. In this study, I used a narrative counter-storytelling approach, giving the participants their own voices and freedom to express their thoughts and feelings about their unique experiences.

Data Analysis

At the beginning of each participant's initial interview, I obtained informed consent and explained the reason for the study. The purpose of this study was to determine if African-American university faculty members at a university research institution in a southeastern U.S. state encountered barriers in their efforts to become university faculty members, and if they did, what strategies they used to overcome the barriers. I used various data collection methods, including interviews, researcher observations, memos, university documents, and policies.

I used Seidman's (2006) three-step interview model for a series of three interviews with each participant. I developed three interview guides, each with a distinct purpose. The first guide was a way to learn about each participant's personal life experiences, including family, education, and religious and cultural norms and beliefs.

The second interview guide allowed me to learn about participants' career experiences as African-American faculty members, their communication style, and how they managed different personalities and work conflicts. Following the third interview guide, I probed participants to learn about their hiring process, their opinions about multiculturalism and social justice, department culture, and university culture. Interviews took place through face-to-face meetings or teleconferencing software. Using open-ended questions, I engaged in a deeper dialogue with participants and gained a more profound understanding of their experiences. Before, during, and after each interview, I wrote memos to document any observations during the study. Maxwell (2013) urged researchers to write memos regularly throughout the study to capture immediate thoughts. Memos also assist in the data analysis process.

Data analysis began after each participant's second interview. Upon completing each interview, I transcribed the audio recording, next comparing the transcripts and the audio recordings to confirm accuracy. During the initial transcript review, I began the coding process by writing memos. Member checking was another means to ensure accuracy, providing participants an opportunity to review their transcripts for correctness or any possible discrepancies (Maxwell, 2013).

I used Hahn's (2008) coding process to analyze the data, beginning with open coding to break down raw data from the interview transcripts and memos. I began fracturing data into smaller chunks during this phase and developed initial codes (Hahn, 2008; Maxwell, 2013). Using various tools, including visual aids and Microsoft Excel, I began to identify similarities between the participants. Table 6 presents the initial codes.

Table 6

List of Initial Codes

Code	Code description
LE	Life experiences: upbringing
CE	Career experiences: career experiences
SM	Student mentoring: mentoring relationships between students and faculty
FM	Faculty mentoring: mentoring relationships between faculty and their colleagues
BR	Black representative: the expectations for participants to be spokespersons for the entire Black race
RE	Recruitment: recruitment strategies at the university
HE	Hiring experience: the hiring experiences of each faculty
RA	Racism: racism at the university
CA	Cares for students: how faculty feel about students
RT	Research and teaching: the relationship between research and teaching at the university
AD	Administrative duties: additional duties required of faculty
CL	Career flexibility: faculty's ability to manage their schedules
TP	Tenure process: knowledge of the tenure process

During the second stage of coding, I reviewed the transcripts multiple times. As I reexamined the transcripts, I took detailed notes in the margins and documented similarities between the participants. I developed a color-coded matrix using Microsoft Excel to group codes and identify similar words. During the third and final coding stage, I identified common patterns in the data and developed categories. From those categories, four themes emerged. An example of an emerging theme is in Table 7.

Table 7

Example of an Emerging Theme

Theme	Participant response	Initial code
Tenure process	Joe: Tenure is part beauty contest, and part accomplishment. . . It's sort of a secretive process. . . [It] is much more open, and people get tenure based on some very standard characteristics. Twin Rivers University is not one of those places.	TP
	James: I felt there was a lot of guidance about the process. It wasn't like I was walking in completely blind. I kind of knew what I was supposed to do. . . There were no roadblocks	
	Dee: So, the policy was clearly stated, but how it gets applied is where the wrinkle is.	
	Michael: Yes, the requirements were clearly stated to follow, but it is open to interpretation. . . It's just like there are words on a piece of paper and you have to figure out how to interpret those against the culture and expectations of your environment. . . There's a broad interpretation. . . Not only it is open for interpretation, [but] the requirements are set by who is in charge.	

Themes

Four themes emerged from the data collected during the study. The themes were burden of Blackness, politics of isolation and omission, paradox of diversity at a PWI, and extended roles and responsibilities of African-American faculty in PWIs. Each theme receives discussion in the following sections.

Theme 1: Burden of Blackness

In this theme, I analyzed African-American faculty's efforts to navigate racial narratives, ideologies, and discourses within complex White institutional spaces while trying to achieve professional success. Participants reported that racism prevented them from having equal opportunities to be successful in their jobs. Through participants' stories and the lenses of CRT and BFT, I found race discrimination manifested in the

institution most obviously through everyday racial microaggressions and dismissive dominant ideologies that denied them the relevance of race and racism (Fanon, 2008). Sue et al. (2007) defined racial microaggressions as "brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults to the target person or group" (p. 273). According to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, racial discrimination is

> Any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise on an equal footing of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life. (Henner, 2006, p. 169)

Data analysis indicated that the root causes of racial discrimination at Twin Rivers University were White faculty and students' actions, institutional culture, unconscious bias, and failure to enforce anti-racist policies. All these issues inevitably led to racist behavior and discrimination of Black faculty. Participants' candid stories revealed some shocking experiences of racial discrimination. Thus, this theme provided an African-American faculty perspective of overcoming racial discrimination at a PWI.

I adopted CRT and BFT as conceptual frameworks for making sense of data provided by African-American faculty at a PWI. The first theme that emerged was that African-American embodiment is a (symbolic and material) burden, what I called the burden of Blackness. I analyzed data from individual interviews, observations, and

written documents through the conceptual lenses of CRT and BFT to identify unique voices of race thesis. From the standpoint of the participants with whom I share a race, Blackness, as experienced in the PWI context, is burdensome. The data indicated that for African-American faculty working at PWIs, the difference of their (dark) skin color is not the problem; instead, it is how others perceive, interpret, and act upon that difference.

Problematic stereotypes related to race played an essential role in the professional experiences of African-American faculty at PWIs. Vinacke defined stereotype as "the tendency to attribute generalized and simplified characteristics to groups of people in the form of verbal labels, and to act towards the members of those groups in terms of those labels" (as cited in Kanahara, 2006, p. 307). Rönnbäck (2014) argued that stereotypes about African-Americans in the United States are products of the institution of slavery. Rönnbäck noted that deeply held beliefs stem from White racist attitudes operationalized through oppressive and discriminating actions, which idealized how slaves should think and behave. For example, stereotypes about aggression and lack of academic aptitude explicitly associated with African-American men may influence different responses to men and women.

This section focuses on stereotypes regarding gender and academic ability that have favored European American men and boys in educational settings (Edwards & Ross, 2018). I also look at African-American faculty's feelings of anxiety about whether they will confirm or disprove their colleagues' and students' stereotypical beliefs. Although most male participants in this study reported being considered more acceptable to White students, Christian's found his credibility challenged. He shared,

> I had a student, Caucasian male student—I'll never forget it as long as I live—who, first day of class . . . he raised his hand . . . asked me what qualifications did I have to teach him. . . . I think the distressing thing was less about him saying it, and even less about him having the audacity to say it. The more distressing thing was this just happened to be a class where I had a really high percentage of Caucasian students. . . The vast majority of them had this look like, "Yeah, we agree; answer the question."

This stereotype confirmed Kelly et al. (2017) and Whitfield-Harris and Lockhart (2016), who asserted that African-American faculty members are in unique positions of having to prove their academic ability. Harris (2007) and Jones et al. (2015) echoed similar thoughts about African-American faculty's feeling diminished in their attempts to develop credibility with non-Black students and colleagues. Reid (2010) also recognized that minority faculty faced criticism from students, who rank them lowest in terms of "quality, clarity, and easiness" (p. 142).

Whitfield-Harris and Lockhart (2016) confirmed participants' efforts to validate their credibility in and out of the classroom. It is reasonable to speculate that such experiences could have led participants to isolate themselves to avoid the "feelings of marginalization" (p. 29). For example, Christian felt "burdened," as if he were on an island by himself. Joe claimed, "I'm a little put off by my departmental culture. . . In my 33 years, four different chairs. . . That's one of the reasons we have been unsuccessful. . . Our school culture has been pretty crappy. I don't like it. Never have." As the only African-American faculty member in his department, Joe explained, "I used to feel

lonely. I don't anymore, because I've gotten to the point it don't matter to me no more, because I know it's not going to change." Asked if he has adapted to the lack of African-American faculty representation in his department, Michael stated simply, "I'm fine." He continued, "It's the life of the only."

According to Miller (1995), the stereotype of Blacks as inferior to White people stems from the belief that "White culture is much more advanced" (p. 78). Joe claimed that the theory of White supremacy had permeated Twin Rivers University's institutional culture, as evident in different acts of disrespect toward African-American faculty. Black men are a stereotypical threat on college campuses (Boyd & Mitchell, 2018). Based on my observations, I speculated the male participants were consciously aware of their depiction as an aggressor or a threat. Typically, Blacks stereotyped as aggressive or hostile avoid standing too close, speaking too loudly, or using harsh language; however, African-American male faculty often believe they must be aggressive to establish credibility in their classrooms. Joe described a situation with White students in one of his classes:

> [Twin Rivers University] students are kind of aggressive, and I think particularly the males. They weren't accustomed to having African-American professors, so they were a little more aggressive than usual, and what I had to do was become more aggressive than usual. So, I chopped up a couple of them pretty good the first few days, and then they realized that I knew what I was doing. I wasn't going to take their crap, and it worked out.

Likewise, Christian illustrated how students were intimidated by his presence. He stated,

> I'm a large Black man. . . I definitely have had a situation . . .where some student will complain about something, and what they'll complain about is innocuous. They didn't like being told no by a large Black man. . . I've had to explain nothing disrespectful was done to this student. This student can't handle talking to a tall Black professor; that's their issue, not mine.

In another instance, Joe felt disrespected at a faculty meeting, where one of his White colleagues yelled at him "because he was higher-ranked than me, and he thought I was afraid of him." Joe reacted angrily to the stereotypical assumption that he is dumb because of his skin color. Joe shared, "It was like time stood still. Everybody in the room got scared because I leaned on the table and I said, 'Excuse me. . . Have you lost . . .?' Everybody just froze, right?"

Joe was also painfully conscious of a common perception of White people depicting Black men as threatening (Hester & Gray, 2018), which could jeopardize his faculty position at Twin Rivers University. Hester & Gray (2018) suggested Black men with larger statures can encounter even greater stereotypes and negative perceptions from authoritative figures. Joe's incident showed that race can influence people's interpretation of stature. This trait can be positive or negative for African-American men. Joe mitigated this stereotype with an upbeat attitude. He stated, "I'm subject to strike. . . I try to be nice to them, so they never do anything to make me kill somebody."

Joe maintained that his colleagues were more aggressive than his students. He said,

> The difficulty is with your colleagues. It's so damn competitive here, and everybody is constantly grinding, trying to get an edge and, you know,

these White folks political, right? And they're always trying to get around things and get ahead, so . . . I don't like that part. I don't like the political part.

Along similar lines, Michael lamented about the burden of continually trying to convince his White colleagues of his equal ability to succeed. He conveyed, "People of color have tried for years to convince White people—White males, in particular—that they're equal and should be given all these rights. That has been a slow, slow, slow progression to success." He further hypothesized, "Someone will have to explain the incentive for White people to share power and wealth." James expressed frustration with his colleagues' audacity to question the educational outcomes of one of his courses.

It goes back to . . . tension that I always feel like happens with Black people in these types of settings where you get questioned a lot. . . And amongst other faculty, we've always had this one tension within one of the degree programs about my course and what it does and doesn't do for students. Despite the fact that the course is very popular, the scores from the students are always really . . . high.

James also felt pigeonholed by his colleagues. Despite his qualifications to teach at Twin Rivers University, his colleagues did not consider him good enough to participate in work events as equals. He felt he was just there to fill a diversity quota, with the university allowing him to do only so much. He captured these sentiments in the following passage:

They care about what I can bring to the table as the Black person. And "Oh, yeah, you do, do research. Oh, shoot. What do you do?" That kind

> of thing. I've been asked to give talks in a lot of places; very infrequently have I ever been asked to give talks here to anybody for anything. . . I think that's always interesting.

Unlike some of the participants, Christian was uncertain about how his colleagues viewed him. He shared, "I walk around with the understanding that . . . many of them probably think I'm not as smart or I'm not as whateverness to the rest of them, generally, because that's the general feeling toward Black persons in this country."

I believe Faith suffered worse stereotypes than her African-American male colleagues because of her gender. Supporting this view was the idea that African-American women do not necessarily experience race in the same way as African-American men (Browne & Misra, 2003; McCall, 2005). Faith decried being marginalized based on her race and gender:

> As woke as some of us claim to be—and by "we," I mean them and they—they still carry . . . those little stereotypes and microaggressions that might come out . . . because I'm sorry, but as a people, we uniquely communicate in a lot of ways and we have that code-switching ability and that ability to just say things just by looking at each other sometimes. . . . Sometimes I may have an idea for the way that I think something should be approached and, of course, I'm bringing all of me when I bring—when I have these ideas. It's not just professional [Faith], but it's personal [Faith] and private [Faith] . . . and every experience that I've ever had as a Black woman. And they haven't had that, and sometimes they don't necessarily get it. And it's hard to sometimes explain to them . . . why are

you taking that approach? Well, this is why. Because XYZ and I'm not just pulling this out of the air.

Faith worked harder than men just to prove her ability to do the same job. She explained,

> I have to bring the engineer in me to the table . . . put my balls on the table, too, to make sure [they] recognize that I'm just as qualified and credentialed as [they] are. So, it's almost like . . . a proving ground . . . as a woman, as a Black person . . . a Black woman, just making sure that they recognize that I'm supposed to be here and that I deserve to be here.

Dee experienced similar stereotypes as Faith early in her faculty career. She learned how to make her voice heard in a sea of White men and some African-American men. She indicated, "I knew I had to get the person in the room to echo what I would say for it to be heard or to provide additional justification for whatever I was saying to be valid."

Male and female African-American faculty were also conscious of students stereotyping them in the classroom (Reid, 2010) and were ready to counter these assumptions. When perceived as less intelligent, Faith and Dee emphasized their pedigree. Harris (2007), an African-American female faculty member, experienced her students stereotyping her as less knowledgeable of her subject content and not qualified to teach them, attitudes related to her race and gender. Faith shared her coping and survival strategies:

> One is getting them to believe the stuff that I say, that this is real, and I understand because I come from an engineering background, so I was trained in the same way that they were. . . . Really and truly establishing

> credibility with them, too, is another issue and what I find . . . that challenge . . . what has had to happen is often times I have to just tell them a little bit about me and let them know that, "Hey, I have a degree, you know; all my degrees are in engineering, just like yours."

Women's stereotyping escalated to disrespect by some students who chose not to acknowledge the female professors as professionals, refusing to use their academic titles. Harris (2007) and Pittman (2012) called these behaviors microinsults. White students' refusal to acknowledge African-American faculty by their earned title of "Doctor" forces African-American female faculty to continually defend themselves (Constantine, Smith, Redington, & Owens, 2008; Harris, 2007). Faith pointed out that this was a typical issue with White students; she had not experienced disrespect at her previous job at an HBCU. She compared the two institutions:

> When I taught at [an HBCU], the expectation was that you would be called Dr. XYZ, whatever your last name is. Whereas at an institution like [Twin Rivers University], you're just [Faith]. You almost have to say, "No, I'm a doctor," or this, that, or the other, because we recognize how critical, how hard-fought it was for us to even have these degrees and everything.

To some extent, Michael forgave students' behavior as culture shock, deeming them simply ignorant of race issues. He explained, "They've never been in class with a professor that looks like me . . . and they are holding the same stereotype, so we have to address all those things."

The participants complained of other stereotypes based on the assumption that all African-American people are the same and thus targeted as race gurus in their

departments and classrooms. White colleagues often expected the participants to speak on behalf of all African-American people as if they were a homogenous group. For example, Dee lamented, "It's not my job to educate you on what life is like for a Black person. . . My experience is just one. I don't speak for the race. . . You should talk to a lot of Black people. . . Why you ask me?" Additionally, Joe asserted, "I am so frustrated with [Twin Rivers University] sort of saying, 'Okay, we need one African-American to speak for all African-Americans.'" Such an attitude fails to acknowledge that African-American experiences and perspectives are varied (Celious & Oyserman, 2001).

Participants strongly rejected stereotypes and prejudices built on the assumption of sameness in ability and features. They also identified an urgent need for White members of their institution to understand them as heterogeneous people and not perceive all African-Americans through the same lens. Pittman (2012) confirmed these feelings, stating that "African American faculty felt that they were viewed as competent or experts in the opinions of Whites on race topics" (p. 88).

Yet, as much as African-American faculty resisted portraying themselves as micro-validators and as experts on their "foreign" culture (Pittman, 2012, p. 88), they sometimes succumbed and sat at the table as "diversity experts" (Stanley, 2006, p. 704) to discuss issues that would otherwise go undiscussed. Pittman (2012) maintained that African-American faculty accept these "race-related service" obligations (p. 89) to support their students. Although Christian sometimes found it burdensome to speak on race-related issues, he felt obligated to have these conversations with his colleagues. He explained his role as

> Having a voice at the table. Raising awareness. My Caucasian colleagues love to— ignorance is bliss. They love to not be aware and, truly, in many circumstances, are ignorant; they just aren't aware. You hope that they would proactively desire to learn about the cultures and the needs and the struggles of persons who are not Caucasian, but by and large, they do not. And so, it's kind of a responsibility of a minority, particularly a Black person, on a PWI campus to kind of raise the question, and point certain things out and make sure that while we develop all of these systems. . . . This is a White student environment. This is a White student system. So now let's develop something just as high quality for the other students . . . and they don't realize, but Black students wouldn't want to go to that, wouldn't want to engage in that.

James expressed frustration with his colleague's assumption of his role. He explained,

> There are some faculty who just . . . assume that you want to go . . . talk to every Black school you can possibly talk to, to get students. Which, philosophically, great. . . But I also do other things, right? There's the other side of me, too, that has other interests, as well. There's a little bit of tension there sometimes.

James discussed his displeasure with the expectations for him to work with minority populations because of his race:

> For some reason, there is this impression that I care a lot about outreach, particularly in the African-American community. Now, granted, I think it's an interesting thing to do. I think it's obviously a very good thing to

> do . . . but . . . regardless of what the project is . . . and how much . . . research is involved that is relevant to my academic research, which has nothing to do with race and gender explicitly. I always get asked to do outreach to minority populations.

Faith bemoaned the responsibility of being a representative for all Black people:

> Some days, I am very conscious of who I am as this Black person in this Black skin, this woman in this position, to make sure I am representing all of us in the best light possible. And then some days, I just don't give a . . . And I think sometimes I tread very lightly when it comes to vocalizing . . . because I think people— Because we're Black, they think we're experts in Black history. . . But for some reason we're expected to— And so sometimes it can be a little bit overwhelming because it's like, "Do I say something?" Because I don't want to now have to be the representative for Black history, you know, because I'm not the expert.

I found that stereotypes are deeply embedded in Twin Rivers University culture and often influenced acts of prejudice and systemic racism that have contributed to an atmosphere of mistrust and inequality between the African-American faculty and their White counterparts. Although the institution touts diversity policies, it fails to implement meaningful diversity where everyone feels valued. All participants agreed that more serious effort is needed to end prejudices and promote understanding, tolerance, and friendship at Twin Rivers University.

Theme 2: Politics of Isolation and Omission

Theme 2 pertained to Twin Rivers University's failure to improve the diversity of its teaching ranks and to reduce the feelings of isolation that many underrepresented African-American faculty members experience at PWIs. Although the institution's official documents indicate a commitment to recruit a diverse faculty, the data collected for this study showed otherwise. The percentage of annual African-American faculty hires at Twin Rivers University increased by only 1.4% over the last eight years (Lite Report, 2019).

Although it is not entirely possible to determine if the university has made efforts to increase the number of African-American faculty, current faculty demographics do not indicate such an endeavor. The population of African-American faculty at Twin Rivers University was less than six percent, not nearly enough to support the population of approximately 2,000 African-American students (Lite Report, 2019). Modica and Mamiseishvili (2010) found African-American student's lives enriched and their likelihood of academic success improved when surrounded by African-American faculty.

Several scholars have highlighted the pervasive issue of isolation for African-American faculty in higher education (Allison, 2008; McKay, 1983; Shealey et al., 2014; Turner et al., 1999). In a study by Louis et al. (2016), participants reported that stressful microaggressions perpetuated by their White colleagues had forced them to retreat into solitude. There was an overarching sense of isolation among all participants. McKay (1983) proposed that African-American faculty experienced isolation because, in most instances, they are the only Black person in their department. Table 8 shows the number of African-American faculty in each of the participants' departments.

Table 8

Participant Departmental Demographics – Number of African-American Faculty

Participant	Number of African-American faculty
Faith	1
Michael	2
James	2
Dee	2
Joe	1
Christian	3

With this theme, I illustrated how African-American faculty are not only isolated but invited into academic spaces where they tend to be omitted, underdeveloped, overworked, and invalidated by their White colleagues. In many instances, the expectations are for them to be visible, to accept the burden of extended responsibilities, and to feel like they are equal contributors while, at the same time, forced to be silent (Jackson, 2018; Stanley, 2006).

This study's participants described positive hiring experiences that made them feel valued by their university. Kelly et al. (2017) posited, "Black faculty reported being drawn to the PWI for its innovative research opportunities, welcoming departments, and location in a racially diverse geographic area of the country" (p. 310). Many of the participants were proud to share their stories. Joe was happy to report, "I was recruited," elaborating, "They made it pretty clear that they wanted me, which was a nice feeling to have, because I think they were really trying to increase the diversity quotient, so they made it clear that they liked me." James shared a similar experience:

> I was kind of sort of recruited. . . The person who was the chair of the former department . . . knew one of my mentors and . . . said, "Do you

know anyone?" He said, "Yeah. I know this guy." And then I was encouraged to apply. . . They cared about what I was interested in bringing to the table here. I met a lot of people, which were all very good interactions.

Michael described his hiring experience as "positive. . . I felt that I was being recruited. I felt that the faculty were engaged and respected what I brought. I felt that they expected me to have a career." Dee had a similar experience, which she also labeled as positive. She recalled, "They recruited me. I gave the job talk. They sent me an offer letter. I negotiated and got what I wanted." Faith also had a "really positive hiring experience. . . Everyone was extremely professional, and I've never felt that anyone did not want me on board, so I felt very accepted from the very beginning." Christian chuckled, stating, "I had a hilarious experience. I remember it like it was yesterday." He continued,

> So, I put on a suit, got all prepared, had my CV and cover letter all ready to go, had my portfolio, walk into his office, sat down. . . He's getting a list from me of the courses that, based upon my training, I felt comfortable teaching. . . I was very confused, so I asked him and he's like, "Well, there's an academic advisor who assigns faculty to classes. So now that I know what classes you teach and that you want to teach one class, she will assign you to a class." I was like, "Wait a second. There's no interview?" And he's like, "Interview?" He was like . . . "We trained you; you did the undergrad with us; you went to the number two school in the nation and got your PhD. You're trained. You're fine." . . . So that was my hiring.

> . . Again, no one had me do a microteaching to confirm that I could teach; none of my references were checked, none of that. I was hired, and at that time it was as a part-time lecturer. . . My career has just grown from there, but I've never officially been interviewed or anything like that; it was just really very random.

Although all participants were happy to have been hired as faculty at a prestigious institution, they appeared to understand that their hiring may have been a gesture to fill the diversity quota. The U.S. Constitution and federal statutes require that employers eliminate discrimination based on race or sex. Employers can face lawsuits under these statutes for policies and practices that create widespread disparities in the number of minorities in the workplace (SHRM, 2020; Ware, 2000). Twin Rivers University likely reached out to qualified African-American faculty to have tangible proof of its nondiscrimination efforts.

Although each participant described positive hiring experiences, they had all faced different forms of racial discrimination after hire. Feagin, Vera, and Imani defined racial discrimination as "the socially organized set of practices that deny African-Americans the dignity, opportunities, spaces, time, position, and rewards the nation offers White Americans" (as cited by Gusa, 2010, p. 466). Thus, although the college was slowly increasing its number of Black faculty, systemic racism persisted at a local level through the cultures and practices of institutions established by and for White people that have not changed to allow for a more multicultural population. Participants reported instances of persistent racial hostility and discrimination, including increased harassment of Black faculty. In general, African-American faculty appeared to experience the

campus more negatively than their White counterparts, which, in turn, adversely affected their identification with the institution. In the following section, I present participant experiences that show a racialized college culture.

Lack of faculty mentoring leads to isolation. Mentoring is a process within a contextual setting; a relationship between a more knowledgeable individual and a less experienced individual; a means for professional networking, counseling, guiding, instructing, modeling, and sponsoring; a developmental mechanism; a socialization and reciprocal relationship; and an opportunity for identity transformation for both the mentor and protégé (Tillman, 2001). Although participants had some shared history and geography, they came from significantly different cultures than their White counterparts. Their differences were apparent in skin color and attitudes based on each individual's historical and social contexts. As outsiders, the African-American faculty members needed mentoring, something critical to their professional growth and development. However, participants failed to develop mentoring relationships that addressed their underrepresentation in a PWI. Therefore, all participants reported pervasive feelings of isolation within the college. A lack of mentorship can directly correlate to the feelings of isolation for African-American faculty (Zambrana et al., 2015). Without a mentor, Joe had to navigate his position alone. He said,

> I think there are things that our chair and the White people talk about that they don't want to say to me. . . I haven't been lucky enough to have a mentor here, to help me publish, and do that kind of stuff.

James expressed similar feelings of loneliness, responding, "That's one weakness I would say: The mentorship structure for faculty is pretty poor. That's very well known.

Everyone kind of knows it. They haven't quite done anything about it yet, but a lot of people know that."

Further compounding the problem of isolation was their White peers' reluctance to support them when they presented new ideas in departmental meetings. The participants felt overlooked or simply disregarded, with their contributions ignored. Dee and Joe provided examples associated with this challenge. Dee captured her colleagues' dismissal as

> Being in a meeting, presenting an idea, the idea not considered as being valid or important, and then it's repeated by someone else and then it's acknowledged as being important. But what is perhaps different is that I lean in and say, "Thank you so much, Michael, for acknowledging my previous comment. I'd love to build on that." It's . . . I don't know. I just . . . I see these challenges as opportunities to grow and be better and make space for other people. Because you don't know who's watching you and so your struggle is someone else's strength.

James expressed similar sentiments, sharing an example of a common occurrence in his departmental meetings:

> I made some points during that meeting that became like seminal points related to developing particularly two academic programs in this space. The funny thing about that was during those two meetings, in particular, those were points that were largely disagreed by the committee. About a year later, those two points came up yet again in a different context related to the same thing, and now they're universally agreed upon. And now,

> someone else is taking the reins to actually implement all of these things to develop the program. And I sat there, and I said out loud, "So, y'all remember me saying that last time we met?" And it was awkward. And I said it to be awkward. And I was like, "Look, this is ridiculous." And one person in the room, to this person's credit, did say, "Yeah, you're right. You did say that at that last meeting. You're totally right, and we totally missed it." That's probably one of the feelings that I feel most often in the faculty side of things is you say things and you're totally missed.

One misconception the participants highlighted was the university's lack of commitment to faculty development. According to Chen (2015), there is a longstanding notion that research supersedes teaching in higher education. Chen discussed three faculty responsibilities: "teaching, research, and administrative service." Research is a priority for faculty and the institute because it increases funding opportunities, whereas faculty do not receive any acknowledgment for great teaching. It is plausible that some participants could have been surprised to learn that the university's primary concern was not teaching. Joe expressed,

> I don't think the institute has ever been really committed to [teaching]. I think the institute is committed to raising money and doing what it does. The people who run [Twin Rivers University] believe it is in the business of making money. They don't believe it's an educational institution.

James expressed similar sentiments. He said, "You're supposed to teach. And everyone knows that, but you're not really developed to teach well." Michael shared his thoughts:

> One of the biggest challenges of teaching and research . . . is your colleagues and administration don't recognize you for good teaching; they could care less. . . Make sure you're getting what you want out of the job because nobody else is probably tracking your contributions. . . You have to be excellent at the research. . . If you don't get anything else right, you have to get that right. And by excellent research, you bring in enough money to figure out how to do the job and train the students before the five years are up. . . With respect to teaching, you should do it well enough that no one's complaining. But the most part, you know, if you have in the upper twenty percent of the scores, you're not getting grievances against you and stuff, that's good. You show up to class, you teach, you should introduce a new course, probably something related to your graduate studies. Or if you can't do that, enhance something a lot so you can be like, "I took that course and refreshed it."

Christian echoed his colleagues' displeasure about the prioritization of research over teaching:

> Probably the main difficulty is that [Twin Rivers University] is a research institution. It's not a teaching institution. . . In the 10 years that I've been here, no one has checked my teaching to make sure if I'm doing a good job. . . Staff have evaluations; certainly, people are evaluating the quality of person's research when they go up for tenure, the whole nine. . . But in 10 years of being here, no one has checked to see if I'm doing a good job in the classroom, if my students are learning, how I've grown in the ways of pedagogy, have I improved as an instructor. . . . So, I think that's a challenge. The complacency that we have

around teaching makes it hard as it relates to the student learning, so I think that's my main challenge teaching here. . . We talk a good game about how important teaching is, but as long as there's a warm body in front of the students and the students are not complaining, no one's really going to check on the quality of your teaching at both places.

I found that isolation was a significant issue for African-American faculty at Twin Rivers University. Data provided in this theme indicated the underrepresentation of African-American faculty in each participant's respective department. Despite positive hiring experiences, participants lamented the absence of mentorship opportunities available for African-American faculty, the lack of attention toward faculty development, and the likelihood of White colleagues to overlook their contributions. Based on these findings, more effort is needed to increase the presence of African-American faculty to combat the feelings of isolation at Twin Rivers University.

Theme 3: Paradox of Diversity at a PWI

Theme 3 shows the paradox of diversity at PWIs. Although the university met the call for diversity, it continued to marginalize African-American faculty due to their race and ethnicity. Twin Rivers University policy documents indicated that institutional leaders consider themselves to be colorblind, ignoring the influence of institutional racism in their efforts to implement diversity on campus. I used CRT and BFT to explain why African-American faculty continued to be underrepresented, marginalized, and deemed powerless—or, better yet, considered as outsiders at PWIs (Howard-Hamilton, 2003; Joseph & Hirshfield, 2011).

A thorough review of the institution's diversity policy documents indicated diversity initiatives, including efforts to recruit and retain minorities and a commitment to creating a diverse environment focused on increasing the presence of underrepresented minorities. Further analysis of the diversity policies and initiatives showed plans to create an inclusive environment to equalize gender and racial disparities. The institution brands itself as one that prioritizes diversity and tries to distinguish itself as a prominent leader of diversity in academia. A review of university policy documents indicated evidence of activities that reflected a degree of racial harmony and a desire to promote racial equality. These included multiracial town hall meetings led by experts on social justice issues and implicit racial bias training. In recent months, university leadership had launched several opportunities for the academic community to engage in uncomfortable and courageous conversations to bring awareness to racial injustices that effect day-to-day lives of minority students, staff, and faculty campus. However, I did not find any meaningful alignment between formal diversity initiatives and Black faculty's actual lived experiences on campus. This disconnect cast doubt on the effectiveness of these diversity initiatives.

Thus, an interesting paradox emerged in which university administration, through formal organizations, believed it met an acceptable diversity threshold. In contrast, Black faculty firmly thought Twin Rivers University was not truly committed to meaningful diversity, instead pretending to support a trend that would eventually fade. Michael remarked, "What most institutions are doing around diversity and inclusion is a fad, because there are no teeth being put into the systems . . . no . . . true resources. . . It's because nobody really wants to address them." Faith said the school "put a nice face on

diversity. . . I don't know if they push the envelope with diversity." She considered the lack of diversity "the most challenging aspect. . . . They don't know how to embrace it."

Participants reported significant dissatisfaction with the university's official efforts to promote diversity and felt marginalized for being Black. The participants were still severely underrepresented despite efforts to recruit more minority faculty. I found that several academic units had minimal to no representation of African-American faculty, which contradicts the purported commitment to increase the presence of underrepresented minorities in faculty positions. The lack of recruiting efforts put forth by the university led to feelings of loneliness for African-American faculty. Christian, Michael, and Joe felt the burden of isolation and had grown accustomed to the lack of African-American faculty representation within their departments.

Although it is not clear if there are specific diversity policies to facilitate recruiting and retaining African-American faculty, Twin Rivers University has committed to hiring more African-American faculty as part of its diversity initiatives. A reasonable speculation based on the policy documents is that university leaders just wanted to see written policies but did not particularly care about the tangible effects of truly diversifying the university demographics. Without real change, the university will maintain skewed racial demographics. Failure to recruit more African-American faculty creates an undue burden of representation on the few African-American faculty members on campus. Participants discussed ways to manage the stress of being Black, isolated, undervalued, and overlooked while carrying out their regular teaching, research, and other service obligations.

In sharp contrast with university diversity policies, participants presented evidence of racial discrimination and dissatisfaction with their jobs. The six participants complained of a systemic culture of discrimination against African-American faculty at Twin Rivers University. Such a culture indicates the institution's failure to adequately address racial inequities and create an inclusive environment where African-American faculty feel like valued members of the organization, thus leading to tokenism. According to Snell (2017), tokenism is "the practice of making only a . . . symbolic effort to do a particular thing, especially by recruiting a small number of people from underrepresented groups in order to give the appearance of sexual or racial equality within a workforce" (p. 1). I wove an analysis of participant narratives into Theme 3, demonstrating the problematic approach to implementing diversity.

The participants described the institution's missteps in creating a diverse and inclusive environment for African-American faculty, an environment where they are included in some ways and excluded in others (Pittman, 2012). Upon hire, African-American faculty assumed they would have the same rights, privileges, opportunities, and benefits of any other faculty member but recognized some differences through varied experiences. One issue the participant's addressed was the lack of career opportunities for African-American faculty.

Edwards and Ross (2018) suggested that the scarcity of African-American faculty directly affected career advancement opportunities, which is not the case for their White colleagues. Participants subscribed to this notion. Joe lamented, "I think if I was a White boy, I would've been chair. They would've made me be chair . . . but because I'm Black and all of the things that go along with that, I think I've been overlooked in that regard."

He continued, “I think that White males are more willing to help other White males.” Faith agreed but struggled to convey her thoughts. She said, “I don’t know if I would be the one that someone would say, ‘Oh yeah, let me nominate [Faith] for this.’ Like I feel like it would be a colleague over me just because I am, you know.” Michael said that opportunities were not available “because there are a set of networks that I’m not in, and I can’t put my finger on all of them.” He expounded, “I have to work harder with respect to my normal activity to ensure that I have the same . . . Do I have them? Yes, but I have to be . . . far more intentional . . . to get the same opportunities.”

Participants also complained about the lack of support, mentoring, and faculty development at Twin Rivers University (Edwards & Ross, 2018; Smeby, 1998). Faith pointed to the lack of support groups available to African-American faculty. She shared, “Somehow when we get into these faculty roles, we’re expected to just blend in. . . . We’re expected to just go with the flow. If there is an African-American faculty union or . . . support group, I don’t know anything about it.” James and Joe lamented the absence of faculty mentoring at the university, which was not a significant focus. The lack of faculty development was another concern highlighted by several of the participants. Joe, Damon, Michael, and James said Twin Rivers University focused entirely on research and the financial gains that produces instead of ensuring adequate faculty development to provide quality education to their students.

These concerns cause African-American faculty to question their purpose. They wonder if they are simply a token hire, brought on board to meet a diversity quota because of their racial identities instead of the scholarly contributions they can bring to the university (Kelly et al., 2017). James often found himself questioning whether the

university hired him because of his qualifications or because "I was the Black male candidate." Similarly, Dee explained how she felt like the token Black person in meetings or committees. She stated, "Sometimes, I'm like, 'Well, you only have me here because I'm Black.'"

Findings from Louis et al. (2016) and Turner et al. (1999) confirmed participants' dissatisfaction with the half-hearted measures universities used to recruit more minority faculty. Turner et al. identified a direct correlation between "successful recruitment" (p. 28) and African-American faculty satisfaction. They contended that the "absence of aggressive hiring strategies may contribute to the underrepresentation of faculty of color" (p. 31). Faith condemned her institution for not doing more to recruit more African-American faculty members to share her burdens. She discussed her dismay with the university policy drivers concerning whether they made efforts to recruit more faculty of color:

> If I have to dig to see what it is that [they] are doing, then to me that means [they're] not doing enough because it should be more visible and it should be more assessable for people to see, like, "Oh, this is what they're doing to bring in more African-Americans." So, no, in my opinion.

James did not believe the university was serious about recruiting African-American professors, quickly responding, "No. . . . Nope. . . Absolutely not." Joe, too, said, "Absolutely not." He did not feel the administration was setting the tone for recruiting more minority faculty. Joe claimed, "The president of this institution sets the tone. . . He tells the provost and everybody else what they going to do. . . He may not

have his hands in every situation, [but] everybody knows what he wants and what he doesn't want."

Similarly, Dee stated, "The university does . . . have some recruitment strategies in place, [but] I think the units could . . . be more. . . [They] should show greater commitment to that type of recruitment." In contrast, Michael gave the university some credit in its efforts to increase diversity, allowing, "They're trying to get there." Christian also expressed frustration with the university's halfhearted recruitment efforts, saying, "No, absolutely not. . . I won't talk about the institute as a whole; I'll talk about my department." He compared recruiting strategies from another higher education institution:

> When I look at a school like [Rochester Institute of Technology] . . . and how hard they work to recruit—I mean, they were doing this when I was in graduate school, and they still contact me to this day to let me know what job postings they have. I'm in their network as a Black person who has a PhD in engineering . . . so when they have any job opening that's anywhere near something that I could do, I get e-mails from them. They reach out, invite me to apply. . . It's a specific office of theirs . . . focused on recruiting and retaining underrepresented minority faculty. So, when I look at a school . . . having an entire office that is doing that and we don't have anywhere near that, then I would certainly have to say that, no, we're not doing enough.

Davis (2002) and Piercy et al. (2005) found that negative racist campus climates devoid of significant minority representation led to low morale among minority faculty.

Davis purported that several academic institutions have pledged to create diverse campus environments, but there has not been substantial progress. Piercy et al. argued that universities need to develop diversity strategies to promote their commitment to increasing minority faculty. Faith did not perceive Twin Rivers University as making substantial efforts in terms of diversity. She stated,

> I would say that they put a nice face on diversity in the sense that we have the institute diversity. . . We have these people who are in place who are supposed to be, you know. But at the same time . . . I still . . . feel like they tip, it's a tip . . . like . . . I don't know if they push the envelope with diversity. . . Sometimes I feel like it's invisible diversity.

Michael proclaimed, "I don't work in a diverse population." He discussed his experiences:

> Yeah, that's how my life is, right? So, I come to work; I walk in the building where . . . my peers are all White, Asian, or Indian, and there are two Black guys. My chair is a White guy; the Dean's office is full of White people. . . I guess there's one Black Dean. You look at the Vice Provost; they're all White. You look at the Provost: He's Hispanic and the President is White. . . I do not work in a diverse environment. . . They work in a diverse environment . . . sometimes.

James agreed with his colleague, stating, "We haven't done a good job here, I think, of making sure that at each level there is real genuine diversity. . . As a mass maybe, but I don't think it's true if you look more closely." He expounded on his thoughts:

> Diversity and inclusion to me here is a big problem. It's a big problem. But there are people that can tell you about their problem. There are people here that can help work through that problem. You just got to bring them to the table and show that you want to work through that problem.

Dee believed that diversity is a significant focus at the university, but "it's had challenges at the institute level on how to roll out a bigger impact." Joe, on the other hand, did not have much to say, describing the university's diversity efforts as "a lot of lip service." Christian had similar sentiments about the significance of diversity with an emphasis on the student experience, stating,

> I think the university is intimately concerned about getting diverse people, but not necessarily diverse modes of thoughts, diverse understandings. So simply because you admit a very diverse group of people into your institution, if during the four or five, six years that they are at your institution, you don't do anything to expand their modes of thought, then more than likely they leave the diversity of the college campus, go back into homogeneous environments and the problems of our society just continue. So, if we're going to talk about true diversity, it's really about opening minds and bringing awareness of the other and making sure that when people leave college, they're able to go to their job, to nonprofit, to government, or to academia and consider the other in everything that they do. And I just don't see us doing that.

Theme 3 showed the participants' impression of diversity, or the lack thereof, at Twin Rivers University. From the faculty members' perspective, diversity is just talk and requires more attention. Furthermore, the participants reported a deficiency of recruitment efforts put forth by the university and departmental leadership to increase the presence of African-American faculty.

Theme 4: Extended Roles and Responsibilities of African-American Faculty in PWIs

Theme 4 indicates the burden of invisible labor imposed on many African-American faculty at PWIs. Editorial Board (2019) defined invisible labor as "uncompensated obligations and responsibilities" (p. 1) that underrepresented faculty members undertake. As a result, African-American faculty face an incredible amount of pressure to mentor this population of students (Dahlvig, 2010). Reddick, Bukoski, and Smith (2020) hypothesized that African-American faculty have "the burdens of providing extra support to the next generation of scholars of color" (p. 31). Brittian, Sy, and Stokes (2009) suggested that without African-American faculty, African-American students could encounter obstacles defining their "positive identity" (p. 88).

Extensive scholarly research highlighted the stress and challenges associated with extended responsibilities imposed on African-American faculty responsibilities not equally expected of White faculty (Joseph & Hirshfield, 2011; Padilla, 1994; Reddick et al., 2020; Social Sciences Feminist Network Research Interest Group, 2017). African-American faculty members are essential in developing African-American students; they bridge the gap between campus and classroom experiences (Madyun et al., 2013). Several scholars have found a direct correlation between African-American faculty presence and African-American student success (Brittian et al., 2009; Gregory, 2001;

Hughes & Howard-Hamilton, 2003). This invisible obligation can be taxing because there are not enough African-American faculty at PWIs to serve as role models while also fulfilling their teaching and research obligations (Hughes & Howard-Hamilton, 2003).

African-American faculty unselfishly volunteer their time to serve as role models for African-American students (Hughes & Howard-Hamilton, 2003; Padilla, 1994). According to Padilla (1994), African-American faculty possess skills to assist African-American students. However, there is a lack of willingness and accountability from their White peers to tackle Black students' issues because White faculty lack cultural competence. Gasman (2012) declared, "The onus for mentoring Black students should not rest solely on the shoulders of Black faculty members; White faculty members need to step up" (p. 2). Reddick and Pritchett (2016) argued that if White faculty assumed their responsibilities of mentoring and supporting African-American students, they could reduce the burden of "cultural taxation" (p. 56) on African-American faculty. Cultural taxation suggests that African-American faculty are "best suited for specific tasks because of [their] race/ethnicity or [their] presumed knowledge of cultural differences" (p. 56).

Although Christian felt qualified to support African-American students, he was overwhelmed by the expectation of being the one responsible for mentoring and advising all African-American students simply because of his race. He lamented,

> I feel burdened by the need to support as many of the underrepresented minority students as I do. My colleagues do not realize that when they have a situation with an underrepresented minority student, particularly an African-American male, they either bring the situation to me, send the

> student to me, or reach out to me about it. . . . I've never in my entire academic career . . . as an academic faculty, I've never had a problem with a Chinese student and gone to one of my Chinese faculty and said, "Hey, you're Chinese; resolve this. Talk to this student." . . . Yet they do that to me with their African-American students, particularly the African-American males.

Christian believed that African-Americans are underserved in the university as part of systemic racism, which viewed African-American people as "other" and not necessarily a distinct racial group. He explained,

> I think they do it because still to this day, even in 2020, the Black student, the Black person is considered "other." And so, my Whites, my Asian, my Hispanics, they're all one homogeneous group. And the faculty feel comfortable dealing with them, but the Black student, that kid is "other."

Many participants displayed a sense of obligation to connect with, care for, mentor, and serve as role models for African-American students and were not necessarily bothered by the additional responsibilities. Strategically, they decided to teach at a PWI because they wanted African-American students to experience what they lacked when they were in school: African-American faculty. Some participants had attended PWIs, where they experienced the invisibility of African-American faculty to educate or serve as role models for them. Christian explained, "I definitely wanted to come back [to Twin Rivers University] . . . because there was zero— . . . I went through an entire undergraduate experience without having an African-American professor." Similarly, Dee said, "I wanted to be the face . . . that I didn't have . . . [when] I went to a PWI."

The six participants expressed their commitment to all students, but especially to African-American students. They understand the influence they have and how significant it is for African-American students to see a representation of themselves at the front of the class. Despite the responsibility of mentoring African-American students being an involuntary role, the African-American faculty also believed that they were the right people to mentor, educate, and develop African-American students and encourage their success.

Faith, James, Michael, Joe, and Christian confirmed the idea of mentoring African-American students as a service to meet the obvious needs of Black students in a predominantly White environment. Faith nurtured her students like a mother would for her children. She shared,

> Teaching has made me feel hopeful. . . Often times for me, it stems around the mentoring that I'm able to give to my students, particularly . . . moments when I made those connections with students and they trusted me in different capacities.

Michael also played a parental role for his students. He explained, "I am in a . . . position of higher education . . . at a predominantly White institution. . . I see all these little kids coming in front of me, and I have to remember that I am serving for role models for all the kids."

James wanted to ensure success for his Black students. He said, "You know, I care about what they learn. I care about their success. I care about what happens to them." Joe was devoted to training African-American students, saying, "We're looking to help the next generation get better, and when I get an African-American student that's

really interested . . . it's about training. It's about pushing others forward, and that's what I enjoy." Christian expressed, "I'm very intimately aware that my students care less about my ability to master the content; my students care most about my ability to care about them." Christian wanted to be remembered by his students as one who "'wasn't just my professor, but he was my friend. He developed a relationship with me. And he cared about me as a person.'" Christian shared his greatest reward:

> So, when I see students, particularity underrepresented minority students . . . come into my class and they're really feeling psychologically defeated . . . and they haven't seen an A since they've been in college, and Twin Rivers University has almost really beat them down. To be able to encourage them and show them the study habits and the tools and the techniques and what needs to be done to get an A, and to really see them achieve in my class, I think that's . . . the most satisfying experiences.

In this theme, I explored the paradoxical challenges African-American faculty encountered in their efforts to serve voluntarily on the one hand and involuntarily on the other. PWIs often take advantage of Black faculty's willingness to serve Black students by overburdening them with excessive social responsibilities to meet Black students' learning needs (Baez, 2000; Edwards & Ross, 2018; Herbert, 2012; Hughes & Howard-Hamilton, 2003). Allen et al. (2000) found that overwhelming Black faculty with the expectation to mentor all Black students harmed African-American faculty's career advancement. Because of the increased responsibilities assigned to African-American faculty and not their White counterparts, African-American faculty often struggle to focus on their research and publications, which Twin Rivers University values over

teaching success. Although this phenomenon is problematic for many African-American faculty, Herbert (2012) and Hughes and Howard-Hamilton (2003) asserted that PWIs expect African-American female faculty to manage even greater job responsibilities than their male colleagues. Herbert noted, "Due to limited availability of [Black female faculty] at PWIs, our presence is often spread thin between teaching, service, and scholarship" (p.100).

The participants confirmed Allen et al.'s (2000) finding, discussing the burden of additional responsibilities outside of their primary role as Twin Rivers University faculty. In addition to being an advisor, Christian mentored students at risk of failing academically. Michael is a faculty member and an Associate Chair in his department as well as the "Director of the summer undergraduate research experience and . . . Secretary of the athletic board and . . . on a couple different committees." Michael appeared to have accepted these additional roles as opportunities to learn more about his faculty position. He stated, "I was [initially] asked to do a lot of things, but I didn't do everything. Now I've taken on some more stuff just because I want to learn how things work."

James mused about the organic manner in which he took on extended roles without really being aware of it. He stated,

> I guess if there was something I would improve, and I think this is just generally about this type of job, is at some point, you realize how quickly you can be consumed with stuff. You get this committee and that committee and that committee, and before you know it, you're on eight committees and you don't know why and you're like, "I don't even know

> what this is. What do I contribute to this exactly to be representative of my department or my college?" And it can become overwhelming after a while. Some of that's self-inflicted. It can be, at least, if you're not careful. I always tell people, "Feel free to say no. Always remember no is an option."

James viewed the assignment of additional roles as a form of exploitation, with African-American faculty undervalued, treated as tokens, and called upon to serve because they fit the diversity quota. He cautioned young African-American faculty to recognize the mean spirit behind these assignments.

> I've told a lot of younger Black faculty to make sure you're aware of why you're getting invited to stuff. There's not a lot of us here and you're going to get asked to be on things and, unfortunately, sometimes it's because you're Black and they need a Black person on it.

Dee served on "17 committees last year . . . and . . . my colleagues . . . served on an average of four to six." Turner and Grauerholz (2017) argued that African-American faculty accepted the added responsibilities as a "cost of respect" for "going the extra mile" (p. 218). Dee confirmed Turner and Grauerholz's argument.

> I serve in lots of spaces that, as a result, has allowed me to be in rooms where people say, "[Dee], what do you think?" And they don't ask other colleagues who may also be in the same unit what do they think . . . in the room of 50-something people. And my dean was there. They didn't ask him. And so, in some instances, you have to show up, . . . sit in the second row, . . . comment, and make some people unhappy.

Dee related, “The committees I was on, I chose to be on most of them, but there were some I couldn’t get out of.” Unlike Dee, Faith complained about her additional responsibilities, saying,

> We are working on that. . . That is something that I have brought to . . . the attention of my supervisor and they’re trying to figure out ways to take those things off of my plate. And I had noticed . . . why is my colleague . . . working on this grant? She’s doing this, she’s doing that, and I’m working on a grant now, too, but at the same time, I feel like I was doing a lot of the grunt work, in a sense.

The findings showed that African-American faculty members at Twin Rivers University often struggled silently to balance the involuntary versus voluntary burden of invisible labor. They believed they received different treatment than their White peers simply because they were Black. Based on the data, it was plausible to speculate that Twin Rivers University intentionally overworked African-American faculty to meet the needs of Black students, thus setting them up for failure in other professional areas, including research. Despite the additional workload, the participants persevered with pride, devotion, and commitment to enhancing the lives of African-American students.

Chapter Summary

Chapter V presented themes constituting the findings of this study. The themes were burden of Blackness, politics of isolation and omission, paradox of diversity at a PWI, and extended roles and responsibilities of African-American faculty in PWIs. The findings are consistent with the central tenets of CRT and BFT, which undergirded this

study. I found solid evidence to support the literature on the lived experiences of African-American faculty at PWIs.

Chapter VI

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to determine if African-American university faculty members at a university research institution in a southeastern U.S. state encountered barriers in their efforts to become university faculty members, and if they did, what strategies they used to overcome the barriers. A qualitative narrative approach was appropriate to empower participants to use their voices to share their experiences through storytelling (Gay et al., 2009). This study's findings could prove beneficial to colleges and universities, state leaders, and other local-level leaders. The themes that emerged from data analysis showed the unconscious biases in hiring practices for African-American faculty.

The following research questions guided this study:

RQ1: What were the life experiences of selected African-American university faculty members prior to becoming university faculty members at a university research institution in a southeastern U.S. state?

RQ2: What barriers, if any, did selected African-American university faculty members at a university research institution in a southeastern U.S. state encounter in their efforts to become university faculty members?

RQ3: If barriers were encountered, what strategies did select African-American university faculty members use to overcome the barriers at a university research institution in a southeastern U.S. state?

In this qualitative, narrative study, I examined African-American faculty members' life and career experiences at Twin Rivers University. Purposeful sampling allowed me to recruit six African-American faculty members to participate in the study: four men and two women. Four of the six participants were tenured faculty, with the other two holding a lecturer and academic professional position within the university. In this chapter, I discuss my study findings and answer the research questions that guided this study. As the primary research instrument, I was the interviewer, participant observer, and data analyzer. Being so intimately close to the data, I took measures to enhance the integrity of the data gathered (see the Validity section in Chapter III).

I used Seidman's (2006) three-step interview model, with each interview having a distinct purpose. The first interview was a way to explore participants' life experiences before becoming faculty at Twin Rivers University. In the second interview, I explored the professional experiences of the participants. Finally, the third interview allowed me to investigate the organizational climate of the university. Each interview was 60- to 90-minutes and took place in a face-to-face setting at the university or via teleconferencing software. Rev.com transcribed the recordings at the completion of each interview, sending the transcripts to participants to ensure the accuracy of the data.

Analyzing the data was in accordance with Hahn's (2008) coding strategy, the first level of which was initial/open coding. I broke down large amounts of data into smaller units, creating visual posters to identify similar participant characteristics. I focused on coding in the second level of data analysis, developing a color-coded matrix in Microsoft Excel to organize the data. Through manual coding, I identified keywords and phrases. I developed conceptual themes in the third level of data analysis, linking

and connecting similar experiences to identify four emerging themes: burden of Blackness, politics of isolation and omission, paradox of diversity at a PWI, and extended roles and responsibilities of African-American faculty in PWIs.

Subsequent sections of this chapter include the final discussion of research questions, limitations and implications for further study, and recommendations for future research.

Research Questions: Final Discussions Summary

This section shows how the findings of the study aligned with the research questions, conceptual framework, and themes.

Research Question 1

RQ1: What were the life experiences of selected African-American university faculty members prior to becoming university faculty members at a university research institution in a southeastern U.S. state?

The participants in this study had very similar backgrounds. When they were children, family, religion, and education were of the utmost importance and influenced their lives. Although participants had grown up in different geographical areas and with varying educational and cultural experiences, all were motivated and inspired by their parents' successes. Regardless of their parents' education level, career achievements, or socioeconomic status, all participants saw their parents as successful role models. They were inspired by their parents' achievements to persevere through their education to become respected scholars in their university.

Definitions of success varied across the participants. Michael defined success as a process of setting and working to accomplish goals without causing undue harm to

others. He related, "Number one . . . I picked something and have made progress actually toward getting there. . . . Not just doing stuff, [but] making progress toward some goal. Number two, . . . doing it without damaging all the other people around you." Faith defined success as "serving others" and "sacrificing for others," believing that people need to collaborate with others to be successful. She explained, "No man is an island entire of itself; we are all a part of something else." James defined success as "whatever . . . you aspire to do in life, that you're able to actually do it, and . . . able to find a way. . . Make it the best thing for you given the fact that you want to do it." Dee saw setting goals and following through as indicative of success, "doing those things you commit to." Joe measured success through life experiences. He responded, "The broadness of experience, right? So, you see, I got a chance to experience things. I know a lot of rich kids who have never done the things that I've done." Christian attributed his achievements to family and religion, saying, "Success is really about family . . . identifying the purpose that God has to my life, then dogmatically pursuing that purpose and doing everything that I can to successfully achieve it."

All six participants came from families that highly valued education and expected them to achieve academic success. In the African-American culture, academic achievement is critical, delivering Black people from poverty to opportunities and, ultimately, success in whatever one endeavored to accomplish (Johnson, 2005; Mosley, 2009). Being historically denied education, African-Americans often feel a sense of urgency to obtain college degrees and compete with the socially privileged White people (Mosley, 2009).

It is reasonable to speculate that education was highly important to participants' parents, who had witnessed firsthand the discrimination of Black people during the Civil Rights era. Michael's father underscored the value of education by pursuing his dream of attaining a "Master's degree in the late '60s, early '70s. . . . [It was] a unique thing to do at the time, so was very important." Academic success was significant in his household, where "everyone was expected to get As and Bs." James's parents "viewed everything through the lens" of education. Because they did not have the opportunity to attend the schools of their choice, they urged their children to be strategic and "go to the right type of school . . . the best school . . . you can go to. . . . You put yourself . . . in places to make your life better." Dee's and Joe's parents expected the best from their children; failure was not an option. Joe shared, "We got a whooping if we didn't do well."

In contrast to the other participants, Faith did not experience parental pressure to excel in education. Her mother, a rural farm worker, had very limited education and gave her no academic advice. Faith explained, "I wouldn't say [education] wasn't important, but I will say it was non-existent. . . I was the first to graduate from college in my family."

All participants believed their lives were, to a great extent, a product of their religious faith. Colón-Bacó (2010) asserted that religion is a framework that guides a person's morals and ethical principles. Christian and James perceived religion as a guiding faith system that makes individuals, in Christian's words, "willing to believe simply because that is your faith system." For Joe, religion is "about how you relate to other people." Dee believed "religion [is] rules established to guide people toward a common practice." Michael said religion guided his life, providing "some general

reference against which you judge your behaviour." Faith tied religion to a belief in "one true God."

Another commonality among the participants was that they became college professors by default. They were, however, drawn from childhood to the idea of influencing people's lives through education. Faith had her happiest moments in "academic space . . . where I found . . . peace." As a young child, Michael aspired to be a musician but in high school developed a passion for science and math, which led to a career in aerospace engineering. James loved science and investigating things. He stated, "I always knew that I was going to want to do something in the research space." From an early age, Dee "wanted to be the face in front of the classroom or the community that could help direct them to understanding how things worked." In sharp contrast, Joe yearned to become a professional basketball player but ended in a higher education classroom. Despite his father encouraging him to seek a corporate job, Christian soon realized he was best suited for academia.

Research Question 2

RQ2: What barriers, if any, did selected African-American university faculty members at a university research institution in a southeastern U.S. state encounter in their efforts to become university faculty members?

All participants reported facing unique racial barriers throughout their lives. They shared similar experiences of racial discrimination, racial bias, and various forms of microaggressions. Five of the six African-American faculty were born after the Civil Rights era; one grew up in the pre-Civil Rights era when racism was rampant and accepted as normal for Black people in the United States (Ziabari & Houston, 2019). Joe

took advantage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and other laws and bills to fight racial segregation and pursue academic positions (Jones, 2002). I used the CRT (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001) lens to understand these experiences.

Most of the participants first experienced racism and racial discrimination in school from their White teachers, coaches, and leaders. Gross (2018) discussed racist schoolteachers who were not sensitive to the full power of their racial biases on young Black children. The author posited that White teachers and students are "beneficiaries of . . . oppression" (para. 10) who needed to recognize their privileges to combat racism in their classrooms. My findings confirmed many instances of racial barriers constraining participants from realizing their academic potential. In the following sections, I enumerate the various racial constraints faced by the participants.

Dee endured racial discrimination on a field trip when a Girl Scout troop leader singled her out, leaving her White peers alone. She recalled,

> We were at the zoo, and my troop leader yelled at me because she said I was running, but I was running and her daughter . . . was running. But she yelled at me. . . I was like, "That's not fair. I wasn't the only person running." . . . I said, "Your daughter was running." She was like, "You were running, too." I said, "Yeah but you didn't call her name. That was not fair." She was like, "Just get on the train." The whole train ride, I just wept, crying audibly with . . . other people in the train. . . She started to apologize. . . I was like, "That's not fair. . . You need to apologize in front of everyone."

Dee was an overachiever in school but rarely received accolades for her academic achievements; instead, she found herself overlooked because of her race. She remembered,

> Maybe the worst memory was in eighth grade. . . I was taking algebra at the high school and there was this kid . . . taking whatever the regular class was in the middle school. They chose the best math student of the year and this was a White blonde boy and they chose him and I was like, "How is that possible that you're the best math student and I got an A in high school class and you're taking an eighth-grade class?"

Segregation and racial discrimination were normal when Joe was born., he "saw racism firsthand." He discussed seeing Black people profiled by police and accused of crimes they had not committed.

> I'll never forget . . . a really weird experience. I was waiting on the bus in Columbia, South Carolina, trying to get home from work. There were three Black guys talking trash to the meter maid . . . when their meter expired; they were giving her a hard time, laughing, joking. She got upset about it and called the police. . . [The] police came, a big wagon of them came, and they were just grabbing up everybody that they could find. If you were a young, teenage Black guy, they taking you to jail. I'll never forget this: I was standing there at the corner waiting for the bus, and this guy came over, wanting to take me to jail. The only reason that I didn't go to jail [was] because my daddy taught me, "Don't say anything. You just do what they tell you, because I don't want them to shoot you." . . . I was

> going to go to jail, but [the meter maid] says, "Oh no, he didn't do anything." What this told me [was] they weren't trying to figure out who was doing what; they just were coming to lock up all the Black folk.

This encounter also showed the need for Black parents to teach their children what to do or say when confronted by police to avoid being arrested.

Joe grew up in an "infinitely racist place," where he attended segregated schools until he began middle school. Joe was an avid sports fan who loved playing basketball and football and hoped to be a professional athlete; however, his coaches did not think he was good enough, withholding the positions that could have led to a lucrative career. Joe recalled, "This racist cracker who was the coach . . . didn't want me to be a quarterback. . . I heard him whisper to this other dude, 'Well, he's not smart enough to be a quarterback.'" Similar obstacles persisted through college, as Joe related:

> My first Econ course, another racist White boy . . . said Black people didn't contribute to the gross national product. . . I did well [in the class, but the teacher] . . . ended up giving me a low grade—my first and only C in college—because he was boneheaded. . . He knew I was good [but] he tried to discourage me.

Christian grew up in a predominantly White neighborhood and attended predominantly White schools, devoid of his identity as a Black person. For a long time, he deemed himself to be "whitewashed." He did not initially perceive race as a potential barrier to occupying certain spaces; finally, though, he realized he had been a victim of racial discrimination on multiple occasions. Christian realized race was an issue when he started sensing how his White friends' parents treated him differently. One time, his

friend's father uninvited him from a birthday party. Christian shared, "Her daddy told her no Black boy would ever come to [his] house." At the same time, he was a star basketball player, and his friend's parents "cheer[ed] like crazy for our local high school team."

Christian realized he was the victim of racial discrimination and unfair treatment due to his race when his White classmates did not receive the same severe punishment as him when a teacher accused them of cheating. As punishment, Christian lost his membership in the National Honor Society. At first, Christian was oblivious to racism, unaware that he was being "targeted as an African-American." However, he became aware of the racial disparities as he grew older and identified as a Black man.

James believed his experience with racial discrimination had prevented him from becoming a medical doctor. He blamed his teacher for holding him back from achieving his dream. He related, "She told me after taking her course that she felt like I didn't have what it took to succeed in grad school or medical school." Before James was a faculty member, he held a research position at a prominent health institution. One on occasion, a coworker mistook him for a custodian because of his race. He said,

> Somebody thought I was part of the janitorial staff . . . despite the fact that I walked into this staff office. . . I had on dress shirt, dress pants, dress shoes, because it was a clinical area. . . That's what everyone that was an investigator wore. . . I happened to be doing a study that day, so I definitely was well dressed. I walked in and they said, "Oh, great, you're here. The thing, the stuff you need to move and get rid of and take down to the supply warehouse is over there." And this is somebody I've been e-

> mailing with for a while. I'd never actually met her. And I was just stunned, and it wasn't— . . . I will never forget. It was a Black woman sitting right there. And she looked at me and I looked at her and she just slowly turned around her chair. You can see a lot on her face, right? There was a lot of like, "What is happening? Why would you?" And she took a moment . . . the woman who said . . . she took a moment, and her face went from white to red.

Michael cited a significant racially charged event that he felt prevented him from promotion to a top math class. His new teacher wrongly accused him of cheating in class, making him sit in the back of the room the entire semester. As a result, Michael lost the opportunity to excel in his original math class.

Faith grew up in a rural area where the challenges were significant: poverty, race, and gender. She attended an "antiquated and segregated" school system where White children received better educational opportunities than Black children. She lived in a poverty-stricken environment, which provided little to no motivation for individuals to succeed in occupations other than farming and agriculture. She lacked role models, as no people around her exemplified success. Faith's mother had grown up during segregation and had limited education; therefore, she did not impart the importance of education or the idea that women could be successful.

Faith lamented her mom's inability to help her in school. She reflected on a time she had asked her mother for help with her homework, recalling her embarrassment when she learned it was the wrong answer in front of her peers. Faith stated, "I made up in my mind right there I would never ask my mother . . . about schoolwork . . . ever." As a

child, Faith had never received positive reinforcement from her mother. She shared, "My mother never told me 'good job'; she never told me, 'Oh, I'm so proud of you.' 'Oh, you're doing a great job; keep up the great work.'"

Unlike the other participants in this study, Faith did not have a father to help her mother provide for her and her eight siblings. As a result, Faith found herself in double jeopardy. As a female, she felt the constraints of traditional gender norms, which portrayed women in submissive roles. Faith discussed these gender barriers, saying, "There was definitely a demarcation between the male and the female roles while growing up." In the face of these challenges, Faith was always thinking about "what else is out there."

All participants had attended PWIs to earn their college degrees. James, Christian, Dee, and Faith reported having few or no African-American faculty at their universities. An absence of African-American faculty prevents Black scholars from having race-appropriate faculty role models and mentors, decreasing their desire to attain high-level academic positions (Avent, 2020). As the participants reflected on their college experiences, their words indicated a desire to have African-American faculty's support in their academic endeavors. The presence of African-American faculty has a meaningful influence on African-American students' success and well-being, especially those who attend PWIs (Allen et al., 2000; Hughes & Howard-Hamilton, 2003; Turner & Grauerholz, 2017).

Research Question 3

RQ3: If barriers were encountered, what strategies did select African-American university faculty members use to overcome the barriers at a university research institution in a southeastern U.S. state?

The participants identified barriers that could have easily altered their future academic and career goals. Even so, each individual made concerted efforts and developed individual strategies to meet the challenges and attain success.

Most participants in this study accepted and valued their parents' advice and encouragement to persist in school and be successful. As children, they allowed their parents to push them toward greatness. Five of the African-American faculty reported using all the help and support they could get from teachers and other community leaders to get ahead. Berkel et al. (2009) confirmed that children who accepted positive reinforcement from their parents could increase self-awareness and self-esteem. Although some participants struggled to achieve their best when faced with constraining teachers, others relied on the support of their teachers, college professors, and mentors, which positively affected their lives and future career aspirations.

An old African proverb, "It takes a village to raise a child," suggests the need for communities to be involved in the children's upbringing and rearing (Global Black History, 2015). The participants illustrated the positive impression their village had on them throughout their lives. Faith expressed, "There's always been a teacher, mentor, or someone who will see something in me that I'd never seen before." Michael took his teacher's encouragement to explore different career pathways and eventually attained his goal of being a college professor. James allowed his professors to "take me under their

wings and really help me, really be supportive of me, really be kind of connected with my goals, . . . so I felt like they actually cared about my education." Dee chose to persevere under the guidance of her college professors. Unlike the other participants, Christian embodied resilience and was able to navigate the school system alone. He proclaimed, "The professor's unwillingness or inability to connect with me, to help teach me was not going to stop me." As confirmed by Berkel et al. (2009) and Brown and Tylka (2011), this strategy to overcome racial barriers showed that resilience in the face of adversity is as important as having a village.

All participants possessed grit and motivation to attain advanced degrees that earned them faculty positions. They employed different strategies to overcome institutionalized racism. First, they rejected racist stereotypes typically used to describe Black people, such as laziness. Instead, they chose to do the opposite: work harder than their peers. Some of their teachers, coaches, and faculty devalued their self-esteem and the ability or perseverance to overcome, but the participants focused on being successful students to have successful careers. The six African-American faculty had worked hard to achieve academic and career success, choosing not to give in to the systemic, racial, and gender barriers that could hinder them from attaining advanced degrees and career goals.

According to Sanders (1997), "African Americans have responded to racism and discrimination in ways that have promoted educational attainment and academic excellence" (p. 84). All participants committed to achieving academic excellence, with most considering themselves high achievers from grade school through college. Christian, Dee, Faith, Michael, and Joe spoke proudly about their academic success and

described earning all As and Bs throughout school; although James was a B to C student, he became disciplined later in his academic career.

Faith attended a PWI where she yearned to make connections with other Black women on her college campus. Similarly, Christian went to a PWI and struggled with his self-identity as a Black man, having grown up in a predominantly White area where he immersed himself in the dominant culture. While attending a PWI, both Faith and Christian decided to seek membership in historically Black Greek letter organizations (HBGLOs) to help them overcome feelings of isolation, promote cultural and self-awareness, and connect with students with similar ethnic backgrounds. Faith shared, "One of my best memories . . . I was selected . . . to be a part of my organization, my sorority . . . because it gave [me] lifelong connections." Christian had joined his fraternity for different reasons, as he described:

> I came to Twin Rivers University . . . for undergrad. I just went right into what I knew, to having mostly Caucasian and non-African-American friends. . . I think I was about maybe 19 or 20 when literally it hit me like a ton of bricks: "Hey, did you know you're Black?" I decided I've got to do something to be more Black. I made the decision in that moment: I'll pledge a fraternity.

As Bonner (2006) suggested, African-Americans' fundamental benefits to join HBGLOs were to cultivate relationships with other Black students and find a safe place. These benefits coincided with the reasons Faith and Christian sought membership in an HBGLO. HBGLOs emerged early in the 20th century, "during a period in which the national climate upheld racial injustice, inequality, and separate but 'un-equal' doctrines

that marginalized the existence of the African Americans" (Bonner, 2006, p. 17). HBGLOs had a tremendous effect on African-American students who attended PWIs, providing an opportunity to connect with organizations devoid of the racial prejudices that existed on campus. Furthermore, HBGLOs promoted high academic achievement for African-American students, something equally important to Faith and Christian.

After more than a century, HBGLOs still provide African-Americans with valuable tools to succeed in their personal and professional lives. According to Commodore (2014), the five benefits of being an HBGLO member are the celebration of Black women, leadership development, the great equalizer, economic and political power, and community impact and service. It is reasonable that Faith and Christian's decision to join an HBGLO improved their self-identity and self-awareness, decreased the feelings of isolation on their college campuses, and helped them develop lifelong connections with students from similar backgrounds.

Final Discussion

The purpose of this study was to determine if African-American university faculty members at a university research institution in a southeastern U.S. state encountered barriers in their efforts to become university faculty members, and if they did, what strategies they used to overcome the barriers. Through the study, I gave voice to a select group of African-American faculty to share their life and career trajectories, leading them to become professors at a PWI. Participants told stories about growing up, shielded by their parents throughout childhood, and then learning to navigate school and college as Black men and women. They shared tales of grit and motivation as they encountered and overcame significant barriers. The findings emerged through four major analytical

themes: burden of Blackness, politics of isolation and omission, paradox of diversity at a PWI, and extended roles and responsibilities of African-American faculty in PWIs.

Research Findings

The six African-American faculty members in this study described similar issues. First, participants raised the notion of the burden of Blackness pertaining to problematic stereotypes deeply embedded in Twin Rivers University culture. Stereotypes often led to acts of prejudice and systemic racism, contributing to an atmosphere of mistrust and inequality between the African-American faculty and their White counterparts. Furthermore, this problem kept African-American faculty isolated amid a field of Whiteness.

Second, the participants reflected on the institution's botched efforts to recruit more African-American faculty and increase diversity. Participants shared feelings of isolation as a result of the failure to recruit a diverse faculty. Although it is not entirely possible to determine whether the school had made efforts to increase the number of Black faculty members, isolation was a significant issue for African-American faculty at Twin Rivers University.

Third, the findings indicated an interesting paradox. On the one hand, the university goes out of its way to recruit African-American faculty in accordance with its diversity policy; however, at the same time, it continued to marginalize that very group due to Black faculty's race and ethnicity. These concepts are contradictory in complex ways and caused great concern for the African-American faculty members at Twin Rivers University.

Fourth, the study showed the participants' struggles to balance the involuntary versus voluntary burdens of invisible labor. The faculty attempted to serve as role models and parental figures for African-American students when overextended while balancing their teaching and research responsibilities. The African-American faculty's experiences were testimony to the difficulties of being a minority faculty member at a PWI. Despite the additional workload, the participants persevered with proud devotion and commitment to enhancing African-American students' lives.

In this study, I also revealed some interesting issues about race and racism at PWIs when African-American faculty members faced unequal treatment, perceived as fundamentally different from their White counterparts. Six African-American faculty members subscribed to the notion of teaching while Black, with race and ethnicity tightly connected to systemic racism in institutions of higher education. It was not clear whether these stories of discrimination and bias in academia are specific to African-American faculty members. The faculty members articulated concerns about the effects of racial discrimination as problematic, not so much on Black students' education, but on themselves as professionals. I contend that the presence, influence, and contributions of African-American faculty can help higher education students achieve intercultural competence, which is "people's ability to communicate and function effectively across varying cultures" (Madyun et al., 2013, p. 65).

African-American faculty must have a platform to use their voices to share their experiences (Stanley, 2006). There is a need to gather reliable information on the experiences of minority faculty to create a better work climate (Blackburn, Wenzel, & Bieber, 1994). Blackburn et al. (1994) claimed that the recruitment of minority faculty is

of extreme importance but what is equally critical is their success at the university. The marginalization and absence of African-American faculty can have a significant effect on the overall culture and climate of the institution; thus, university leaders should focus on these faculty members' experiences (Louis et al., 2016) to improve the environment and increase the presence of African-American faculty on campus.

Many of the African-American faculty members at Twin Rivers University had similar experiences with racism, marginalization, and countless forms of microaggressions before and during their tenure at the university. Using their voices and telling their stories, the participants confirmed much of the previous literature specific to the career experiences of African-American faculty members (Alexander & Moore, 2008a; 2008b; Bartman, 2015; Collins, 2001; Edwards & Ross, 2018; Grant & Ghee, 2015; Hazelwood, 2014; Heggins, 2004; Henry & Glenn, 2009; Knox, 2019; Patton & Catching, 2009). Exploring African-American faculty members' life and career experiences at Twin Rivers University provided a comprehensive story of the attitudes and perceptions of select African-American faculty members at PWIs. Individuals seeking faculty positions, university leadership, hiring personnel, and anyone with a distinct desire to learn about the experiences of African-American faculty at prominent research institutions may find this study helpful as they attempt to understand the perspectives of African-American faculty at PWIs.

Discussion

Although in this study, I focused on African-American faculty members at a PWI, it had broader implications, particularly for the recruitment and retention of African-American faculty to increase the number of faculty of color in academia. Participants'

descriptions of the daily dynamics of teaching at a PWI could be helpful in diversity education for all institute personnel. Most diversity initiatives currently address issues at the individual level—in other words, how and why diversity issues and the associated ramifications affect people. Metzler (2003) suggested that diversity initiatives "do not, however, address the systemic issues—an organization's practices, policies and procedures—and how they operate to exclude subordinated groups" (p. 19).

Another key finding was that African-American faculty members have an extended role encompassing social, educational, and personal responsibilities. It is possible that the "scholarly" efficiency of the faculty in some areas might be adversely affected by the extended roles they play. Because the diverse roles are an integral part of their professional identities, universities might need to incorporate these roles in the promotion and tenure requirements, helping African-American faculty meet the expectations to be successful in their jobs. Also, suppose these areas of expertise (e.g., mentoring, counseling, acculturating, and nurturing African-American students) are all part of their responsibilities as African-American faculty. In that case, these functions merit consideration when evaluating African-American faculty for promotion and tenure.

This argument has major implications for all faculty members who teach African-American students. Suppose African-American students benefit from and are more likely to succeed academically because of the nurturing and acculturation roles held by African-American faculty. In that case, African-American faculty are bringing with them special types of expertise. Consequently, all educators may benefit from learning these skills to increase recruitment and retention of African-American students. The data indicated different expectations for White faculty, suggesting individuals of all races might learn

from each other; however, institutions tend to give more credence to what African-American faculty have learned from White faculty.

In this study, six African-American faculty members discussed adopting grit and persistence strategies to overcome racial barriers and stay competitive with their White peers. PWIs in the United States need to create college and university environments that promote cultural competence and collaboration at all institutional development levels. African-American faculty indicated experiencing low morale and high levels of dissatisfaction with their jobs. This is a significant problem that prevents higher education institutions from closing the achievement gap between Black and White students. Education agencies should formulate and promote policies that encourage cultural competence and create a positive work environment for all faculty members. The African-American faculty in this study were tokens used to represent diversity. Still, in reality, higher education leaders merely talk about the need to dismantle systemic racism yet maintain the status quo. African-American faculty need to be explicit, clear, and direct in articulating what racial justice looks like and creating intentional, meaningful change. In 2020, the nation and the world are faced with the realities of racism, witnessing the anguish, pain, and rage of African-American people. Thus, now might be the best time to confront systemic racism, as did these participants in voicing their individual experiences perpetuating racial biases. Institutional leaders need to acknowledge their privilege and role in this system and identify ways in which the structure serves to benefit them.

Limitations and Implications for Further Study

In this section, I examined research implications and speculated on potential policy implications. In this narrative research study, I presented African-American faculty's perspectives as interpreted through the research lens and attempted to uncover and further understand systemic racism in higher education institutions. Bringing my diverse ethnic background, university experiences, and beliefs in race relations in writing this dissertation, I hope to support African-American faculty, administrators, and students in all U.S. institutions of higher education. In this study, I collaborated with African-American faculty members on areas of common interest and explored critical race issues in qualitative research. I was also aware my interaction with the informants might have led them to discuss some issues and ignore others.

The work presented in this study is just a portion of African-American faculty's perceptions of their experiences with the institutional diversity landscape. Because I did not interview other stakeholders, such as White faculty, students, and administrators, I could not triangulate African-American faculty's perceptions with what other stakeholders say about college diversity. Future scholars on race relations and diversity should explore race relations from other perspectives. Multiple viewpoints are required to gain a holistic picture of the phenomenon. Empirical studies may be needed to investigate select faculty from the same institution with comparable experiences. Furthermore, the dichotomy of race and gender might be a more useful foundation in future studies to frame the race/gender distinction in terms of intersectionality rather than treat race issues homogeneously.

The primary limitations of this study were the small sample size and the limited number of female participants. A lack of critical mass of African-American faculty at the university constrained the study's number of qualified participants. Critical mass refers to the significant representation of a population in an environment (Hughes & Howard-Hamilton, 2003; Stanley, 2006; Trower & Chait, 2002). As a result of the small number of participants, specifically women, it was difficult to determine if their experiences and perceptions are like those of other African-American faculty. Although the sample size was small, the rich data gathered from participant interviews could be generalizable and transferable to other academic settings. Mason (2010) maintained that the quality of the data collected is not necessarily affected by the sample size. Because the participants self-reported their experiences, I assumed they were truthful in their responses. Another limitation was the setting, with participants selected from a single university. This study's findings could have been more transferable with data gathered from participants from other research universities in the surrounding geographical areas.

Data collection occurred over three months. This narrative study aimed to explore the career experiences of African-American faculty at Twin Rivers University. Using Seidman's (2006) three-step interview model and BFT and CRT constructs, I encouraged participants to share their personal stories freely, describing their experiences and perceptions of the university. Data collection occurred over three months. The goal of this narrative study was to explore the career experiences of African-American faculty at Twin Rivers University. Using Seidman's (2006) three-step interview model and the constructs of BFT and CRT, I encouraged participants to share their personal stories freely, describing their experiences and perceptions of the university. Face-to-face

interviews took place for five participants at various locations in a quiet setting; teleconference occurred for one participant using FreeConferenceCall, a teleconferencing service. Some participants may have been hesitant to share accurate details of their experiences, which could also be a potential limitation. Finally, the use of an audio device to record each interview could have distorted some participants' responses, leading to inaccurate interpretation.

Policy Implications

In this section, I speculate on the possible policy implications of the results of the study. Specifically, I focus on the institution's policymakers' relevance for diversity policy formulation, particularly cultural competence training. It is important that Twin Rivers University design its cultural competency training to engage, inspire, challenge, and provoke serious conversations related to diversity and to encourage current or bourgeoning leaders to become agents of change. A well-designed diversity program can increase the awareness, knowledge, and skills of Twin Rivers University students and staff about critical issues, including self-awareness, communication, cultural literacy, diversity, discrimination, and relationship-building. As shown in this study, there are emerging instructional strategies associated with African-American faculty. It would be reasonable to consider these instructional strategies in the training of all college faculty and staff. Because African-American faculty have developed culturally sensitive instructional and advising strategies, their distinct instruction and advising styles should serve as factors of professional competency during promotion evaluations.

The African-American faculty selected to participate in this study were from a major metropolitan area in the southeast United States; thus, I cannot claim whether their

experiences were comparable to those of other African-American faculty in similar positions elsewhere in the country. The participants were also at different stages in their careers; it is unknown if their experiences would remain the same as they progressed in their careers. Their perceptions of their professional careers may change with time. This study's findings reflected the participants' unique experiences; therefore, I was not liable for inaccurate information they may have communicated during the interviews. The primary aim of this study was to obtain insight into the lived and professional experiences of African-American faculty at a PWI through a group of carefully selected men and women. It is up to the reader to determine transferability to other contexts and discern patterns across the broader higher education faculty experiences. Despite the general limitations laid out in this study, the findings contributed significantly to the body of knowledge about African-American faculty members' experiences in PWIs in the United States.

Recommendations for Future Research

I explored the lives and career experiences of six African-American faculty members employed at Twin Rivers University. Using a qualitative narrative approach led to valuable insights into the challenges some African-American faculty faced throughout their careers. Moreover, the research design allowed participants to discuss the strategies they used to navigate their professional journeys. Based on the findings of this study, there are several recommendations for future research. One suggestion is to conduct a comparative analysis study to examine African-American faculty's career experiences who are employed at PWIs and HBCUs. Such a study would allow the researcher to

explore the similarities and differences in faculty career experiences based on the university culture and environment.

This study's participants were from Twin Rivers University. Future scholars could include participants from multiple research institutions. Studying multiple settings might increase the number of participants and determine whether the challenges shared by these participants are isolated to Twin Rivers University or if African-American faculty face similar challenges at other research institutions.

In this study, the focus was on the experiences of African-American faculty. Scholars could replicate the study to examine another underrepresented minority faculty population's experience, such as Hispanic faculty, both male and female. Another recommendation is to conduct a qualitative study that focuses on efforts to retain minority faculty. It may be beneficial for university leadership and hiring personnel to review current retention efforts to determine if new strategies are necessary.

Additional studies could focus on the importance of African-American faculty from the student perspective. Such an approach could provide more insight into the effect African-American faculty have on students. Moreover, the findings could help research university leaders understand the significance of African-American faculty presence.

More African-American men were willing to discuss their experiences than women. It could be advantageous to explore what factors contribute to African-American female faculty sharing their experiences. A study of this magnitude might encourage African-American and other minority female faculty to share their stories. Another recommendation is to conduct a study that examines the experiences of males and

females separately. The findings could help identify how experiences may differ based on gender.

Final Conclusions

African-American faculty members are underrepresented at a southeastern U.S. university research institution, holding fewer than six percent of the faculty positions compared to sixty percent of their White counterparts. Studies on the underrepresentation of African-American faculty should be a primary focus for leaders of higher education institutions. Leaders within these organizations must be aware of how African-American faculty perceive their experiences at their universities. Understanding why African-American faculty continue to be underrepresented makes it essential to give them a platform to share their experiences (Stanley, 2006). I explored the lives and career experiences of six African-American faculty members at Twin Rivers University, seeking to learn about the barriers they encountered in their careers as well as the strategies used to overcome them. Four themes emerged from the data: burden of Blackness, politics of isolation and omission, paradox of diversity at a PWI, and extended roles and responsibilities of African-American faculty in PWIs.

The participants expressed their passion for teaching and their love for education. However, they had mixed emotions regarding their experiences as faculty members at the university. On the one hand, they felt accomplished by receiving recognition for their research contributions and seeking and attaining faculty positions at Twin Rivers University. They described with enthusiasm their commitment to educating and serving as role models for their students, especially African-American and minority students. Many of the participants did not have African-American faculty when they were in

college, so they felt their presence was necessary for African-American students' success. On the other hand, participants discussed facing many challenges as underrepresented minorities. One of the significant concerns was the lack of faculty diversity present at Twin Rivers University (Trower & Chait, 2002). Although university leaders emphasized their commitment to diversity, many participants deemed it "lip service" and refuted the idea that they worked in a diverse environment. Participants also revealed their frustration with the institution's lack of recruiting efforts to increase African-American faculty members' presence. They have witnessed little to no increase in their respective departments; one participant reported being the only African-American faculty in his department for over 10 years. Due to the underrepresentation of African-American faculty, some of the participants described feelings of loneliness and isolation.

Another challenge the participants described was pressure to represent the entire Black culture. The faculty did not appreciate their university viewing them as African-American culture experts (Pittman, 2012). Moreover, their colleagues often assumed that they should be responsible for handling issues with African-American students and being the spokesperson for minority outreach and student recruiting efforts because they were African-American. Participants believed many of their White colleagues displayed implicit biases toward African-American students and were not committed to helping students succeed.

Participants also felt undervalued and overlooked by their colleagues. They often described their contributions unacknowledged, with their ideas to improve academic processes not considered until their non-Black colleagues presented the same ideas. The faculty in this study also described the uneven distribution of job responsibilities

compared to their White colleagues, including excessive committee work and additional student support. Although participants believed a fundamental component to faculty success was mentorship, many remarked that mentorship and faculty development were not a significant focus at the university. They argued that university leadership and some of their colleagues were more concerned about research than teaching.

As African-Americans, the participants highlighted numerous forms of microaggressions they encountered from some of their students and colleagues. White faculty and students had questioned their credentials on several occasions. Students were often surprised to see African-American faculty in their classrooms and were intimidated by their presence, sometimes resulting in unwarranted complaints. The participants experienced various forms of racism from students and colleagues.

CRT and BFT served as the theoretical framework guiding this study. Given the nature of this research, these theories were appropriate to focus on the marginalization and underrepresentation of African-American faculty at PWIs (Collins, 2004; 2007; Grant & Ghee, 2015; Patton et al., 2007). Based on the findings of this study, race contributed to the overall career experiences of African-American faculty.

In this study, I hoped to capture the experiences of African-American faculty members at Twin Rivers University. Their stories showed a critical need to continue investigating the challenges and barriers African-American faculty encounter as they try to navigate successful careers in PWIs. University and college leaders and board members could use this study to take an in-depth look at their recruiting and retention policies for minority faculty members and determine what improvements they can make to create inclusive environments. The insights and strategies that emerged from this

study could help aspiring university faculty attain positions at PWIs. Moreover, the findings suggested that Twin Rivers University leadership may need to consider examining the unequal distribution of workload and putting more effort into training and preparing all faculty to support African-American students' needs at the university. Although the participants highlighted the barriers and challenges at Twin Rivers University, they all maintained a need and a place for African-American faculty at other PWIs.

As an African-American woman, I recommend and encourage African-American female faculty to share their stories and experiences to help other female minority faculty succeed in this White male-dominated industry. Henry and Glenn (2009) suggested that more African-American female faculty should help other African-American female faculty to succeed at PWIs.

Final Note

As the researcher, I applaud the participants' courage to use this platform to share their stories—stories that may have been difficult to tell but could potentially effect change for current and future African-American faculty and university leaders. Their stories serve as a call to action. Many participants expressed how vital this type of research is and how they hoped it would inspire university leaders to question if African-American faculty members have similar experiences within their universities.

All the participants mentioned how this research would benefit universities and African-American faculty. Faith proclaimed,

> It will benefit universities particularly because oftentimes they don't know about what we're experiencing; there aren't necessarily any concerted

> efforts by the universities just to say, "Hey, how is this going for you?" . . . to actually see through our eyes how we're experiencing these situations. . . [That would] be beneficial . . . as they start . . . developing policies and thinking about, "Where do we need to grow?"

In terms of how this study would benefit other African-Americans, Faith stated, "For people who look like me who read this, I think they're going to be like, 'Finally, someone said it.' . . . They're going to feel like their voices have been heard." Michael suggested, "This study will benefit them by understanding the drivers, hear[ing] people telling you what their experience is like." James said he "would love if people really heard [and] understood the viewpoint of what are, unfortunately, nontraditional voices in a crowd. . . Take away . . . people within these structures [who] have a lot of capacity, power, desire, willingness. . . Try to understand ways to enhance that."

Discussing the benefits of this study, Dee expressed, "It makes visible the stories, the experiences of faculty in this category." From Joe's perspective, this research would help other African-American faculty grow and become better faculty members. He mentioned, "I think what African-American faculty members need to do is see themselves in a situation. . . I hope some . . . Black guy sees himself in me, and . . . use my pitfalls to better themselves." He added, "I think if the university . . . [if] a person can read what I said on a page and divorce it from me, they can digest it better." Christian offered the following thoughts:

> It's going to continue the conversation. . . The conversation of African-American faculty . . . goes dormant. . . [It] probably comes up every January around MLK Day, just before Black History Month. . . Hearing

> the voices of African-American educators is going to be a good thing. . . [It will] challenge departments to look at [their] work and then take a look at themselves and see, 'Hey, what are we doing? What are we not doing? What are the people saying?' . . . When you have decisionmakers . . . sitting at the provost level, at the chancellor level, read work like this, I really think it's going to allow persons to say, "Wow, here's some things that we can do." . . . I think it's going to open up the conversation for us to ask everyone, "How are you doing and in what ways can we improve?" And whenever you have conversations like that, whenever people feel like their voice is being heard, they come to work with a renewed vigor and a renewed excitement to do the work that they are doing. . . . And that can only benefit the students that they're teaching . . . benefit the research . . . benefit the overall effectiveness that your campus is going to have in all of its ways of doing business.

Recommendations to a Young African-American Faculty Member in a PWI

There is no single track to faculty success. It may appear as though most faculty knew their final careers from the beginning to professor, but this is simply not the case. All participants described multiple careers, course changes, second chances, and "accidental" opportunities throughout their careers, which eventually landed them in their current roles.

Do good work; keep your friends close, and your mentors closer. Faculty of color often have difficulty finding mentors of the same ethnic and racial background to talk about professional challenges. This was also true for my participants, who felt isolated

and appeared to struggle with navigating their positions' social and political terrain. One faculty said her best experience as an African-American faculty member was "being surrounded by . . . other African-American faculty who have become family."

Overcome your internal barriers. Moving into a faculty role has not just work-related challenges, but personal ones, as well. Internal barriers arise as faculty members accept and assimilate the negative stereotypes associated with their race. All participants shared strategies to overcome barriers, handle conflict appropriately, build personal resilience, and develop "thick skin" to avoid internalizing negativity. African-American faculty have learned to be resilient in the face of these challenges.

These steps are only a snapshot of strategies that can increase the number of African-American faculty members succeeding in their roles. Understanding these experiences can help others aspire to these positions and prepare to attain these roles. Additionally, institutions can create more inclusive spaces for all faculty to succeed.

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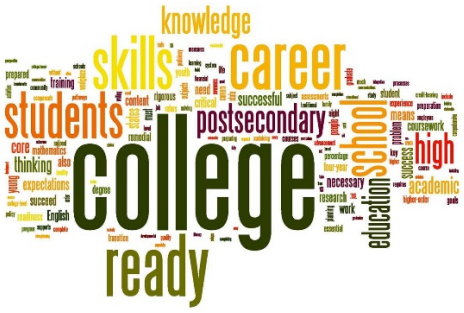
APPENDIX A:

Participant Flyer



Are you an African-American Faculty Member at Twin Rivers University?

If so, this is for you! If you are an African-American faculty member who currently or has served as a faculty member at Twin Rivers University, we need to hear from you.

My name is Michelle Robinson and I am a student at Valdosta State University. I am conducting a study examining the career barriers and strategies of African-American faculty in higher education. Your involvement in this study will provide valuable information and add to and enhance the body of knowledge that focuses on the career experiences of African-American faculty. Additionally, the findings of this study could provide current and future African-American faculty members with strategies to achieve their desired career aspirations. Furthermore, it will provide university leadership and hiring personnel with strategies to effectively recruit and retain more African-American faculty.

If you are interested in participating in this study and sharing your story, please contact me at mirobinson@valdosta.edu.

Michelle Robinson - Primary Researcher
mirobinson@valdosta.edu
Valdosta State University – Valdosta, GA
Dr. Rudo Tsemunhu, Associate Professor
James L. and Dorothy H. Dewar College of Education and Human Services

Questions regarding the purpose or procedures of the research should be directed to Michelle Robinson at mirobinson@valdosta.edu. This study has been approved by the Valdosta State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Research Participants. The IRB, a university committee established by Federal law, is responsible for protecting the rights and welfare of research participants. If you have concerns or questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the IRB Administrator at 229-253-2947 or irb@valdosta.edu

APPENDIX B:

Participant Invitation Letter

Dear Faculty Member:

You are an integral part of the overall college experience for each student you encounter. Many researchers and African-American students are concerned with the lack of minority faculty members they are met with when they begin their college journeys. Despite the many qualified African-American faculty who exist at a university research institution in a southeastern U.S. state, it is estimated that less than ten percent of the faculty, both male and female, are present in the University System are of African-American descent. I believe that as an African-American faculty member, you can make a significant contribution to the existing body of knowledge that highlights the career experiences of African-American faculty.

If you are currently an African-American faculty member with at least 2 years of faculty experience or have previously been employed at Twin Rivers University, I invite you to participate in this study that will examine the barriers encountered, if any, and the strategies employed by African-American faculty members who serve as faculty at Twin Rivers University. Specifically, you will be asked to share your career experiences and discuss any barriers you encountered, as well as what strategies you employed to be a successful faculty member.

While there will not be any monetary compensation for your participation, your contribution to this study will provide valuable information and will add to and enhance the body of knowledge that focuses on the career experiences of African-American faculty members employed in the University System. Additionally, the findings of this study will provide current and future African-American faculty with strategies to achieve their desired career aspirations. Furthermore, it will provide university leadership and hiring personnel with strategies to effectively recruit and retain more African-American faculty members.

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete a preliminary participant profile form that will assist with determining if you meet the selection criteria. If you are selected, you will be required to have three interviews with the researcher to gather data needed for the study. If you are interested in participating in this study, please email me at mirobinson@valdosta.edu with the subject line "Interested in doctoral study." Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Michelle Robinson
Doctoral Candidate
Valdosta State University

Questions regarding the purpose or procedures of the research should be directed to Michelle Robinson at mirobinson@valdosta.edu. This study has been approved by the Valdosta State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Research Participants. The IRB, a university committee established by Federal law, is responsible for protecting the rights and welfare of research participants. If you have

concerns or questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the IRB Administrator at 229-253-2947 or irb@valdosta.edu.

APPENDIX C:

Preliminary Participant Profile Form

Participant Demographic Information

1. Name: _____
2. Gender: _____
3. Ethnicity: _____
4. Age: _____

Participant Selection Criteria

1. Please circle if you currently work as a faculty member Twin Rivers University.
   Yes No

2. Please circle if you are not currently employed as a faculty member Twin Rivers University but have been in the past. Yes No

3. Please circle your faculty level while employed at Twin Rivers University.

   Professor Associate Professor Assistant Professor Instructor Lecturer

4. Please circle the type of doctoral degree you were awarded. Ph. D Ed. D

5. Indicate the year you earned your doctorate?
   _____

6. Indicate the field of your study: _____

7. Indicate what year you became a faculty member at your institution.
   _____

8. Please circle to indicate if you have gone through the tenure process.

   Yes No

Questions regarding the purpose or procedures of the research should be directed to Michelle Robinson at mirobinson@valdosta.edu. This study has been approved by the Valdosta State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Research Participants. The IRB, a university committee established by Federal law, is responsible for protecting the rights and welfare of research participants. If you have concerns or questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the IRB Administrator at 229-253-2947 or irb@valdosta.edu.

APPENDIX D:

Research Statement (Consent to Participate)

Informed Consent: Prior to beginning this study, we must obtain consent from you to participate. The researcher will read the informed consent aloud, and if you agree, you will say your full name, the date, and state, "I have heard the informed consent and I agree to participate in the study." Note: This consent will be recorded by an audio device.

Research Statement: You are being asked to participate in an interview as part of a research study entitled "Black Scholars' Burden: An examination of life and career experiences of African-American faculty at a PWI," which is being conducted by Michelle Robinson, a student at Valdosta State University. The purpose of this study was to determine if African-American university faculty members at a university research institution in a southeastern U.S. state encountered barriers in their efforts to become university faculty members, and if they did, what strategies they used to overcome the barriers. You will receive no direct benefits from participating in this research study. However, your responses may help us learn more about the career experiences of African-American faculty. Additionally, the findings of this study could provide current and future African-American faculty members with strategies to achieve their desired career aspirations. There are no foreseeable risks involved in participating in this study other than those encountered in day-to-day life. Participation should take approximately 4-5 hours. The interviews will be audiotaped in order to accurately capture your concerns, opinions, and ideas. Once the recordings have been transcribed, the tapes will be destroyed. No one, including the researcher, will be able to associate your responses with your identity. Your participation is voluntary. You may choose not to participate, to stop responding at any time, or to skip any questions that you do not want to answer. You must be at least 18 years of age to participate in this study. Your participation in the interview will serve as your voluntary agreement to participate in this research project and your certification that you are 18 years of age or older.

Confidentiality: The information you provide will be kept confidential in a locked cabinet, and your identity will remain anonymous. For the purposes of this study, you will be assigned a pseudonym that only you and the researcher will know. Finally, your employer's name will not be released.

Description of the interview process: Three interviews will be conducted for each participant. The interviews will be either in a private, face-to-face setting or via telephone using a free conference call service. If the interview is face-to-face, it will be recorded using an audio device. If the interview is conducted via telephone, each call will be recorded using the Free Conference Call recording software. The participant will be informed when the interview begins and ends. Each interview will last approximately 60- to 90- minutes. Within five days of the interview, participants will receive a written transcription to validate the data for accuracy or correct any incorrect information. Each subsequent interview will be conducted approximately one to two weeks after the prior interview. Participants will receive a journal to document any thoughts they would like to share with the researcher during the study. At the end of the final interview, the participant will be required to provide the journal to the researcher so the data can be used for the study.

Questions regarding the purpose or procedures of the research should be directed to Michelle Robinson at mirobinson@valdosta.edu. This study has been approved by the Valdosta State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Research Participants. The IRB, a university committee established by Federal law, is responsible for protecting the rights and welfare of research participants. If you have concerns or questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the IRB Administrator at 229-253-2947 or irb@valdosta.edu

APPENDIX E:

Interview Questions

First Interview Questions:
Family
When and where were you born?
Where did you grow up?
What is your ethnic background?
Where is your mom's family from? Where is your dad's family from?
Have you ever been there? What was that experience like?
What were your parents like when you were a child?
Do you consider your parents to be successful?
How do you define success?
How do you define "family?"
Who holds the most "status" in your family? Why?
Are the roles of men and women specifically defined in your family? If so, what are they?
Did you get into trouble? What was the worst thing you did?
Do you have any siblings? What were they like growing up?
How would you describe yourself as a child? Were you happy?
What is your best memory of childhood? Worst?
How would you describe a perfect day when you were young?
What did you think your life would be like when you were older?
What career aspirations did you have as a child?
Do you have any favorite stories from your childhood?
School
How important is education in your family?
Did you enjoy school? Do you have any favorite stories from school?
What kind of student were you?
Were your elementary, middle school, and high school's populations diverse?
What are your best memories of grade school/high school/college/graduate school? Worst memories?
Was there a teacher or teachers who had a particularly strong influence on your life? Tell me about them. What did you learn about teaching from them?
Describe your overall college experience with faculty. What impact did they have on your education and career goals?
Tell me about your career experience since graduating from college.
What degrees have you earned?
What is your research focus?
Religion and Culture
What is your definition of "culture?"
What is your definition of "religion?"

Do you actively participate in an organized religion?
How important is religion in your family? Why?
If religion is important in your family, do you plan to pass this on to your children? Why or why not?
What is considered most disrespectful in your culture?
What is considered most respectful in your culture?
What would you say is, from your perspective, the most commonly held misconception about people of your culture?
Have you ever experienced racism? In what form?
In your opinion, what can be done about racism and prejudice?
Do young people today have a sense of culture?
Have you ever felt excluded based on your gender or culture?
Do you remember excluding others based on Culture or Gender?
Is there anything you would like others to know that we have not included here about you or your culture?
Thank you - is there anything else you would like to share?
Second Interview Questions:
Individual Experiences
When and why did you decide to become an educator? Was this always a dream or aspiration?
Tell me about your first day as a professor.
How is teaching different from how you imagined it to be?
Looking back, what advice would you give to yourself in your first year of teaching?
What are some examples of the most satisfying teaching experiences you have had here, both with students and with colleagues?
What are some examples of the unique difficulties of teaching here, both with students and with colleagues?
Tell me about a time when teaching made you feel hopeful.
Tell me about a time when you questioned teaching as a career.
What are the most challenging moments you've experienced in the classroom?
What are the funniest moments you've experienced in the classroom?
What has been your best experience as an African-American faculty member?
What has been the most challenging experience as an African-American faculty member?
Do your teaching experiences differ based on the ethnicity of your students? If so, please explain.
Can you tell a story that best describes your experiences as an African-American faculty member at a PWI?
What lessons has your work life taught you?
If you could do anything different now with your career, what would you do? Why?
Describe your overall comfort level as a minority at your university.

Describe your overall career experiences as an African-American?
Has your teaching style ever been questioned as an African-American faculty member (by students and colleagues)? If so, describe the situation, how you handled it, and the outcome.
Do you think race and gender have influenced your overall career experiences? If so, how?
In what ways does your race and gender influence your relationships with the following? - Students?, Faculty, Staff
Please share what you feel is the most significant influence African-American faculty contribute to a Predominantly White Institution.
Can you share some of your favorite stories from your work life?
What contribution do you want to make as a faculty member?
Where do you see yourself in five years as a faculty member?
How would you like your students to remember you?
What type of legacy do you want to leave as a faculty member?
Communication
Describe how you, as a faculty member, function and communicate effectively?
Describe how you ensure you are sensitive and respectful within the context of varying beliefs, behaviors, identities, and backgrounds?
What is your method of communication with faculty and students who are different from you?
When interacting with a person from a different culture than your own, how do you ensure that communication is effective?
Give an example of how you honor commitments.
Describe a time when you were asked to compromise your ethics. What did you do? What would you do in the future?
Personalities and Conflicts
Tell me about a time when you had to work with someone who had the direct opposite personality of yours?
Describe a situation in which you encountered a conflict with a person from a different cultural background than yours. How did you handle the situation? (Please be specific)
Talk about a time when you had to deal with conflict at work.
Tell me about a time when you changed your style to work more effectively with a person from a different background.
Tell me about a time you took responsibility/accountability for an action that may have been offensive to the recipient and how you did that.
Describe the most difficult person you've ever had to deal with at work.
Describe a time when you needed to work cooperatively with someone that did not share the same ideas as you.
Give an example of a time when you could not be tolerant of another person's point of view.

Talk about how you responded to a co-worker who made an insensitive remark.
What have you learned from working in a diverse population?
Thank you - is there anything else you would like to share?
Third Interview Questions:
Hiring Process
What is your current faculty level? - Adjunct, junior professor, tenured, full-time.
If tenured, tell me about the process. Did you fully understand the process? Were the requirements clearly stated somewhere?
If tenured, what have you learned through your tenure process or your career that you could say to a newly hired faculty to help him or her cope with the challenges of the academy?
If non-tenured, tell me why.
If you are interested in being tenured, do you know the process?
Did you ever wish to teach at a PWI or at this institution specifically?
Why did you choose to apply to teach here? Were you recruited?
How long have you taught at this university?
Have you ever taught at another PWI?
If so, how was that teaching environment compared to your current university?
Have you ever taught at an HBCU?
If so, how was that teaching environment compared to your current university?
Tell me about your hiring process. Did you have a positive or negative experience?
In your opinion, does your university have recruitment strategies to hire more African-American faculty?
Do you think the university is doing enough to recruit faculty of color? If yes, how? If no, in you're your opinion what more can they do?
Do you like your job? Why, or why not?
Multiculturism and Social Justice
Describe your experience or explain how you have been educated to understand the history of African-Americans and other historically marginalized communities in the USA.
How do you think a Higher-Ed institution benefits from multiculturalism (or the co-existence of diverse cultures)?
What is your sense of the complexities and leadership challenges related to multiculturalism?
In what ways have you integrated multicultural issues as part of your professional development?
What are some specific things you are going to do within the next two years to further your development in cultural competency?
(**Cultural competence** is the ability to understand, communicate with, and effectively interact with people across **cultures**. **Cultural competence** encompasses. being aware of one's own world view. developing positive attitudes towards **cultural** differences)

How do you define social justice?
What is your sense of the complexities and leadership challenges related to social justice?
What have you learned from working with diverse populations?
What have you learned from teaching diverse populations?
Describe your experience with working with other African-American faculty.
Departmental Culture
Describe the culture of your department. How many other African-American faculty are in your department? What other ethnicities are represented?
How do you feel as one of few African-American academics in your department?
How connected do you feel to other African-American faculty on campus, either in your department or across campus?
What opportunities have you had working and collaborating in a predominantly White institution?
Do you feel respected by your colleagues who have a different ethnicity than you?
Do you believe your department has different standards for tenure promotion and/or scholarly publication for you as opposed to your non-Black colleagues?
Other than faculty responsibilities, do you have any other job responsibilities?
Do you feel that you have more administrative duties than your non-Black counterparts?
Do you feel like you the same advantages for career progression as your White counterparts?
What is the sex and gender of your department head?
What is your overall relationship with your department head?
Do you feel like you have the support of your department head and peers to be successful as an African-American faculty member?
Do you feel like you play an integral part in your department? Are you able to express your concerns or thoughts freely?
University Culture
Tell me about the university.
Describe your perception of the culture and organizational climate at your university.
What is your definition of diversity?
Is diversity a significant focus at your university? If yes, how so?
How do you encourage people to honor the uniqueness of everyone?
How do you challenge stereotypes and promote sensitivity and inclusion?
What do you see as the most challenging aspects of an increasingly diverse academic community?
Follow-up question: What initiatives have you taken to meet such challenges?
Based on your career experiences, what advice do you have for the leaders of your organization?

What is your model of success and how does it fit into this institution's culture?
Please describe strategies this institution has used to create an inclusive learning environment for your faculty and students.
This Study
How do you feel this study will benefit universities and African-American faculty?

APPENDIX F:

IRB Protocol Exemption Report

Institutional Review Board (IRB)
For the Protection of Human Research Participants

PROTOCOL EXEMPTION REPORT

Protocol Number: 03857-2019 **Responsible Researcher:** Michelle Robinson

Supervising Faculty: Dr. Rudo Tsemunhu

Project Title: *A Qualitative, Narrative Research Study Uncovering the Unknown Career Barriers and Strategies of African-American Faculty.*

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD DETERMINATION:

This research protocol is **Exempt** from Institutional Review Board (IRB) oversight under Exemption **Category 2**. Your research study may begin immediately. If the nature of the research project changes such that exemption criteria may no longer apply, please consult with the IRB Administrator (irb@valdosta.edu) before continuing your research.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

- *Upon completion of this research study all data (data list, email correspondence, etc.) must be securely maintained (locked file cabinet, password protected computer, etc.) and accessible only by the researchers for a minimum of 3 years.*
- *In order to ensure participant confidentiality, you must maintain demographic forms and participant name lists in secure & separate files - from the associated pseudonym list.*

☒ ***If this box is checked, please submit any documents you revise to the IRB Administrator at irb@valdosta.edu to ensure an updated record of your exemption.***

Elizabeth Ann Olphie 07.08.2019 ***Thank you for submitting an IRB application.***
Elizabeth Ann Olphie, IRB Administrator ***Please direct questions to irb@valdosta.edu or 229-253-2947.***

Revised: 06.02.16

APPENDIX G:

Rules for the Study

The rules for the study are as follows:

1. There can be no discussion of the study with anyone other than the researcher.
2. Participants will be informed that if they are ever uncomfortable, they have the option to withdraw from the study at any time
3. There must always be mutual respect between the researcher and the participant.
4. Participants can always ask questions to gain a better understanding of the research process and their roles in the study.
5. The researcher will not share any information about the participant or their organizations with anyone.