

## ABSTRACT

### When They See Us: A Multiple Case Study to Understand Recruitment and Retention of Black Faculty at Predominantly White Institutions

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Diversity and inclusion in the United States have been poignant topics for decades. These concepts apply to multiple facets of the American landscape, including, but not limited to, higher education. The diversity of educators in the higher education system does not reflect the diversity of learners, nor the variety of modern-day thought. With the current state of diversity within academia, there is a noted lack of faculty that represent the identities of Black, African, African American people and the diaspora.

This research study explored the recruitment and retention of different levels of Black faculty members at predominantly White institutions (PWIs) in the United States. The inquiry primarily focused on how diversity in education proves beneficial for all but remained a challenge to execute. This study sought to answer the following primary question: What are the experiences of recruitment and retention of Black faculty members at a PWI? A multiple case study design was employed to discover perspectives and disparities associated with recruiting and retaining Black faculty members.

Critical Race Theory was the chosen theoretical framework for this analysis and formed the foundation of the study, proving that many benefits came from diverse educational opportunities. This research pointed to the need for inclusivity of non-hegemonic people and points of view in the educational system. Data collected included interviews conducted with current faculty who identified as Black, and a focus group to further tease out themes.

Findings included varying narratives that highlighted the successes and challenges of being a Black faculty member at a PWI; themes discovered from the qualitative research offered strategies for moving forward. Common themes among participants were: (1) the academy was not a primary interest, (2) interest convergence, and (3) “being better than great to be considered average.” These themes pinpointed how the experiences of Black faculty members at PWIs reflected greater concerns within the academy.

When They See Us:  
A Multiple Case Study to Understand Recruitment and Retention of  
Black Faculty at Predominantly White Institutions

by

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A Dissertation

Approved by the Department of Curriculum and Instruction

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Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of  
Baylor University in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree  
of  
Doctor of Education

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August 2021

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES .....	vii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS .....	viii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....	ix
DEDICATION .....	xi
CHAPTER ONE .....	1
Introduction to the Problem of Practice .....	1
Introduction .....	1
Statement of the Problem .....	3
Purpose of the Study .....	6
Theoretical Framework .....	6
Research Design .....	8
Definition of Key Terms .....	8
Conclusion .....	11
CHAPTER TWO .....	12
Literature Review .....	12
Introduction .....	12
History of Integration in American Education .....	13
The Current State of Diversity in Higher Education Faculty .....	18
Diversity of Thought .....	26
Value of Recruiting and Retaining Diverse Faculty .....	30
Conclusion .....	34
CHAPTER THREE .....	35
Methodology .....	35
Introduction .....	35
Researcher Perspective .....	36
Theoretical Framework .....	37
Research Design .....	39
Site Selection and Participant Sampling .....	41
Data Collection .....	42
Data Analysis .....	44

Data Validation .....	46
Ethical Considerations .....	47
Limitations and Delimitations .....	48
Conclusion .....	48
CHAPTER FOUR.....	50
Results and Implications .....	50
Introduction .....	50
The Participants.....	51
Cross Case Analysis.....	70
Discussion .....	76
Implications.....	86
Conclusion .....	88
CHAPTER FIVE .....	90
Distribution of Findings.....	90
Executive Summary .....	90
Findings Distribution Proposal .....	97
Conclusion .....	99
APPENDIX A.....	101
IRB Exemption Confirmation.....	101
APPENDIX B .....	102
Interview Questions .....	102
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	103

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1 <i>Primary and Secondary Research Questions</i> .....	36
Table 3.2 <i>Participant Demographics</i> .....	42
Table 4.1 <i>Findings Aligned with Literature Review</i> .....	83
Table 4.2 <i>Findings Aligned with Theoretical Framework</i> .....	85

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CRP: Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

CRT: Critical Race Theory

HBCU: Historically Black Colleges and Universities

MSI: Minority-Serving Institutions

NAACP: National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

PWI: Predominantly White Institution

UCLA: University of California Los Angeles

USC: University of Southern California



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I thank the faculty of Baylor University, who provided support through coursework and dissertation work as well as their respective leadership within the Department of Curriculum and Instruction. I also express my gratitude for the Graduate Writing Center and my editor, Dr. Rhonda Hylton, for their willingness to evaluate my work. I also must thank my peer working group: Cecile Carson, Marsha Kocurek, and Sagirah Wheeler. Without you all, there is no way that my experience would have such positive sentiments associated with this process. Thank you all for your contributions to my work.

I thank my classmates, coworkers, colleagues, and friends that offered continued encouragement throughout my academic pursuits. The number of positive sentiments and motivational moments cannot be appreciated enough. Cohort members including my peer working group, as well as fellow ‘Originals’ Cris Slotoroff, Taylor Bunn, and Ashley Gibson, definitely kept me honest and on the path towards this goal. The workplace provided this opportunity and I would be remiss not to acknowledge the growth that came from these experiences; I have to acknowledge the importance of individuals including, but not limited to Tanesha Dixon, Ryan Durgin, Rachel Braunstein, and Morgan Bell. The support systems around me did nothing short of invigorate me, even when times were tough, and I cannot understate that.

I especially want to acknowledge exalted filmmaker Ava DuVernay for the inspiration for the title of my dissertation, based on her film of the same name. *When*

*They See Us* speaks to the lived experiences of Black people in America and this dissertation does the same, albeit within the context of higher education. She and I started our respective pursuits at the same age of 32, which only further cements DuVernay's importance to this work. Thank you for telling our stories; my aim is to do the same.

## DEDICATION

To my family, both immediate and extended, who make me who I am.

To my love, Dr. Connesia R. Handford, for none of this would exist if not for you.

To my future self: you wrote your way out.

## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction to the Problem of Practice

#### *Introduction*

From law to business to education, one common conversation was how to institute better equity in workspaces (Lynn et al., 2013). Higher education has evolved over hundreds of years; however, notable gaps have remained in the current iteration of colleges and universities in the United States. Diversity and inclusion efforts, including *Brown v. Board of Education* and the No Child Left Behind Act, helped racial minorities and underserved students gain access to education from the 1950s to present day (Reardon et al., 2013). These efforts fundamentally changed the ability of people from different demographics to obtain a formal education. Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP), created by Derrick A. Bell Jr., proved useful in educating different students; the knowledge gained was relative and resonant to those learners (Beckett, 2011). Efforts to diversify education were complicated and involve many stakeholders—students, families, staff, administration, and faculty members.

Higher education grew from its beginnings to primarily educate young White men, to its present emphasis on educating people from various demographics. It was essential that institutions of higher education presented faculty and staff members to the student body whose diverse backgrounds and lived experiences represented those who sought education. Many multicultural initiatives existed within higher education. Booker et al. (2016) offered, “There is qualitative information about the experiences of students taking courses with instructors who participate in such training programs” (p. 1). The

desire to educate these newfound students led to the creation of numerous retention efforts, from affinity groups to affirmative action. Nationally, college enrollment rates for students of color were increasing (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2013); therefore, faculty and staff at colleges and universities felt pressured to cater to these demographics. Diversity of learners provided a diversity of thought and, from a collegiate perspective, allowed for students to become well-versed members of society (Gurin et al., 2002).

Research in the field of education acknowledged a need for diversity education, as well as a lack of thorough understanding regarding the necessity for diverse educators in higher education. Hurtado (2007) acknowledged the ways colleges and universities recruit professionals for high-level positions. However, one or two new hires cannot be expected to alleviate all issues of diversity throughout an organization. Institutions of higher education must acknowledge the importance of recruiting and retaining professionals who can address situations from diverse perspectives—especially from a micro level. Substantial benefits resulted from having new insight from individuals with diverse perspectives (Smith, 2009). Focusing on the different points of view of people from different demographics was essential to the growth of an organization and its effectiveness.

This qualitative study explored the issues PWIs face regarding the recruitment and retention of Black faculty members. This study was necessary because there was a notable lack of effort to actively seek diverse faculty members within different levels of institutions of higher education. This work aimed to account for the lack of Black faculty members recruited and retained at PWIs. The study examined how Black faculty

members experience recruitment, onboarding, and tenure across colleges and universities in the United States. Lastly, this study prompted an examination of efforts (or lack thereof) in places that maintained the current state of affairs at these schools.

### *Statement of the Problem*

Diversity of thought should have led to better educational and societal outcomes. To embrace diversity of thought, an institution needed diverse faculty to engage learners in the thinking process. Encountering and engaging diversity broadened students' horizons, creating more well-rounded students who, in turn, were more well-rounded citizens. A society of well-rounded citizens then presented new and encouraging thought processes and ways to interact with the world at large. The educational opportunities present with diverse and inclusive learners and educators proved beneficial to all parties, both Black and non-Black (Perry, 2016). Learners who completed their education and were successful shared positive messages associated with their institution. As a result, institutions found themselves in pivotal positions to affect change on a local, regional, and global level—leading to higher enrollment and more financial gain.

Despite the desire for diversity and inclusion at institutions of higher education, there was a notable lack of faculty representing people of color (NCES, 2018). This problem may have been caused by the lack of explicit efforts in changing the diversity landscape as it pertained to Black faculty members at PWIs. The history of the United States acknowledged, albeit begrudgingly, that despite the desire for equality among all, there were notable challenges to combating the issues at hand, including educational equality and civil rights (Sokoya, 2014). During the history of integration in the United States, progress has been slow-moving. Aguirre and Martinez (2002) offered, “Diversity

in higher education is sometimes treated like the family member or relative that is shielded from view or the presence of others to avoid embarrassment or unkind comments” (p. 54). The desire to be diverse and inclusive leads to surface-level efforts or attempts to do as little as possible to attain equity within education while maintaining the status quo. Integration of education happened because institutions throughout the United States sought to showcase their diversity (Wright, 2009). Institutions of higher education aim to provide diverse and inclusive experiences for students, faculty, and staff. The concerns, however, were how well the process is implemented, and how it can be shaped to better serve Black faculty members.

Different protocols guide institutions in their recruitment and retention efforts of employees of color (Stewart, 2012). However, improvement by societal standards has yet to be achieved. In attempts to figure out why the proverbial needle moves slowly, there is a lack of efficacious effort to push diversity forward (Aguirre & Martinez, 2002). How can diversity and leadership flourish without active efforts to nurture that diversity? Many might suggest it would not be possible. The need for proper efforts toward retention and education of professionals to cater to diverse circumstances and situations is apparent. The question then becomes: what stops professionals from coming into institutions of higher education with this mindset and later, further being supported in this mentality? Neil Smelser (1993) believed the issue comes down to a sense of ambivalence. He addressed the politics that surround higher education and the difficulties that arise from new ideals and ambitions that encounter a more conservative line of thought from the institution. Smelser (1993) stated, “The new battle lines are tenuous, however, because every subgroup in both major coalitions has a particular agenda and particular

ambivalence, which may surface at any time and occasion a subtle or open realignment” (p. 42). These different experiences, sentiments, and mentalities negatively affect newcomers to an institution, primarily when the demographic they represent draws open fire from the very organization that employs them (Krupnick, 2018). This constant struggle leads to the phenomenon of an “us versus them” mentality, resulting in the need to understand how to cater to individuals who may present themselves as different from the “norm,” but who provide positive outcomes for an institution.

When examining the diversity of education, statistics have not proven favorable for Black faculty members. As it stands, diversity and inclusion, in a veiled way, help the racial majority more so than the minority (Demaske, 2019). Seventy-six percent of all academic faculty in the United States identify as White—men and women. In comparison, six percent of faculty were Black—men and women (NCES, 2018). The disparity of numbers is apparent, especially regarding the split between PWIs and Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) and Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). Statistics demonstrate the hiring of Black faculty members decreased over the 2010 decade, further proving the point that a lack of Black faculty exists at PWIs. Twenty percent of tenure-track faculty who identify as Black work at 72 HBCUs that report self-identifying information such as race (Krupnick, 2018). Most higher education institutions seek to provide post-secondary education for all. However, efforts in place to seek out diversity—especially regarding recruitment, hiring, and retention—were lower than acceptable (NCES, 2018). This research is essential because it aims to ensure racial minority students benefit from efforts to increase diverse faculty members.



### *Purpose of the Study*

Literature on diversity within higher education ranged, and mainly focused on the student experience. However, faculty and staff who deliver these learning outcomes directly impacted student experiences. These considerations proved the need for this study, particularly the necessity for diversity to permeate the educational space. This study explored this problem as it pertains to PWIs. Predominantly White institutions tend to have possessed similar traits and outnumber other types of schools (Bourke, 2016). The student population at PWIs had similar demographics; however, comparably sized institutions suggest the same number of faculty members.

The research in this study centered around the idea of addressing and alleviating the gap in numbers of Black faculty members at PWIs. The discrepancy stemmed from two factors: (1) recruitment and (2) retention. This study sought to explore various questions related to these factors. The main research question that guided this study was: What are the experiences of recruitment and retention of Black faculty members at a PWi? This question guided other questions posed in the research, as it addressed both parts of the hiring process. The secondary questions addressed thoughts within the central research inquiry: What factors led Black faculty to accept faculty positions at a PWi? What factors encourage or discourage Black faculty to accept positions at PWIs? What factors currently exist at PWIs that contribute to Black faculty member's decision to stay at the institution? These questions helped shape the overall purpose of the study.

### *Theoretical Framework*

This study employed Critical Race Theory (CRT) as the theoretical framework. Developed by Derrick A. Bell, Jr. in the 1980s (McCoy & Rodericks, 2015, p. 3), CRT

combatted racism built into the law and rhetoric of the late 1950s and early 1960s (Bell, 1995). CRT eventually became a theoretical framework that battled a series of issues during its inception, including the idea that racism was built into the infrastructure of American society, allowing the racial majority to seek higher education, with the sole purpose of the self-service of those who created the very system—well-to-do White people (Demaske, 2009). The idea of accepting the status quo was beneficial for the majority. White people in charge not only created the rules, but also determined what non-White people could do within those confines.

Critical Race Theory suggested racial salience, or the idea that one race stands out or is more important than another. The framework is a significant proponent to race relations in America. Thornhill (2015) wrote,

Whether a given person of color is hired, promoted, or in the case of college admissions, accepted, is a function of whether or not Whites within the organization consider them racially palatable or not overly concerned with race. This [consideration] creates an incentive for people of color to work their identity to allay any concerns among Whites that they may be too racially salient. (p. 694)

CRT was developed by Derrick Bell, Jr. Bell initially engaged in CRT to address issues of race within law and civil rights (Bell, 1995). The concepts around CRT expanded to cover other fields, including education. CRT was conceptualized within the educational realm. Delgado and Stefancic (2015) shared, “From conventional civil rights thought, the movement took a concern for redressing historic wrongs, as well as the insistence that legal and social theory have practical consequences” (p. 5). The theoretical framework is further detailed in Chapter Three.

With this framework in mind, this study addressed three elements. The first was the history of educational diversity and integration—how has higher education in the

United States arrived at its current state? The second element centered around the current state of recruiting and retaining Black faculty members at PWIs—its effectiveness and ineffectiveness. Finally, the importance of diversity of thought is addressed within higher education and the need is addressed for a diverse collection of educators to achieve this goal.

### *Research Design*

The research conducted in this study used a multiple case study design from a qualitative lens. A multiple case study design best suited the research conducted on this topic because the research questions required the researcher to gain data from multiple cases. The research focused on shared experiences of Black faculty members; therefore, a multiple case study parsed out themes that represented a specific population. Participants in this study were bound by the following characteristics: they participated within specific social groups (i.e., Black Student Affairs Professionals); they were faculty members at only PWIs; they held a similar number of years of teaching experience at their current institutions; and they were graduates of doctoral programs within the past 20 years (Griffin, 2012; Davis & Fry, 2019). From the data collected, the data analysis led to narratives that addressed themes relevant to Critical Race Theory (CRT).

### *Definition of Key Terms*

*Black Power Movement:* A social advocacy movement during the 1960s and 1970s, in which people of Black and African descent took pride in who they are and stood up for what they believed in (Sokoya, 2014).

*Campus climate:* The state of affairs regarding sentiments felt on a college or university campus, concerning students, faculty, and staff (Stewart, 2012).

*Civil Rights Movement*: A period during the 1950s and 1960s, in which racial minorities made concerted efforts towards equality of opportunity within the confines of the United States (Sokoya, 2014).

*Cognitive diversity*: “The existence within a given group of different ways to see the world, interpret it, and apply predictive models in it” (Landemore, 2012, p. 3).

*Critical race pedagogy*: The application of critical theory, as it relates to race, in the confines of teaching, learning, and education (Lynn, 2013).

*Critical Race Theory (CRT)*: A theoretical framework, which uses critical theory and thought to study civilization as it applies to race (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001).

*Culturally Relevant Pedagogy*: The display of cultural humility and competence within the confines of teaching, learning, and education (Beckett, 2011).

*Demographic*: A specific part of a population of people, defined by a common characteristic (Beckett, 2011).

*Diversity*: The representation of a collection of different people or things (Umbach, 2006).

*Diversity of thought*: “The idea that... thinking is shaped by... culture, background, experiences, and personalities” (Tulshyan, 2016, p. 1).

*Groupthink*: “The mode of thinking that persons engage in when concurrence seeking becomes so dominant in a cohesive in-group that it tends to override realistic appraisal of alternative courses of action” (Reagan, 2015, p. 1).

*Hegemony*: Inferred, perceived, or actual power of one specific group of people over other groups of people (Jennings & Marvin, 2005).

*Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)*: Post-secondary institutions established with the intent to educate Black people (Office for Civil Rights, 2018).

*Imposter syndrome*: A series of events, actions, or patterns in which a person doubts their ability or sense of belonging (Stanley, 2006).

*Inclusion*: The act of providing an opportunity to belong to a particular group or structure (Stulberg, 2011).

*Interest convergence*: The idea that the demands of minority people would be met only if that particular action also serves White interests (Lynn et al., 2013).

*Minority Serving Institution (MSI)*: A designation given to post-secondary institutions based on the racial makeup of their student population (Bourke, 2016).

*National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)*: A civil rights organization founded with the express purpose of uplifting people of color (Bourlin, 2013).

*Person of Color*: Any individual categorized as a racial minority in the United States.

*Predominantly White institution (PWI)*: Any post-secondary institution that enrolls a student population where White students are over 50% (Bourke, 2016).

*Racial salience*: Prominence of a particular race, over others, and the structure in which that specific race seeks to commit to that narrative (Thornhill, 2015).

*“Talented Tenth”*: A term made famous by W.E.B. DuBois to represent the elite of Black society, according to knowledge, leadership, and success (Sokoya, 2014).

*Tenure-track*: A pathway in which a faculty member can garner full tenure at an institution (NCES, 2018).

*Tokenism*: The representation of a marginalized group, amongst the majority, for appearances (Stanley, 2006).

### *Conclusion*

Diversity and inclusion in the United States have been relevant topics for several decades. The concepts apply to multiple facets of the American landscape, including, but not limited to, higher education. The diversity of educators within the higher education system does not reflect the diversity of learners, nor the variety of modern-day thought.

This research study explores the recruitment and retention of Black faculty members at predominantly White institutions (PWIs) and primarily focuses on how diversity in education proves beneficial for all but remains a challenge to execute. The study seeks to answer the following primary question: What are the experiences of recruitment and retention of Black faculty members at a PWI? This study employs a multiple case study design to discover perspectives and disparities associated with recruiting and retaining Black faculty members. The chosen theoretical framework, Critical Race Theory, forms the foundation of the study and confirms the many benefits which come from diverse educational opportunities. This research also points out the need for inclusivity of non-hegemonic people and points of view in the educational system.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Literature Review

#### *Introduction*

The lack of Black faculty at predominantly White institutions in the United States is a multi-layered issue. Closing the gap in the Black faculty population in higher education requires acknowledgment of three items. First, one must acknowledge where higher education began in regard to Black Americans—their pursuit of higher education and the beginning of their serving as faculty members were points to be considered (Anderson & Span, 2016; Geiger, 2014). Second, one must recognize the notable and decidedly significant inequalities between Black and White faculty members (Krupnick, 2018; Modica & Mamiseishvili, 2010). Finally, institutions of higher education should direct their attention toward the value of recruiting and retaining Black faculty members and its positive impact on an institution (Vasquez Heilig et al., 2019). This study argues that disparities exist between Black and White faculty members with regard to recruitment and retention efforts.

This review of the literature illustrates the recruitment and retention of Black faculty members have historical and current obstacles that should be addressed. First, the history of integration in higher education is reviewed, particularly as it pertains to Black teachers and learners. The history of integration of Black learners directly affects the development of Critical Race Theory (CRT), which frames this study. Second, the review of the literature presents information that speaks to the current state of diversity in higher education and acknowledges the successes and challenges that come with the status of

post-secondary schooling. Third, diversity of thought considers a preferred way to address diversity concerns in corporations and colleges with varying results. Finally, the benefits of future changes in the landscape of inclusion within higher education highlight efforts made, as well as what those efforts reflect. Addressing the past, present, and future of Black people in higher education—especially within the confines of educating students at predominantly White institutions—will accentuate the issue.

### *History of Integration in American Education*

The integration of American education has undergone several stages over the years (Geiger, 2014). The start of school in the United States left the majority of citizens without opportunities to become educated. Once underrepresented groups sought equal rights, educational opportunities came with those requests. Slow-moving efforts allowed for some change to affect how and where Black people gained an education, yet disparities still exist. Integration proved beneficial to educate Black students but left a gap in the representation of Black students and faculty members. The lack of institutional change led to the creation of Critical Race Theory (CRT), which aimed to alleviate the lack of diversity within higher education (Taylor et al., 2009). Challenges such as the social construction of race, and the notion that racism is ordinary and not aberrational, were encountered (Bell, 1995). These ran parallel to the argument that Black faculty were in high demand, a response to the historical lack of this population.

Higher Education in the United States began as a desire to educate privileged White men (Geiger, 2016). As early as 1636, those who could afford the opportunity to be educated enrolled in ivy-league institutions such as Harvard University. The position of the educator did not garner the same regard as the professional roles that graduate



students gained, such as lawyers, doctors, and clergymen, who were held in higher regard (Geiger, 2016). However, the growth of students obtaining an education in America meant there was a need to increase the workforce and acquire more educators. Over time, the population of people who were privileged to seek higher education diversified. Education aimed at Black men and women led to the establishment of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). Institutions established for Black people to become educated still contained gaps, as those educated individuals did not have the opportunity to teach more people. Instead, early graduates of early HBCUs served their communities with skilled trades and education. Notable inequality is present in the educational access, opportunities, and outcomes for Black and White students, respectively. The type of opportunity for education received by different demographics further cemented the inequality between White and non-White citizens of the United States. Concerted efforts ameliorated the educational gap between learners. Black educators returned to school to earn advanced degrees, and educated families and communities did their best to educate their youth in an effort to close the educational gap.

The concern White citizens had regarding the education of citizens from different demographics stems from the concept of racial salience (Thornhill, 2015), which suggests that a majority—in this case, White citizens—find specific changes concerning race and racial circumstances acceptable so long as the status quo continued (Thornhill, 2015). Delgado and Stefancic (2001) offered, “Think how our system applauds affording everyone equality of opportunity but resists programs that assure equality of results” (p. 23). Equity of education for different races did not see a notable change until the Civil Rights Movement pushed for that equality.

The Civil Rights Movement began in the 1950s with the mission to gain equal access and opportunities for non-White citizens (Sokoya, 2014). One of the most notable cases to drive equitable access was the Supreme Court case *Brown v. Board of Education* (U.S. Courts, 2019). The Brown family of Topeka, Kansas, found themselves as the plaintiffs for a landmark court case regarding the education of their daughter, Linda. The family could not gain access to a local school due to racism. The Browns, along with other families, went to court to fight for Linda and other Black students to attend schools closest to their homes, regardless of the racial makeup of the student bodies. *Brown v. Board* began in District Court, where judges sided with the Topeka Board of Education and upheld the law of “separate but equal,” from *Plessy v. Ferguson*, another court case in which Homer Plessy, a Black man, refused to sit in a train car designated for Black people; this action led the Supreme Court to rule segregation was not against the Constitution (Office for Civil Rights, 2018). With the *Brown* case, judges in the Supreme Court ruled in favor of the plaintiffs and established that educational opportunities for Black and White students should integrate (U.S. Courts, 2019). After this decision, schools integrated at the reluctance of the majority. While the results of the Supreme Court cases allowed for students from different demographics to attain the same education within the same space, the proctors of that education did not reflect that decision (Sokoya, 2014). The disparity in educators from different backgrounds, however, left theorists and activists eager for more change.

During the 1960s, numerous efforts featured prominent figures who sought to gain rights and privileges that, while established in the U.S. Constitution, did not exist for all people. Leaders like Martin Luther King, Jr., Thurgood Marshall, W. E. B. DuBois,

and others, helped shape the Civil Rights Movement (Sokoya, 2014). Martin Luther King, Jr. organized marches against inequality, including the March on Washington. Thurgood Marshall was the lead lawyer for the *Brown v. Board* case in the Supreme Court (U.S. Courts, 2019). W. E. B. DuBois significantly influenced the education of Black people, encouraging the elite among them to create the “Talented Tenth” and uplift fellow Black people towards garnering higher achievement (Sokoya, 2014). The efforts made to desegregate the American landscape—including educational opportunities—were primarily influenced by Critical Race Theory (Lynn et al., 2013), which ran parallel to the Civil Rights Movement.

In his work with Thurgood Marshall, Bell served as a lawyer within the U.S. Justice Department’s Civil Rights Division. After a request for Bell to resign because of his affiliation with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), he worked within the organization as Assistant Counsel. During Bell's time as a member of the Legal Defense Fund, he worked extensively to alleviate the disparities people still fought for during the Civil Rights Movement. Bell actively and openly challenged the position of civil rights in America through his research and publications, including *Race, Racism and American Law*, written in 1973 (Bourlin, 2013). Despite the favorable decision from *Brown v Board*, Bell noticed a lack of headway towards equal educational opportunities. After he studied the effects of desegregation within the educational system, Bell believed the quality of education for Black students needed to be the central focus. Starting as critical legal theory, Bell developed this model into Critical Race Theory,

Critical race theory not only dares to treat race as central to the law and policy of the United States, but it also dares to look beyond the widespread belief that

getting rid of racism merely means getting rid of ignorance or encouraging everyone to get along. (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. xx)

Bell's drive toward educational equality led him to leave his legal position and seek work in academia. Bell started his career in academia in 1967 at the University of Southern California (USC) and Harvard University (Bourlin, 2013). Bell was hired at Harvard University after Harvard law students protested the lack of Black faculty members (Bernstein, 2011). During his time at Harvard, Bell and other lawyers, activists, and members of academia cultivated CRT. While CRT exists to address gaps in education for Black people, other theories branched from his work (Demaske, 2019).

CRT development includes several tenets and focuses on how racial salience assists in the continued establishment of supremacy for the majority. Gloria Ladson-Billings (2013) wrote,

White people will seek racial justice only to the extent that there is something in it for them. In other words, interest convergence is about alignment, not altruism. We cannot expect those who control the society to make altruistic or benevolent moves toward racial justice. (p. 38)

Bell continued to work in academia and was hired as the Dean of the University of Oregon's School of Law. During his scheduled five-year tenure in the position, Bell planned to hire an Asian-American woman to join the law school faculty. The university rejected his request, leading Bell to subsequently resign from his role (Bourlin, 2013). Bell continued to advocate for the diversity of higher education, changing the landscape of diversity among faculty members at the different institutions where he worked. The development of CRT has proven beneficial to the larger picture of higher education; Black faculty members cannot rest on their laurels and believe that the work no longer exists. Ladson-Billings (2013) stated,

The work of the critical race scholar must be as rigorous as that of any other scholarship (or perhaps more so). We have an obligation to point out the endemic racism that is extant in our schools, colleges, and other public spaces. We must deconstruct laws, ordinances, and policies that work to re-inscribe racism and deny people their full rights. (p. 45)

Black faculty members can implement CRT, cite historical triumphs, and enable other educators to shape the future of diversity work. However, these educators must be aware that the process is simple, but enacting change requires hard work.

In conclusion, the history of integration in American education in the United States illustrates the argument that much more effort is necessary to progress before true diversity and inclusion in the field can be made. Scholarship established for White men proved detrimental to other communities, including Black learners. After hundreds of years, formal education found its way to Black communities, yet the gaps in educational experience waned because of the disparity between educational outcomes. Theorists, activists, and educators made notable strides in assuring educational opportunities for Black communities (Lynn et al., 2013). Advocates for equal education created theories and processes that actively sought to alleviate inequality—leading to the creation of CRT (Demaske, 2019). The needle of diversity has moved over the centuries but considering the current state of higher education stands today, more work is required.

### *The Current State of Diversity in Higher Education Faculty*

The integration of higher education led to some opportunities for racial minority students. Gaps remain in what the educational experience warrants for students because of a lack of diversity within these institutions. Numerous studies note both quantitative and qualitative proof that racial minority representation in academia lacks in numbers or presence, especially for Black faculty members (Gassam, 2019). The academy has not

made the strides expected because of campus climates, a lack of resources available to Black educators, and the experience of Black faculty members in White majority spaces (Daut, 2019). The current state of diversity leaves the field of higher education in a state of perpetual recovery, illustrating that focuses on the diversity of faculty will benefit academia and higher education en masse.

Diversity in education does exist (Davis & Fry, 2019); however, a disparity is prevalent between the numbers of Black faculty and staff when compared to White faculty and staff, especially those in high profile administration positions. The disparity exists for several reasons, including hiring issues and a lack of opportunities for Black employees as compared to their White counterparts (Stewart, 2012). Because of these gaps, Black people in the educational field often find themselves subject to tokenism, imposter syndrome, or other negative stereotypes and experiences (Seyoum, 2020). These issues further widen the chasm of Black employees in education and discourage others from taking on these roles in the future (Stanley, 2006).

The concept of predominantly White institutions (PWIs) is, in fact, not a formal designation for an institution—unlike Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs), those that serve a student population of mostly minoritized students (Gasman, 2019), including Historically Black Colleges and Universities (Office for Civil Rights, 2018). A PWi is an institution that does not have the expressed goal of educating a particular racial group. As of the 2017–2018 academic year, there were nearly 4,298 degree-granting institutions in the United States. Of those institutions, 735 were MSIs (Gasman, 2019), which means over 3,500 degree-granting schools in the U.S. were predominantly White. This

designation resonates at institutions where effort is put forth to incorporate and execute diversity and inclusion initiatives.

Several initiatives instituted at PWIs seek to address diversity concerns. Those initiatives include concerted efforts in racial minority recruitment, the establishment of diversity centers on campus, and other methods of helping minorities on these campuses feel welcome to learn and grow as they matriculate. However, despite some university's best efforts, there is an inherent "otherness" for racial minority students attending PWIs. Bourke (2016) offered,

The term "predominantly White institution" suggests property rights that are inherent to Whites. Consider the racialized labeling of institutions of higher learning in the United States: For funding and other purposes, the U.S. government groups MSIs on the basis of racial stratification. For example, HBCUs are grouped... There is no official race-based designation "PWIs." This label usually is applied in scholarly works, many of which are critical examinations of race-based issues in U.S. higher education. Through the lens of CRT, a view emerges of the interconnectedness of race, social structures, and social practices. According to CRT, PWI is more than a simple institutional label in that the word "predominant" reflects an ongoing social practice according to which Whiteness maintains a place of supremacy, resulting in the continued subjugation of people of color. (p. 15)

The institutions brought forth what Bell championed, through the work of advocates and the creation of CRT (Bell, 1995). Unfortunately, diversity among faculty in higher education has struggled to progress in the desired manner. Preconceived notions dictate how a person processes the idea of a PWI, which perpetuates marginalization and racism that continue to persist. This struggle is reflected in student experiences for Black people, as minority students and faculty find themselves alienated and otherwise removed from their college experience (Bourke, 2016).

Recent statistics reinforce the disparity of diversity between racial majority and minority employees. From 2006 to 2016, Black faculty hiring fell from seven percent to

6.6%—while Black students, across all institutions in the United States, account for nearly 12% of enrollment (Krupnick, 2018). As of the fall of 2016, reports from the United States Department of Education state 76% of all full-time faculty were White—41% male and 35% female. The next highest percentage of faculty, by race, is Asian and Pacific Islander at 11% total—six percent male and five percent female. When examining the same collection of data, Black and Hispanic full-time faculty were identical: six percent each—three percent male and three percent female (OPEPD, 2016).

When defining diversity within the ranks of faculty, Black faculty members still fall short within racial minority statistics. The small number of Black faculty members at PWIs is prevalent among different institutional types and the data represents all of the nearly 4,300 degree-granting institutions. Twenty-three percent of all tenure-track Black faculty (1.2% of the overall number) work at one of 72 HBCUs (Krupnick, 2018). These numbers infer that less than five percent of all Black faculty work across over 4,200 institutions (Stewart, 2012). PWIs know the deficit in Black faculty that exists; however, the lack has effects well beyond the classroom.

Recent history notes the struggles regarding racism and racial equity in places of higher education (Zook, 2021; Seyoum, 2020; Kim, 2018; Krupnick, 2018). Those issues range from staff to faculty and can speak to the number of racial problems that have occurred on college campuses. Stewart (2012) noted,

Interviews with the scholars and researchers who have examined this issue in recent years suggest that, although some institutions have ramped up their recruitment and retention efforts, more proactive measures need to be taken. In addition, numerous racial incidents on university campuses have focused attention on the composition of faculty at many top universities. (p. 16)



From 2009 to 2019, many different cases of racial incidents occurred throughout academia. The issues of racial injustice, however, was predictable given that the U.S. education system is a reflection of American society (Museus et al, 2014). Subsequent issues that stemmed spread across the country.

In 2015, a nationally recognized and racially charged issue occurred at the University of Missouri because of unfortunate incidents in the local community. The death of Michael Brown spurred change across the country (Brown, 2015). Students at the University of Missouri (Mizzou), less than 120 miles from Ferguson, engaged in a series of protests, still reeling from the events that occurred in Ferguson the year before.

The protests spanned between 2010 and 2015 and, despite attempts by the institution to create a diversity initiative to address the concerns, students felt nothing occurred to combat the issues at the institutional level. A student-led movement prompted the dismissal of the sitting President of the University of Missouri System, Tim Wolfe (Pearson, 2015). Students made demands of the administration to hire more staff and faculty of color—notably Black employees—to the university. The students sought diversity among the administrative ranks because of a lack of representation on the campus. The lack of diversity, in conjunction with recent events in the state of Missouri, drove students at the institution to seek change by any means. On November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2015, the Mizzou football team—with a majority Black roster of players—announced a boycott of football-related activities until Wolfe’s dismissal. The team’s actions were supported by the Mizzou Athletic Department, as well as the Southeastern Conference commissioner. A day later, on November 9<sup>th</sup>, Wolfe announced his resignation, as did the Chancellor, R. Bowen Loftin.

These moves by Wolfe and Loftin began the process of rebuilding a positive relationship with constituents who felt harmed by the situation and status of diversity and inclusion at the university. The case at the University of Missouri also led to the creation and hiring of a Chief Diversity Officer, Kevin McDonald (Addo, 2016). Unfortunately, assigning one person to take on such a massive undertaking of addressing diversity issues for an entire institution was not successful. After the hiring of McDonald, as of 2016, 3.5 percent of tenure-track faculty were Black (Krupnick, 2018). Numerous institutions followed suit and created similar positions at their institutions (Wilson, 2013); again, the assignment of one person to effect change among thousands lacked success. Issues of diversity on campuses, whether blatant or muted, have led to institutions to re-evaluate their diversity initiatives; however, colleges and universities were less proactive and more reactive. Because of the lack of proactivity, further research on what progress institutions have made and what developments they have implemented is necessary.

Research reveals the lack of representation of Black faculty exists because of multiple reasons, including a lack of career advancement opportunities, marginalization, and isolation from colleagues, as well as a lack of support from the workplace (Modica & Mamiseishvili, 2010). These and other concerns were not isolated incidents or issues; Krupnick (2018) stated, “many predominantly White four-year public and nonprofit colleges and universities that have been promising for years to improve the diversity of their teaching ranks have made almost no progress in doing so” (p. 1). Many interviews with current faculty at PWIs cite specific circumstances that either discourage staying at an institution or, worse, not desiring to work at the institution. As Black faculty seek

opportunities to work in higher education, there were more elements to consider when seeking a place of employment compared to their White counterparts.

Campus climate is one issue to consider for Black faculty when seeking employment (Krupnick, 2018). The dearth of non-White faculty exists because of “persisting institutional racism and to individuals who continue to—intentionally or unintentionally—perpetuate racially disparate outcomes” (Stewart, 2012, p. 17). Research based on CRT (Bell, 1995) contributed to the negative environment. As Black faculty exist in predominantly White spaces, microaggressions often come from several different places and under unexpected circumstances. For example, “Black professors often get called by the wrong names even after they’ve been working on campus for a few years, says Marybeth Gasman... who directs the Center for Minority Serving Institutions” (Krupnick, 2018, p. 1). The difficult experiences Black faculty members endure discourage them from persevering at majority institutions.

Finding discomfort in the workplace as a Black faculty member does not necessarily only come from a coworker or colleague—an entire institutional culture can prove a toxic work environment. These concerns for comfortability stem from multiple factors, such as how a Black faculty member choose to make use of their work hours to non-consequential matters, such as physical appearance, that differs from the norm. For example, Black women were often scrutinized based on their appearance, despite a disconnect between their choice of hairstyle or attire and the ability to do good work (Phillips, 2012). Black faculty often take on additional tasks, such as mentoring Black students, serving on committees (sometimes as the lone Black person or person of color),

and meeting other expectations different from their colleagues, which have proven to disrupt their effectiveness and career trajectory (Reddick, 2011).

Another challenge for Black faculty to overcome to gain employment at a PWI stems from preconceptions of a candidate's credentials. Research indicates Black faculty experience prejudgment regarding their ability to do well in a particular environment based on their accolades, alma maters, or any other characteristic not deemed good enough for their search (Harlow, 2003). Several researchers call the hiring of faculty of color a "revolving door," where recruitment perpetually happens (Stewart, 2012, p. 16). Krupnick (2018) noted,

It always seems like places are hiring scholars of color, but they're hiring people to replace people who just left. It will continue to happen because the environment doesn't change. They look at candidates and say, 'What can we do to make this person stay?' But they don't look at themselves and what they can do. (p. 1)

Despite a faculty member of color's performance, outside forces can indelibly influence one's success in a role. Hansuvadha and Slater (2012) noted,

Despite [a person's] cultural competence, they [can face] serious administrative challenges and [receive] little support from the system in which they [work]. Without the support of the personnel, political, and financial resources within the system, the long odds of success compared to the immediate stress and work to meet these challenges [appears] to be discouraging. (p. 186)

PWIs express a desire to expand the diversity of their faculty ranks but lack the motivating factors to successfully recruit and retain Black professionals.

In conclusion, there is a lack of diversity of faculty in higher education. Raw data points to the lack of presence of Black faculty in academia; the qualitative statistics and stories highlight the concerns pertaining to Black faculty members and their experiences at colleges and universities. Campus climates and hiring practices stand out as prominent

reasons Black faculty do not find opportunities, or stay at primarily White institutions. With the small numbers associated with Black faculty at PWIs, institutions seek other ways to exemplify diversity and inclusion on their campuses—all with varying degrees of success or failure.

### *Diversity of Thought*

Achieving diversity within American higher education has proven to be challenging. Colleges and universities pursue diversity in traditional sentiments—race or ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation; however, hiring committees and college administrations find themselves unsuccessful in accomplishing those goals. Corporate America developed a means of addressing diversity issues, with relative success (Tulshyan, 2016); however, the diversity of thought narrative is not as sufficient as the need for diversity of persons.

Diversity exists in many capacities: race, and gender were the most widely acknowledged types. However, the concept of diversity of thought is a popular idea to address a lack of diversity in the corporate or educational space. Diversity of thought embraces life experiences and differing upbringings as valuable capital. This sentiment leads to a collection of persons who think differently from one another. For example, a detail-oriented person and a person who thinks on a macro-level offer different perspectives and, therefore, a diversity of ideas and mindsets (Tulshyan, 2016). Diversity of thought has its advantages, as collections of individuals with similar tendencies prove not to be as efficient, effective, or productive. Diaz-Uda et al. (2013) stated,

Diversity of thought can bring an organization the following benefits: It helps guard against groupthink and expert overconfidence... It helps increase the scale of new insights... It helps organizations identify the right employees who can best tackle their most pressing problems. (p. 5)

In the corporate world, conversations about diversity have primarily centered around the diversity of thought, to the detriment of the diversity of persons. With a plethora of different ways to process thoughts and ideas, hiring committees seek various ways to bolster their workforce, ranging from personality tests to leadership profiles for potential employees. Professionals who agree with the approach of a diversity of thought put stock into leadership tests and ways of expression—more so than traditional diversity characteristics, such as race, gender, religion, and ability (Kim, 2018).

The concept of cognitive diversity addresses concerns of diversity in the workplace. Cognitive diversity infers that “diversity in how people feel, think, and act... has significant benefits for organizations,” under ideal circumstances (Chamorro-Premuzic, 2018, p. 1). The diversity of persons addresses the gap in the numbers of employees from different demographics. However, “diversity of thought goes beyond the affirmation of equality—simply recognizing differences and responding to them” (Diaz-Uda et al., 2013, p. 1). The concept of diversity of thought has positive attributes; however, the inference that cognitive diversity is more important than demographic diversity does not hold any weight (Kim, 2018).

American higher education showcases varied results when considering cognitive diversity. Recruitment and retention efforts within the educational world exhibit similar tendencies to corporate America. Finding success from one specific group of prospects leaves those on the outside of that group with few opportunities for successful job searches. Schindler (2018) submitted,

Unfortunately, there are still holdouts that tend to hire employees who think alike. Perhaps they want to hire a replica of “Ted” from accounting because he was so good at his job. Or there are managers who feel comfortable hiring people who graduated from their alma mater. There are even those who attain a new position

with a new employer and then proceed to hire their former colleagues from a previous employer, one at a time, until the old team is all back together. (p. 1)

Black faculty members have received opportunities to attend similar institutions to attain knowledge; however, those experiences do not guarantee a chance to join the academy and change the status quo. The lack of recognition regarding equitable representation, via the diversity of thought narrative, ignores efforts to mitigate the issue (Kim, 2018).

Colleges and universities focus more on demographic diversity—diversity based on race and gender—because of several benefits that affect students, staff, and faculty, and the institution at large. Those benefits include more enhanced student services, intellectual growth, and a student body that represents more underrepresented demographics (Gasman et al., 2011). Even with these benefits to an institution, the ratio of White faculty to Black faculty is still 13 to 1 (NCES, 2018). Where institutions lack the number of diverse faculty, administrations seek to pursue any diversity prove to stakeholders that diversity exists.

Many institutions express a desire to change the state of diversity but often do not demonstrate a dedication toward change. Instead of active participation to impact a change of racial representation, the cognitive diversity argument prevails more often than expected. Kim (2018) pointed out,

It's disappointing to see so many self-claimed progressive intellectuals use 'Diversity of Thought' as a convenient excuse to not challenge the status quo while comforting themselves being complicit in the continued underrepresentation of marginalized groups of people in systems they inhabit. (p. 1)

Education has a similar tendency to those in the American business world to lean towards diversity of thought over the diversity of persons. Diversity of thought, while well-meaning in theory, does not improve the issues present in the workforce. The gap

between the number of White faculty and Black faculty will not find a resolution focusing on cognitive diversity alone. “A focus on diversity of thought can be a distraction from the work that should be done to break down systemic inequities” (Bastian, 2019, p. 1). Constructing actual diversity spans thought, race, gender, and other factors. A specific focus on a diversity of thought does not alleviate the concerns associated with racial or different types of diversity. “By focusing on diversity of thought, we may distract ourselves from the real reasons we need to be focusing on DEI initiatives, and the internal culture shifts required to move the needle in a sustainable way” (Bastian, 2019, p. 1). Demographic diversity lends to the idea of the diversity of thought, as opposed to the other way around; therefore, a shift of focus may address all concerns positively.

Diversity of thought begins when a diverse group of people exist within a space. From a student experience standpoint, racial minority students benefit from seeing faculty members who resemble themselves. Student experiences were not built solely upon the education offered, but were also predicated on the delivery of knowledge. Multiple demographics and viewpoints aid in understanding a student’s needs in various capacities (Bastian, 2019); the presence of diverse people in academia proves beneficial to students, staff, and the school at large. Diversity of thought, in conjunction with a diversity of persons, optimizes its effectiveness within an institution. Kim (2018) offered,

‘Diversity of Thought’ should be achieved as a result of diverse representation. Our thoughts and perspectives aren’t developed in a vacuum. The way we think, problem-solve, communicate, lead, see the world... is largely shaped by our lived experiences, often rooted in our identities. The way we achieve real ‘diversity of thought’ and reduce blind spots in organizations is by ensuring people from all walks of life are given seats and actual power at the table. (p. 1)



As useful as a diversity of thought proves to be for corporations and colleges, a variety of persons provides beneficial returns in more than one way.

In conclusion, diversity of thought cannot replace the diversity of persons in the collegiate or corporate world. The difference in opinion, personality, and perspective range in intensity when considering a person's contribution to a workplace or space. An employee's upbringing and exposure to diverse pedagogy and experiences benefit a workplace more than diversity of thought from coworkers from similar demographics. Demographic diversity allows for more relatability between employees and customers—or, in the case of education, faculty, and students.

#### *Value of Recruiting and Retaining Diverse Faculty*

There is value in the recruiting and retaining of diverse faculty. The use of diversity of thought, alone, cannot address the concerns. Cognitive diversity, “the existence within a given group of different ways to see the world, interpret it, and apply predictive models in it” (Landemore, 2012, p. 3), cannot replace demographic diversity. Demographic diversity aids in the overall experience of several stakeholders within an institution, especially students. Diversity of persons also breaks away from the hegemony associated with traditional education. It brings forth fresh, new processes to consider. With cultivating and more investment, recruiting and retaining diverse faculty members leads to societal changes that might benefit American education in future generations.

Diverse faculty members add significant rewards to an institution, including student success, knowledge, and awareness of diverse populations (UCLA, 2017). Diverse faculty members bring new and different ideas to an educational system that often caters to a specific demographic. The recruitment efforts for professionals of color

were only as effective as the institution doing the recruiting. Gasman et al. (2011) shared, “Institutions of higher education are directing more attention to recruiting faculty of color than in previous years, as they recognize the benefits of a diverse faculty on campus” (p. 212). In 2017, research from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) supports that fifty-six percent of faculty surveyed at the institution make concerted efforts to show their dedication to undergraduate students by “[encouraging] students to recognize biases that affect their thinking” (p. 1). Additionally, UCLA (2017) revealed 58% of faculty members polled stated, “Faculty strongly agree that their role in educating undergraduates is to teach students respect for different beliefs” (p. 1). Faculty, as a whole, believe in the necessity of educating and influencing the lives of their students, but Black faculty members pour extra effort into Black students. Beckett (2011) acknowledged, “effective Black teachers... demonstrate cultural solidarity (they consider themselves part of the communities they serve) and make extensive use of familiar cultural patterns” (p. 71). These efforts by Black faculty members prove necessary for their existence at PWIs.

Concepts such as Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, stem from a combination of diverse learners and educators who willingly meet each other where they were—not only educationally, but also culturally. The use of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy proves useful when seeking to connect with learners from different demographics, based on race, socioeconomic status, ethnic background, or other factors (Beckett, 2011). Culturally Relevant Pedagogy ties directly to Critical Race Theory; Jennings and Marvin (2005) stated, “the development of a critical consciousness can potentially encourage both teachers and students to be more reflexive of their experiences and therefore more open to

understanding how the hegemony of the state has structured their life experiences” (p. 17). A combination of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy and CRT, titled Critical Race Pedagogy, “encompasses the liberatory teaching practices of critical pedagogy with the tenets of critical race theory” (Lac, 2017, p. 3). This style of pedagogy also stands on the foundation that “a Critical Race Pedagogy must encourage the practice of an explicitly liberatory form of both teaching and learning” (Jennings & Marvin, 2005, p. 27). An analysis of Black faculty members heavily involved in mentoring Black students led to a noted discovery. According to Reddick (2011),

The emergent themes are (a) sharing a cultural identity and having a common experience of being a minority at a PWI, (b) the centrality of trust in the mentoring relationship, (c) dealing with time constraints imposed by tenure and promotion processes, (d) working through issues of distance between faculty and students in academia, and (e) concerns about appropriate levels of intimacy between students and faculty. (p. 326)

Miller (2018) noted that there is a significant benefit in diversity and inclusion in the higher education system.

Having diverse faculty, colleagues, and leaders can prove beneficial for many reasons, such as meaningful relationships, active collaboration, and expanded ways of thinking. Even with the return on investment that comes from those efforts, the number of diverse faculty and leadership is lacking. However, “the diversification of college faculty is an important component of preparing students to be citizens in a pluralistic society” (Umbach, 2006, p. 317). Mentorship programs between Black educators and learners can be beneficial, aiding in the development of positive relationships between racial minority students and their respective institutions. Intentionally bringing Black educators to PWIs allows for an opportunity that presents a pipeline of positive outcomes for students, faculty, and the institution. Umbach (2006) noted,

Research suggests that a racially diverse faculty has many benefits for colleges and society. One of the most compelling arguments for the diversification of college faculty relates to the important contribution made by faculty of color in the education of undergraduates. (p. 318)

A diversity of outlooks and experiences can provide a learning environment that allows students to flourish.

Historically, the creation of institutions with a focus on educating educators from underrepresented groups served more than one purpose. Not only did these schools allow Black people the opportunity to become educated, but these educated individuals helped to inform future educators (Stefon, 2019). The cycle produced several racial minority educators that positively influenced classrooms and communities of color. As the world becomes more open and welcoming of differences, so, too, must our educators. Educators of color, whether in kindergarten classrooms or in graduate schools, can positively influence not just learners of color, but all learners (Head, 2013). Faculty of color, particularly Black faculty, were also more apt to engage in learning activities outside of their traditional roles, including diversity-based activities (Umbach, 2006). Black faculty engage in activities with students revolving around diversity, mentoring students who need to feel more connected to their institution, and lending more implementation of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy. The addition of Black faculty in predominantly White institutions will truly benefit stakeholders throughout the system of higher education.

In conclusion, diversity and inclusion were essential aspects of the collegiate world. Open and accepting attitudes towards people from different races and cultures contribute to positive interactions and cultural sensitivity that has been absent in previous educational research. The effects of diverse faculty members allow for transferrable learning outcomes for students, both inside and outside of the classroom. Demographic

diversity, especially for Black faculty members at PWIs, is a necessity. The broadening of mindsets and learning outcomes grants future learners the opportunity to effect change in their communities for generations to come.

### *Conclusion*

This literature review presents reasons why institutions need better recruitment and retention efforts of Black faculty members. The history of integration in higher education acknowledges the progress made for Black people in academia, and also highlights the shortcomings of modern-day education. Furthermore, the current state of diversity in higher education addresses the lack of Black faculty in the academy and varying reasons associated with the hiring and retention gaps. Cognitive diversity, or diversity of thought, suggests a solution that falls short of true diversity and the achievable goals associated with it. Some benefits come with a diversity of persons, lending positive outcomes for multiple stakeholders, such as students, faculty and administrators, and society as a whole. With further research and review, the phenomenon that denies options and opportunities to Black educators might be curtailed and, with time, alleviated.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Methodology

#### *Introduction*

The need for this study stemmed from current statistics that acknowledged the lack of Black faculty members at predominantly White institutions (PWIs) in the United States (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018). Diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts at post-secondary institutions have yet to alleviate this problem (Modica & Mamiseishvili, 2010). This study explored the lived experiences of current Black faculty members to find ways to address this dilemma.

The research for this multiple case study was built upon past scholarship concerning recruitment and retention efforts toward Black faculty members at PWIs. Historical and current circumstances acknowledged limitations and delimitations. As hiring managers and current faculty address issues of diversity, the definition of diversity varied between demographics and other factors, further challenging the ways we work to truly diversify the academy.

This multiple case study explored research questions regarding the recruitment and retention of Black faculty members at PWIs. One primary research question and multiple secondary questions guided the study; they were listed in Table 3.1. This inquiry explored the lived experiences of Black faculty members as they navigated recruitment and retention processes. These different questions guided the overall purpose of the study, as well as the focus on thematic aspects of the research.

Table 3.1

*Primary and Secondary Research Questions*

Primary Research Question	Secondary Research Questions
1. What are the experiences of recruitment and retention of Black faculty members at a PWI?	1. What factors led Black faculty members to consider faculty positions at a PWI? 2. What factors encourage or discourage Black faculty members to accept positions at PWIs? 3. What factors currently exist at PWIs that contribute to a Black faculty member's decision to stay at the institution?

*Researcher Perspective*

The researcher identifies as Black, as part of the millennial generation, and as a member of an underserved community. The researcher possessed a vested interest in the subject of this research because of his experience working at PWIs and viewing firsthand the successes and challenges of Black students in those environments. The researcher also acknowledged the presence of Black faculty and staff and their effect on the well-being of all students. The researcher's experiences led him to conclude that opportunities were necessary for more Black faculty members to succeed and thrive at PWIs.

The researcher invested time in education during his formative years in higher education, specifically as a member of a student affairs administration. During those years, the researcher learned diversity in education is paramount to one's success. Diversity efforts within higher education have expanded because of the experiences of educators from different backgrounds. As a Black educator in higher education, the

researcher's involvement with the subject included lived experiences and educational outcomes.

The researcher also worked at PWIs prior to conducting this study, which allowed for an insider perspective and insight into the phenomenon investigated. Limitations included a lack of direct experience as a faculty member. The researcher also acknowledged most impressions of the academy came from second-hand information from students and other administrators. These limitations impacted the study, as the information gathered from the participants provided more context needed by the researcher. The researcher interacted among different institutions and within those student demographics. He considered the manner in which certain characteristics impacted the lived experience of students. Researcher participation in institution-wide employee resource groups also made clear the disparity of Black faculty at the schools. The researcher believed in reinforcing Critical Race Theory (CRT) and showcasing constructivist learning, combined with the use of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, to ensure the theoretical framework suits the study.

### *Theoretical Framework*

The theoretical framework that shaped this study, Critical Race Theory (CRT), informed all parts of the methodology and design of the research. The creator of CRT, Derrick A. Bell Jr., developed this theory during the Civil Rights Movement, as a response to a lack of diversity in the academy (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). After working in the law field, Bell transitioned to higher education and sought to bring forth equality (Bourlin, 2013); CRT aided in his process to do so. According to Yosso (2005), CRT, as it applies to education, seeks to address five tenets within the context of



education: “(1) the intercentricity of race and racism; (2) the challenge to dominant ideology; (3) the commitment to social justice; (4) the centrality of experiential knowledge; and (5) the utilization of interdisciplinary approaches” (p. 73). This framework directly influenced the research study, especially the methods section.

CRT informed the development of the research questions and subquestions. The research questions associated with this study directly correlated with Bell’s efforts and the theory he and others developed. Specifically, CRT compared Black people to their White counterparts (Yosso, 2005). The research questions compared and contrasted the lived experiences of Black faculty at PWIs. Addressing CRT within the research question and subquestions allowed for data collection and analysis to extend the focus of the research.

The data collection process for the study was also influenced by CRT and tied directly to Bell’s historical experience with diversity in academia. Bell sought to provide opportunities for diverse candidates at institutions he was associated with at the time, including Harvard University and the University of Oregon (Bernstein, 2011). The challenges of participants in this case study echoed the struggles Bell encountered during his career in academia. In the interviews conducted, the researcher asked questions about how the participants adjusted their philosophies to be more inclusive of underrepresented demographics; these questions directly related to “the challenge to dominant ideology” and “the utilization of interdisciplinary approaches” (Yosso, 2005, p. 73). The interview questions covered introduction and access to academia, recruitment experiences, and retention experiences (Appendix B). During the collective focus group, the researcher asked participants to speak directly to “the commitment to social justice” (Yosso, 2005,

p. 73) and to provide specific examples of actions taken to encourage culturally relevant pedagogy.

CRT influenced the analysis of the data within this study, as well. The presence of recurring themes, points of emphasis, and limitations and delimitations reflected different points of importance for the theory, including the permanence of racism, experiential knowledge, intersectionality, and a commitment to social justice (McCoy & Rodricks, 2015). Within the data collected, the researcher sought to uncover common themes among the participants that spoke to “the centrality of experiential knowledge” (Yosso, 2005, p. 73). The researcher believed participants brought useful experiences to their roles at PWIs, lending to “the utilization of interdisciplinary approaches” (Yosso, 2005, p. 73) that benefitted their respective institutions. Thus, the framework of this study influenced the research design and subsequent methodological decisions.

### *Research Design*

The study utilized a multiple case study design presented from a qualitative lens. Gustafsson (2017), noted “A case study can be defined as an intensive study about a person, a group of people or a unit, which is aimed to generalize over several units” (p. 2). Case study research design explored topics with great depth; this research investigated different themes and discovered or proved the contemporaneous phenomenon (Cone & Foster, 2006). A case study assessed different criteria, including a focus on the type of inquiries within the study, a focus on the bounds of the study—including what is and is not a part of the study—the extent of the study overall, and type of case study used (Yin, 2015). Exploratory questions began with “how,” “why,” and “what,” which allowed the data collection and data analysis to build a narrative with rich description and detail.

There are different types of case studies; this study was a multiple case study, or an examination of a number of particular cases.

A multiple case study best suited the research in this study because the research questions required the researcher to gain data from multiple cases, with an interest in understanding similarities and differences between cases, or participants (Gustafsson, 2017). The choice to create a multiple case study (as opposed to a single case study) helped establish themes and covers a multitude of perspectives. Post-secondary institutions are not monolithic and, therefore, required analysis of multiple experiences. Adversely, single case studies are not replicable, comparable, or generalizable and therefore were not preferred for the discovery or proved existence of a phenomenon (Yin, 2015).

A multiple case study research design benefitted this research. In seeking to understand the successes and challenges of Black faculty members at PWIs, a multiple case study allowed data to be pulled from multiple sources and was a means to analyze common phenomena among those faculty members spread across different types of institutions such as research, liberal arts, public, and private. Gustafsson (2017) offered more information about multiple case study design,

Other benefits are that the evidence generated from a multiple case study is strong and reliable and the writer can clarify if the findings from the results are valuable or not. It also allows a wider discovering of theoretical evolution and research questions. When the suggestions are more intensely grounded in different empirical evidence, this type of case study then create a more convincing theory. (p. 11)

Developing a thorough analysis and providing a quality narrative about the lived and shared experiences among Black faculty members at PWIs was best achieved through a multiple case study design.

### *Site Selection and Participant Sampling*

Participant sampling for this multiple case study required meeting specific details to ensure the quality of the research. Participation was solicited on three different occasions, with the intention of sampling participants from colleges and universities in the United States. The researcher utilized larger social groups via social media (including Facebook and GroupMe) as well as nationally recognized organizations (including NASPA and ACPA). Over 20 Black faculty members were solicited from these sites; the use of social media and national organization websites further narrowed down the pool. From these solicitations, the researcher received five responses that accepted the request and ten solicitations went unanswered. Because of the responses, this multiple case study involved five participants. The participants had common threads, including self-identification as Black faculty members and current employment at predominantly White institutions. Ideal participant sampling included a combination of purposeful and convenient sampling. Purposeful sampling allowed for participants with common experiences, which was used in similar research (Harrison, 2014). Use of convenience sampling proved beneficial for the researcher, as well; having a population close and available, especially given the circumstances of the time, was helpful (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007). From those efforts, the researcher identified volunteers who fulfilled the requirements of the study. The participants and researcher exchanged emails regarding the topic of the study and the participatory needs of the volunteers. Each of the volunteers willingly agreed to participate in the study.

The participants belonged to some of the same professional organizations as the researcher. The participants had preexisting relationships with the researcher, based on interactions within the aforementioned professional organizations. Despite the

preexistence of relationships, the goal of the study was to receive honest and forthright information from the participants based on their lived experiences. These parameters allowed the scope of the research to remain manageable and to assess multiple perspectives and common themes among Black faculty members at PWIs. The researcher acknowledged the commonalities and differences of each participant prior to the start of data collection. Through email exchanges, the researcher determined all of the participants had zero to two years of experience at their current institutions. Two participants had dual appointments, working with their respective cultural centers at their institutions, while two participants were solely faculty members. All of the participants worked at PWIs within the Midwest and South regions of the United States (U.S. Census Bureau (2013), as listed in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2

*Participant Demographics*

Pseudonym	Age Range	Gender	US Region	Years at Current Institution
Mahogany	25–34	Male	South	1
Hazelnut	55+	Male	Midwest	1
Kobicha	35–44	Male	Midwest	1
Cocoa	35–44	Female	Midwest	1
Sandy	25–34	Female	Midwest	2

*Data Collection*

Data collection for this study consisted of ten steps, with the intention of providing detailed qualitative, narrative data in order to present themes regarding the phenomenon under study. Prior to data collection, the researcher sought Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval from their institution. After supplying information about

the data collection process, the response from the IRB determined the study did not qualify as human subjects research because the results would not be generalizable to a broader population due to only having four participants. No additional IRB approval was needed and data collection commenced accordingly.

Data was collected in two ways: 1) individual interviews with participants and 2) a focus group with all participants. First, for the first part of the data collection process, the researcher scheduled interviews with each participant, via email, and offered multiple options of availability during the fall semester of 2020. Second, once each participant chose a date and time suitable for their schedule, the researcher followed up with a calendar reminder to confirm the conversation. Third, the researcher engaged in each individual interview. Each interview lasted approximately sixty minutes and was conducted via the Zoom video conferencing platform. Each conference room was password-protected to ensure confidentiality between the researcher and the participant. Fourth, during the interviews, the researcher asked demographic questions, as well as questions about the participant's professional experience, such as how the participant arrived to academia, how they would describe their lived experiences with academia to date, and about their sentiments towards current and prospective livelihood for the participant within the field of higher education. Each interview was recorded and transcribed via the Zoom platform. Fifth, after each interview was completed, it was stored in a password-protected Google Drive system, as well as on a password-protected flash drive.

After each interview, the participants added more data to the study through the use of a focus group. The focus group allowed each participant to share their thoughts,

feelings, or ideas not discussed during the individual interview within a group setting. Sixth, each participant was sent a follow-up email, post-interview, to acknowledge the measures taken to ensure confidentiality along with an initial analysis of the data gathered. The researcher concluded the email to each participant with a poll requesting availability for a future conversation in the winter of 2021. Seventh, after confirming the best dates and times for all participants, the researcher invited them to another password-protected Zoom conference room for the focus group conversation, which lasted approximately ninety minutes. Eighth, the researcher and participants discussed common themes among the participants during individual interviews and expanded upon them. The focus group, like each individual interview, was recorded and transcribed via the Zoom platform. Ninth, upon completion of the focus group, the data collected was again stored in a password-protected Google Drive, as well as on a password-protected flash drive. Finally, the information provided during each of these data collection processes allowed for a plethora of data for thorough analysis.

### *Data Analysis*

Data analysis began during the data collection process and continued throughout, in order to move the process forward. The analysis process began with coding the identifying information of each participant; coding the information affirmed protection of the identities of the participants; this also acknowledged the participants' self-identified statuses (Onwuegbuzie, 2016). The information from each individual interview, along with the focus group interview, led the researcher to identify thematic elements that informed the research questions of the study.

The data analysis process consisted of five steps: (1) organization of information collected during individual interviews, (2) acknowledgement and identification of key terms that appeared across interview transcripts, (3) determination of common terms and emerging themes, (4) engagement in discussion with all participants about preliminary themes, and (5) identification of relevant themes and sub-themes for further assessment and presentation. Steps one, two, and three of data analysis were conducted between the individual participant interviews and the focus group interview. Step four consisted of confirming information during the focus group itself, and step five was conducted after the focus group interview was complete.

Each step of data analysis presented information that informed the overall study, including the discovery of three themes which correlated to the researcher's theoretical framework. Organizing the information collected and highlighting key terms across individual interviews proved successful in other similar research (Harrison, 2014; Wright, 2009). The common terms and emerging themes were collected prior to the focus group interview which allowed for the researcher to sift through sentiments from each participant and build the foundation for further conversation. The focus group interview was used for data collection and data analysis; the analysis confirmed the assumptions of the researcher. The preparation of the results stemmed from the researcher's collection of thorough and expansive narrative from the participants, as well as the theoretical research accompanying the study.

For the analysis of this study, the researcher used initial and descriptive coding methods. Initial coding allowed for numerous coding methods to be utilized to garner quality information. Descriptive coding aided in garnering key phrases from the data



collection. Onwuegbuzie (2016) noted, “codes previously generated through various coding methods such as Initial Coding can be selected and synthesized into themes or categories” (p. 136). The coding process and overall data analysis called for a priori assessment because of the combination of observation, experience and the application of theoretical deduction.

### *Data Validation*

Multiple data validation strategies were used by qualitative researchers to authenticate their study findings. Data validation efforts were employed in this study. One type of validation strategy utilized, per Creswell and Plano-Clark (2007), was clarifying, which acknowledged researcher bias of any sort. The researcher’s biases and positionality were explicitly stated to affirm data collection and analysis were valid. Trustworthiness was ensured in multiple ways. The researcher conducted member checking and assured multiple participants were selected for the study (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007). The implementation of a focus group interview and the expansive narrative provided transparency for the reader.

The data collection process included two sources: individual interviews and a focus group interview. The researcher ensured that the participants’ responses were acknowledged and undefiled. The focus group allowed participants to further confirm their responses during their individual interviews and expounded upon the themes gathered, which acted as a way to validate information, as well (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007).

Further research was encouraged based on the reliability of the research. The participants did not come from every region within the United States. Other factors for

consideration included institution type and size. Future researchers interested in the topic had the ability to conduct similar research, with a specific focus in mind throughout.

### *Ethical Considerations*

Ethical considerations in this study allowed for ethical sensitivity, mitigated risks for participants, and ensured responsible action from the researcher. At the start of the research process, the researcher sought IRB approval from the supporting institution and was granted an exemption (Appendix A). During the data collection process, participants were provided with a description of the study and its purpose, information needed from the participants, a description of the process, as well as the opportunity to opt-out at any time (Cone & Foster, 2006). During individual interviews, the participants only saw and spoke to the researcher in a private virtual environment via Zoom. The study also assessed potential risk to participants, especially those that addressed any limitations in their work that might reflect negatively on their employer or employment status. Given the sensitivity of the topics brought to the conversation, the researcher placed limits on the type of information sought after and provided pseudonyms for each participant. Participant information was anonymized, as to not expose identities, and was stored via multiple password-protected storage devices to assure confidentiality and prevent negative impact to each participant's professional role. Participants were also informed of plans to share responses from their individual interviews within the focus group setting. Participants took part in the focus group without revealing their identities, and throughout the research process, pseudonyms were used to protect participants' identities. Within the Zoom conference call, participants were asked to keep their video off and to remove any identifying information displayed during the focus group interview.

### *Limitations and Delimitations*

There were a few different conditions that influenced the study beyond the control of the researcher. At the time of this study, the Coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) directly impacted access to postsecondary institutions and, subsequently, the participants that worked at the institutions. The unpredictable nature of COVID-19 was a limitation that impacted the study. Access to participants depended on their health and wellness, as well as the researcher's, throughout the process. The unforeseeable nature of the pandemic challenged the execution of the study. Other limitations included the number of participants interviewed and the respective regions these participants worked. The small number of participants, along with the two regions of the United States, limited the research as well.

One final limitation was that the circumstances surrounding the completion of the study were not ideal. However, the researcher's flexibility and use of technology circumvented those concerns, including the health and well-being of the researcher and participants. The researcher desired to control the presentation of the participants' narratives, which may be perceived as a bias. As a Black male educator, the researcher's perspective was influenced by his own lived experiences; therefore, he wanted the participants' lived experiences to be portrayed in a positive manner. Despite these limitations and potential bias, the study remained necessary and had the potential to positively impact the field of higher education, specifically Black faculty members.

### *Conclusion*

This multiple case study examined the lived experiences of five Black faculty members at predominantly White institutions, their successes and challenges, and

common themes among the participants. The study sought to evoke change in the field of higher education by shedding light on how to best recruit and retain Black faculty members. The results of this study had relevance for faculty search committees, hiring managers, and stakeholders that value diversity in the academy. The following chapter describes the data analysis process in detail, the results as they related to the themes that directly connected to the theoretical framework and ends with a discussion on the need to pay more attention to the recruitment and retention efforts of Black faculty to PWIs.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Results and Implications

#### *Introduction*

The researcher utilized a qualitative method of research for this study in an attempt to better understand the lived experiences of Black faculty members and their successes and struggles as they navigated their recruitment and retention processes. Specifically, this study explored the recruitment and retention efforts of Black faculty members as they navigated their most recent employment experiences at predominantly White institutions (PWIs). This chapter shares the results of these research findings categorized into themes; the chapter also explains each theme category, along with a cross-case analysis and a thorough examination of the connection of the findings to Critical Race Theory (CRT), the chosen theoretical framework for this research.

The purpose of this study was to explore the recruitment and retention efforts made toward the successful hiring of Black faculty members. Four questions addressed the research and consisted of one main question and three sub-questions. These are listed in Table 3.1. The main research question was, What are the experiences of recruitment and retention of Black faculty members at a PWI? Research sub-questions included,

1. What factors led Black faculty members to consider faculty positions at a PWI?
2. What factors encourage or discourage Black faculty members to accept positions at PWIs?
3. What factors currently exist at PWIs that contribute to a Black faculty member's decision to stay at the institution?

In conducting a case study, the data produced for analysis were essential to the research design (Yin, 2014). Each of the five participants participated in an individual interview and engaged in a focus group interview. After each individual interview, the data collected led to preliminary thematic ideas. The researcher coded the interviews and utilized preliminary themes for discussion in the subsequent focus group interview. The focus group further discussed and solidified the specific themes, as well as their relationship to the theoretical framework.

The data analysis process utilized in the study followed Creswell and Plano-Clark's (2007) qualitative research process. The process included the identification of significant statements and keywords that led to the creation of themes from the data gathered. This ultimately revealed the relationship of the themes to the CRT framework. This approach was taken to uncover the sentiments Black faculty members held about the recruitment and retention measures they experienced.

### *The Participants*

Convenient and purposeful sampling was utilized to find and select the participants within this study. The participants were faculty members who identified as Black and who were in their first year of employment at their current institution. Participants represented two regions of the United States—the South and the Midwest, detailed in Table 3.1. Each of the participants provided the data for analysis within each case study and enhanced the researcher's knowledge and understanding of the lived experiences of the Black faculty members within their respective PWIs. The results of the data collection and analysis allowed for insight into emerging themes and patterns.

*Participant 1: Mahogany*

Participant 1, “Mahogany,” identified as a Black male within the 25 to 34 age range. He worked for over 10 years in higher education prior to considering a position in academia. When asked about the transition from student affairs to academia, Mahogany stated during his individual interview,

I think I'm one of those people who has a belief that we all have callings and things that we're supposed to be doing with our lives, we all have what we think we want to do... I had what I like to call a come to Jesus moment, where I really had to sit with myself and really focus on not what I was forcing myself into, but what was my actual purpose, what was I supposed to be doing.

With a bachelor's degree in criminology, and a master's degree in the administration of justice and security, Mahogany believed law school was the best option to impact his community. After the 2016 presidential election, Mahogany found himself supporting a student who experienced overt racism on campus. After helping the student, Mahogany desired to change his career path. He shared in his interview, “I wanted to be an advocate for us, but not necessarily in a courtroom. I felt like voices like mine were needed in academia, more specifically in the classroom.” Mahogany pursued and completed a doctorate in Higher Education Administration, then sought to fulfill his interest in academia. After his entry into the academy in 2018, Mahogany sought to explore other opportunities and became an Assistant Professor at his current institution in the fall of 2020. Mahogany worked at an institution with approximately 40,000-50,000 students at a single campus. The institution’s percentage of students of color ranges between 50–75 percent.

*Research sub-question 1: What factors led Black faculty members to consider faculty positions at a PWI?* Mahogany’s interview revealed specific experiences that

encouraged him to enter the academy. While pursuing his doctorate, Mahogany worked as the director of a communications center where he focused specifically on the experiences of graduate students. He was “very intentional” in hiring and supporting Black graduate students while working in his role because he wanted to provide a space where those students “could feel like themselves, where they could be authentically themselves,” which he shared during his interview. Knowing the impact of the opportunity and the responsibility within that role, Mahogany endeavored to create more spaces for that student population to “listen to their stories... and be a driving force” in their development, both as students and as people. Mahogany found the idea of entering a space where Black professionals represented only 6% of the population (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018), “a challenge, and challenges I like.” Previously, Mahogany was a casualty of mass layoffs at his previous employer, which further encouraged him to attain a position in the academy. Undeterred, Mahogany knew he would “shoot [his] shot” and the previous experiences and support from those close to him would lead to a new opportunity.

*Research sub-question 2: What factors encourage or discourage Black faculty members to accept positions at PWIs?* Mahogany’s interview revealed different factors encouraged him to pursue the faculty opportunity with his current institution. He spoke about the importance of a community within and outside of work he could identify and connect with. His search process “took about a year” and was not only dedicated to faculty positions. In fact, Mahogany was more interested in positions “outside of academia, because that’s what [he] knew” from previous experiences with recruitment in higher education. Mahogany also stated in his individual interview that “the hiring



wave,” which suggests that most positions are filled at specific times during the academic year, “was tough to overcome,” especially with the surprising layoff from his previous institution. Additional challenges for Mahogany came in the form of the interview process. Despite those challenges, especially with his current role at his institution in the South, Mahogany successfully acquired his faculty role. Two major points of emphasis for Mahogany were his support system, “my mentors, my family, even the hiring committee,” and his “joint appointment” as a faculty member in two departments at the institution.

*Research sub-question 3: What factors currently exist at PWIs that contribute to a Black faculty member’s decision to stay at the institution?* Mahogany’s interview revealed a few different, positive experiences within his first year had him excited for what was to come. Being “the first joint appointment in my departments” was a major draw for Mahogany, as he gets to affect the learning experiences of a number of students from different demographics. Mahogany teaches courses on different subjects, “including Black political thought, Black families... victimology, race, crime, injustice, institutional corrections, juvenile justice systems, that sort of thing,” while also acting as a Co-Director of a mentor-mentee program. Mahogany took pride in sharing he had “been tapped a lot to give lectures across the campus this semester regarding the history and the roots of racism.” Mahogany enjoyed feeling “affirmed” in his first few months with the institution. Mahogany emphasized his experience at his institution centered around the idea that “faculty are like celebrities at institutions; they hope that you will be a part of it. They will make special considerations and concessions for you to be a part of it because they do not want you to say no.” Mahogany’s experience with being “selective” about

roles, responsibilities, and opportunities was notably different from his student affairs experience.

*Mahogany's summary.* In summary, Mahogany always felt “there is some sense of responsibility for me to be Black and present” in his professional experience, which he mentioned during his interview. Mahogany has over a decade of higher education experience. His interest in becoming a faculty member stemmed from his desire to impact the educational experiences of students, especially those of Black graduate students. Mahogany changed career paths, first considering a career in law then beginning a career in academia and found a way to transition his learned skills from student affairs to academic affairs. Challenges presented themselves as Mahogany sought to better his life and the lives of others, especially regarding the recruitment experience. The support of mentors, colleagues, and family members led to a successful transition into the academy. Mahogany's lived experiences and the opportunities presented after attaining a faculty position have made Mahogany feel well suited to educate others and better his life as well.

#### *Participant 2: Hazelnut*

Participant 2, “Hazelnut,” identified as a Black male in the over 55 age range. He has worked in academia for over 20 years but, during his individual interview, shared he initially “had no intention” of being a faculty member, considering himself “an anomaly” to begin with. Hazelnut's lived and professional experiences revolved around theater and performing arts. He “went to drama school... and then worked professionally,” landing opportunities all over the world before settling back in the United States. One of the common threads that ran through all of Hazelnut's theater experiences was that he

“always traveled with books... and have them on [his] dressing room table.” During a trip to London, England, one of Hazelnut’s fellow actors was enamored by his knowledge of theater history and “out of nowhere” suggested Hazelnut pursue a doctorate degree. Hazelnut’s response, as shared in his interview: “Wow. Why? You know, I’m making a living as an actor. Why would I want to go?” His theater colleague “bet [him] one hundred dollars” to apply; that bet, along with a scant interest in further studies, led Hazelnut to apply to attain a terminal degree in theater. Hazelnut “submitted to about four of five schools” and the institution he chose to attend stood out because of the possibility to write a dissertation on specific Black actors and their theater experiences in Europe. The program also allowed Hazelnut to continue pursuing acting while attaining the degree—which he completed within three years. Hazelnut acknowledged the original bet was “an easy hundred dollars” and he acquired a terminal degree. Those decisions led to Hazelnut becoming a full professor at his current institution, starting in the fall of 2020. Hazelnut worked at an institution with approximately 40,000–50,000 students at a single campus. The institution’s percentage of students of color ranges between 15–20%.

*Research sub-question 1: What factors led Black faculty members to consider faculty positions at a PWI?* Hazelnut returned to Europe soon after he completed his Ph.D. to continue his research and theater career. After a year, Hazelnut’s advisor “emailed and said there was a job coming up... and that [he] should apply for it.” When reflecting upon the academic experiences during the interview, after attaining that first role, Hazelnut stated, “This was a fairy tale.” Over time, Hazelnut met different Black faculty members who encouraged him to pursue academic opportunities and to continue to build upon his unique skillset. Those same efforts continued to set Hazelnut apart from

other theater educators, and he was more than willing to wait his turn for the ideal situations and options; Hazelnut stated in the individual interview, “all those kinds of little things were written into the contract. So that showed me how serious these folks are about having me here, you know?” The recruitment choices were selective on purpose for Hazelnut because “you never just say yes right away” to someone offering a role, but “when you say not and people come back and offer more: okay, let’s keep talking.” Hazelnut was not shy about the idea of receiving the opportunities owed and deserved to him.

*Research sub-question 2: What factors encourage or discourage Black faculty members to accept positions at PWIs?* Hazelnut leaned into his unique experiences and skillsets when he shared what encouraged or discouraged him from considering different roles. Hazelnut was “such an anomaly” with experiences uncommon among faculty members, and with his identity, he knew that his talents were not to be taken lightly. Hazelnut was willing to “bet on [himself]” and wait out negotiations “because [he has] the street cred.” With the positive energy Hazelnut put out, he also knew of and spoke to challenges that impact being Black in the academy. Hazelnut shared in his interview,

We, as folks of color are put to different standards a lot, you understand. So, the dictum in the African American or Black community in the United States has been, you know, you’ve got to be ‘better than’ just to be accepted as an equal player. It’s just like my grandmother said: ‘you’ve got to be better than great just to be average.’

Hazelnut kept up with different issues affecting Black faculty members at PWIs other than his own and looked to help other Black faculty members with their respective grievances to ensure more Black faculty stay in the academy, “fighting for their tenure,” rather than leaving the field altogether.

*Research sub-question 3: What factors currently exist at PWIs that contribute to a Black faculty member's decision to stay at the institution?* Hazelnut was a big proponent of being involved with committees and communities that supported Black students and faculty, “serving on a lot of committees this past semester.” As shared in his interview, Hazelnut’s collective knowledge and skills were utilized on “executive committees and departments and various committees and schools” as well as through his dual appointment. Hazelnut took pride in teaching courses that “help people... find their voice and how to be able to express themselves, and there have been tremendous success stories from that.” Hazelnut engaged in a variety of activities and prided himself on having been “a benefit to the students in whatever I’m going to be exposing them to,” as well as “mentoring with junior faculty” to encourage retention. What stood out most in conversation with Hazelnut was his willingness to challenge the status quo “and not give an F” when saying “no” to an initiative he did not agree with.

*Hazelnut’s summary.* Hazelnut was a self-proclaimed anomaly and his lived experiences spoke to that quality. The academy was fortunate to claim him as a member because of a \$100 bet, and Hazelnut did not take the role as lightly as he did decades ago. Hazelnut was intentional with the opportunities he took on and made sure he did not settle for anything less than he deserved. A great network and quality mentors opened Hazelnut’s eyes to roles that benefitted him in the long run. In Hazelnut’s current role, he leaned in to his responsibilities and made concerted efforts to support his students and advocate for fellow Black faculty members. Hazelnut was unapologetic about how he operated as a faculty member and wanted to ensure people knew his commitment to Black faculty success was paramount.

### *Participant 3: Kobicha*

Participant 3 was “Kobicha,” who identified as a Black male within the 35 to 44 age range. He was brand new to the academy at the time of his interview; his first year at his institution was also his first year as a faculty member, in the fall of 2020. Prior to his current role, Kobicha worked in student affairs for nine years in multicultural student services, student rights, and programming. Kobicha’s last position prior to joining the academy was at a Minority Serving Institution (MSI); however, Kobicha shared during his individual interview, “what people forget is that you can identify as non-White and still perpetuate White supremacy or racism.” As Kobicha sought a terminal degree, he planned to attain a role in student affairs; however, Kobicha was denied from multiple programs and was unsure of what might come next. With the support of his family, Kobicha attained a doctorate degree and looked for a new role. Through a multitude of setbacks, Kobicha now works as an Assistant Professor. Kobicha worked at an institution with approximately 10,000–15,000 students at a single campus. The institution’s percentage of students of color ranges between 15–20%.

*Research sub-question 1: What factors led Black faculty members to consider faculty positions at a PWI?* Kobicha found similar difficulties in attaining a new position after graduation as he did when he initially sought entrance into a degree program. After he finished his dissertation, Kobicha “still didn’t know how you became a professor” at that point in his career. He shared in his interview,

My advisor was like, ‘Don’t you want to be a professor?’ And I was like no, I just got [this degree]. I’m going to invest in myself as a staff member. He looked at me... and I shared with him that I never knew how to become a professor, so I didn’t know yet.

Kobicha applied to numerous roles in various fields, “from November to May,” and “didn’t get a call back until May” for any of the roles. The call back was for a role Kobicha had during the interview, which was shared with him via a fellow Black higher education professional working at the school. Kobicha was hesitant at first, “not really down with teaching,” but was encouraged to apply for the job by his colleague because “[he] ain’t got no job!” Kobicha felt more comfortable applying to roles after referral from colleagues or support from his family.

*Research sub-question 2: What factors encourage or discourage Black faculty members to accept positions at PWIs?* Kobicha was still not convinced of the opportunity to acquire a position in the academy because other schools “didn’t call back” or “[the institution] responded months later with an email saying [he] didn’t get the job.” The lack of responses from different institutions and opportunities proved very discouraging. Kobicha did not hold back about his experience. He stated during the interview,

Man, that six-month process [from November to May] fucking sucked. It was trash. My self-esteem, my anxiety, my depression, it was just like through the roof from what I went through. What I thought, at the time I was working for [the doctoral degrees] institution’s foundation, was I was going to graduate, get a position at the foundation, and that’s it... the CEO of the foundation was unable to hire me full-time.

The scarcity of responses from institutions drove Kobicha to just want “a foot in the door.” Kobicha acknowledged he “was getting help from everybody” including family, friends, colleagues, and professors.

*Research sub-question 3: What factors currently exist at PWIs that contribute to a Black faculty member’s decision to stay at the institution?* When Kobicha’s current

institution initially recruited him, the methods used spoke volumes. He found the role through a fellow Black educator. Kobicha was surprised to hear back from the institution and successfully complete the onboarding process. However, the most surprising part came after he was officially a successful candidate. Kobicha shared during his interview,

What made me go to this institution and made me say was... the dean of the college emailed me to offer the job, and it literally happened a month after George Floyd... the first line of the email was acknowledging the murder of George Floyd, how that can make me feel as an African American individual and how that can affect my family. However, the dean—a White woman at that—wanted to assure me that that's not how all people feel, and act and that this institution will be a benefit if you joined us.

Kobicha found colleagues who were unequivocally supportive of his success and wanted to make sure opportunities matched those sentiments. Kobicha did not feel an overt pressure to perform in his new role, suggesting “this is probably the easiest job [he] ever had.” Despite “inadvertently, being the face of diversity, sometimes,” Kobicha knows the importance of representation in the academy. He and his other Black colleagues are proud of their place in the academy. Through his positive experiences with his institution, thus far, Kobicha considers providing hope for students of color as “kind of like [his] purpose.”

*Kobicha's summary.* Kobicha endured a long journey to the academy and did not take his experience for granted. After nine years of working in student affairs, Kobicha attained a terminal degree and an opportunity to utilize his knowledge of student affairs. Because of circumstances unknown to Kobicha, a number of challenges presented themselves, causing self-doubt to settle in. Despite the difficulties he faced, Kobicha's institutional awareness bolstered him back up and provided a confidence he did not have going into the process. Along with that, Kobicha found constant support from his



immediate family, fellow colleagues in higher education, as well as his colleagues at the institution. The support he received, above all else, drove him to the successes he experienced. Therefore, he made every effort and consideration to pay the positivity forward to other Black students.

*Participant 4: Cocoa*

Participant 4, “Cocoa,” identified as a Black woman within the 35 to 44 age range. She mentioned during her individual interview that she began her career in academia after working for over twelve years in special education as “a bona fide schoolteacher.” Cocoa’s introduction to post-secondary education “was an unexpected trajectory.” Going through her doctoral work “was, for [her], more about the learning, not about the titles” and becoming a subject matter expert was appealing. Cocoa shared in her interview, “I love what I love in terms of niche areas,” so the entry into academia proved most surprising compared to other participants. Cocoa acknowledged during her interview,

I can go back and be a schoolteacher, which to me is the most important work in education. I can let you know that, to me, is not a downgrade, so I can go back and do what I’m best at, that’s not a problem at all and I’m content with that.

Cocoa was unapologetic about her interests post-graduation and only considered the academy at the suggestions of mentors and interested parties. That suggestion led to Cocoa’s first role in academia in the fall of 2020. Cocoa worked at an institution with approximately 40,000–50,000 students at a single campus. The institution’s percentage of students of color ranges between 15–20%.

*Research sub-question 1: What factors led Black faculty members to consider faculty positions at a PWI?* Cocoa considered becoming a faculty member at a time

when she was not seeking a change in her career. Cocoa stated in her interview, “I ran into somebody at my local university that basically, in short, introduced me to this whole new world of academia that I didn’t know existed.” Because of that introduction, Cocoa decided to pursue a terminal degree in her field. As Cocoa attained her degree, she “had no intentions of applying for academic positions” despite possessing the skills and qualifications to become a faculty member. In her interview, Cocoa mentioned during her interview, “as I began to learn more about it, I realized just what a unique and—I don't think great is an appropriate word to define the opportunity here, but a unique and an opportunity not to be missed. So that kind of changed my trajectory.” Cocoa expressed “worry” about the idea of transitioning to the academy, including qualms that “it may not be what [she] expected” or “it may not be in the position [she] wanted.” Cocoa’s support system was a major factor in her decision-making process to even consider a faculty position, to the point that she got “a little emotional” discussing their importance. Cocoa shared during the interview,

There were three people I would always consult with for that. I would always consult with them and get their opinion about the matter at hand. And each one of those people had a special niche, so to speak... one of them was very, very involved in policy work, and that's a big component of what I do. Then another one of my mentors was the one that brought me into the program and was my major professor, and then my other mentor was not even at my university, very involved in policy as well. But she looks like me, and in both ways: black and female. All of those perspectives were very valuable.

The mentors in Cocoa’s life were “essential” to her success and transition from special education to higher education.

*Research sub-question 2: What factors encourage or discourage Black faculty members to accept positions at PWIs?* Initial interest in the academy was fleeting for

Cocoa, as “it wasn’t on my list at all, actually” and there were concerns around joining the academy, based on the unfamiliarity. Cocoa “really was worried” that the academy transition would be a challenge. Additionally, during the interview, Cocoa felt that being a Black woman impacted her journey “the way that it’s impacted [her] life in the workforce and even since [she] was a student.” Cocoa expressed a sense of solace with the process after learning that those seeking to aid in her transition involved “no tips or tricks.” A number of opportunities stood out and pointed towards the academy. Cocoa’s recruitment experience was different from other participants. She shared during her interview, “a search committee reached out to ask me if I wanted to apply,” instead of going through the motions of applying for different faculty positions. With active recruitment, Cocoa had the opportunity to negotiate and “really found a special area of interest that made [her] well fit” for the faculty position in which she began her experience in academia.

*Research sub-question 3: What factors currently exist at PWIs that contribute to a Black faculty member’s decision to stay at the institution?* Cocoa knew there were reasons her institution “intentionally” recruited her. Cocoa felt that interest from inception and found interest convergence to be the focus; she shared in her interview, “They really, especially through the package offered, wanted to, I think, make it clear that not only did they want me to come here, they wanted me to be successful.” Cocoa was not required to teach in her first year with her institution, leaving her to focus solely on her research. Other responsibilities, including “submitting for publications, applying for grants, attending all faculty meetings,” allowed Cocoa to become acclimated to her first foray into the academy. Cocoa acknowledged a need to “ease the transition” for Black

faculty members, due to historical “institutional concerns.” Cocoa spoke further about this and acknowledged in her interview,

I'm very grateful and very humbled and very appreciative to have this opportunity at a time when jobs are scarce, particularly in our field. So, I make no bones about that fact. I have no problem saying I am grateful, I'm humbled, I'm appreciative. But, at the same time, it was my professor that said to me, ‘Don't forget: you've got something they want’ ... it was my White professor that reminded me: yes, it's great to be grateful, but don't forget, they need you. They need you.

Cocoa considered herself, despite all of her education and skills, a “commodity” in the field of academia.

*Cocoa's summary.* Cocoa spent 14 years working in special education before ever considering working in the academy. At the suggestion of a mentor, Cocoa attained a terminal degree with plans to return to her special education role afterwards. However, Cocoa's support system encouraged her to look into opportunities in higher education. A deep trust of her mentors led to consideration of post-secondary opportunities and an eventual entry into the academy. Cocoa spoke about the importance of acknowledging the opportunity present within her institution but knew not to accept the idea that being welcomed to the academy inferred systematic change. Cocoa made it known in conversation that Black faculty members are “still commodities” and not to “get commodity confused with equity.” Cocoa acknowledged the positive and negative aspects of her introduction into academia.

#### *Participant 5: Sandy*

Participant 5, “Sandy,” identified as a Black woman within the 25 to 34 age range. She was a licensed professional psychologist with no plans to join the academy, prior to two years ago. Sandy's professional experience in forensic psychology included

work in a private practice. The idea of becoming a faculty member was never presented to her, as she mentioned in her individual interview that she “had no formal ties or professional [academic] relationships.” Joining academia was, in fact, prompted by “just extra cash” and alumni outreach by her alma mater. The idea of “having your hands dipped in different buckets” intrigued Sandy and that, plus the interest in “supplementing [her] income” led her to become an adjunct professor in the fall of 2019. Sandy worked at an institution with approximately 5,000–8,000 students spread across multiple campuses. The institution’s percentage of students of color ranges between 50–75 percent.

*Research sub-question 1: What factors led Black faculty members to consider faculty positions at a PWI?* In her interview, Sandy spoke about her experience of seeking a faculty position and how she was initially uninterested. After she completed her degree, Sandy believed working in a private practice was her next move. However, after entering the field, she quickly learned multiple streams of income were necessary in order to be financially comfortable. Sandy acknowledged, “all of my professors, I sort of knew that an academic appointment wasn’t their only job.” Knowing this and having a relationship with faculty, post-graduation, Sandy felt it “made sense that they would reach out to alumni” to recruit faculty members. Because of that relationship, Sandy said, “there actually wasn’t” a recruiting process, but instead she “reached out to the department chair [who] was actually one of my former professors” and the chair set up the faculty opportunity based on “relationships that I already formed.” The ease of the process, especially considering Sandy “had zero experience,” led to a successful transition into the field.

*Research sub-question 2: What factors encourage or discourage Black faculty members to accept positions at PWIs?* Sandy's fledgling interest in the academy was not something she took lightly. A sense of comfort was vital to Sandy's decision, particularly because of her "zero experience" searching for faculty roles. Sandy shared during her interview, "It just made more sense to go to my home institution, the program that I actually graduated from, the people that actually taught me." Sandy was also encouraged by a suggestion from the institution that professors at the school "have other appointments, whether it's private practice or things like that" and the "leniency" around working multiple jobs in the field. The main challenge that arose in Sandy's recruitment process was being "the only faculty of color" in the department. Sandy expressed the lack of Black faculty or faculty of color was her "biggest grievance" in the process. Sandy showed appreciation for the relationships built from attending the institution where she is employed, but also recognized the process for what it was.

*Research sub-question 3: What factors currently exist at PWIs that contribute to a Black faculty member's decision to stay at the institution?* In her interview, Sandy acknowledged a major importance in familiarity with the institution she worked at. Sandy cited, "leeway" in the teaching of particular courses—whether in number or subject—and appreciated the flexibility that comes with being an adjunct professor. Sandy spoke about her ability to help "design a course" if and when an update is needed. The responsibilities Sandy shared were "consistent for adjuncts across the board." Her identity as a young Black woman directly impacted her "relationships and mentoring with students, especially students of color," in her particular field of teaching. Her student population has been "just very White," so Sandy was "a little bit more gung-ho" when

communicating the importance of her presence as a Black faculty member at the institution. As Sandy considered promotional opportunities within academia, she desired “creative control” and emphasis on diversity, equity, and inclusion within her department and the field of forensic psychology.

*Sandy’s summary.* Sandy was a forensic psychologist by profession who chose to add academia to her list of experiences. Initially, she planned to supplement her income and previous experiences and relationships with her alma mater, which allowed her to make a smooth transition to an adjunct role. Sandy stated, “the transition would have been 10 times harder, for sure” without those relationships. During her interview, Sandy appreciated those relationships and made the best use of those connections. However, the lack of Black faculty within Sandy’s department proved a notable challenge for her to overcome. Looking forward towards possible opportunities for career growth in academia, Sandy ensured that her position was not due to a special “gatekeeper” that allowed her to enter the field, but because of her merit and contributions to academia. After the interview, Sandy planned to safeguard future Black faculty to prevent them from feeling like they aren’t “on an island” as they go through development.

### *Focus Group*

The participants came together to discuss topics related to the recruitment and retention experiences had and commonalities amongst them. Conversation began with discussion of recruitment experiences; Sandy shared during the focus group conversation,

There’s no, like, sort of support in that sense. And so, I feel like without previously established relationships, I think my transition would have been a lot harder than it was, for sure, because you’re kind of just like you’ve got no idea really what you’re doing... you have to orient yourself to the system.

Sandy's introduction to the recruitment process was of notable challenge, even with the support she already had connections to. Kobicha acknowledge a similar struggle and shared in the focus group conversation that his partner encouraged and supported him, "telling [him] 'you're an expert', you know, 'you're an expert at working with people. You're an expert! Everyone can't do what you do.' And who are we to deny what God has in store for you?" The parallels among participants was notable but not sweeping. Mahogany noted during the focus group conversation, "most interview processes included a number of Black faculty and administration... but I'd be sure to ask, 'is the campus population reflective of this interview experience?' and, most times, the answer was a flat out 'no'." Mahogany also acknowledged, during the focus group, the importance of being the first Black male to have the opportunity to work in the two departments: "I feel like [the institution] really realized what they were getting with me and created space for me to thrive, grow, and flourish. I think a lot of that has to do with the fact that I'm in a joint appointment." Mahogany's preparation and confidence in self allowed for a successful hire.

In discussion about the retention experiences of the participants, the varying experiences of the participants revealed more about thematic aspects of the research. Hazelnut acknowledged hesitance in joining and staying in the academy because his institution's location was not conducive to his theater career. Hazelnut shared in the focus group conversation that he was later convinced by his advisor, who told him, "You're going to meet people in your professional life in academia that you would never have met in the theater world, if you get this job. She really stayed on me and I applied, and I got the job." In similar conversation, Kobicha acknowledged challenge in retention and that



the “social capital” built up given his identity as compared to White counterparts, was less, but not something to discredit. Kobicha shared in the focus group “I got to let [Black students] see me, so they know that they can become a Black faculty member, too.” Cocoa stated during the focus group conversation that “support helps you be successful” and throughout her journey, that concept resonated with her. Knowing that lived experiences were “fraught with racism and sexism and bigotry and all kinds of ugliness” did not encourage Cocoa to leave what was comfortable to her because “academia is no different.” Therefore, what came up most during the focus group conversation was the concept of interest convergence. The responsibilities Cocoa was given made it “very evident” to her that the institution was very interested in her joining the program she worked for.

### *Cross Case Analysis*

Data from all participants presented three themes that emerged as components of their faculty employment experience. The production of themes came from a coding process employed on the individual interviews. The continued reveal of thematic concepts was further confirmed during a focus group conversation. The themes also related to each participant’s lived experiences: (1) the academy was not a primary interest for participants, (2) interest convergence, and (3) “being better than great to be considered average.” The researcher asked all of the participants to reflect and expand upon their experiences with recruitment and retention that revolved around issues of their racial identity. The data collected from the participants offered more rich narratives for the research.

### *The Academy Was Not a Primary Interest*

In the first theme, participants acknowledged becoming a member of the academy was not a foregone conclusion. All of the participants held prior career experiences and goals. They were two higher education administrators, a social scientist, a K–12 educator, and an actor. Hazelnut was aware of his interest in education and was led to pursue a terminal degree from the beginning. When he chose to pursue an entirely different career, Hazelnut acknowledged a turning point during his individual interview,

And I always travel with books, you know, and have them on my dressing room table... so my dressing room mate said, "you're always talking to everybody else about history. Why don't you apply for a PhD program?" and that just came out of nowhere. I said, "Wow," and I said, "Why?" I said, "You know, I'm making a living as an actor, why would I want to go?" So, you know, he bet me one hundred dollars—this is a true story—and I thought this is going to be easy. Hundred dollars - and I was intrigued by applying... I had written some things and so I submitted to about four or five schools.

Sandy already had a career outside of higher education, but a request from her alma mater led her to the academy. Sandy's network proved useful when seeking another way to supplement her income, providing her the opportunity to become a faculty member.

Cocoa and Kobicha also acknowledged the influence of others when considering academic roles. Kobicha applied for many jobs and hoped an opportunity would present itself. When he did not feel confident about prospective roles, he noted the positive reinforcement from his spouse during the focus group,

It's crazy what people see in you; you know what I'm saying—especially loved ones. Like my [spouse] for example, I mean, for many years [my spouse] would tell me how I'm an expert. 'You're an expert, you know. You're an expert at working with people. You're an expert at these things. You just- you just don't understand how smart you are.

Kobicha knew the motivation sparked from his spouse would encourage him while he waited for a positive response. However, during the process, Kobicha was open to any opportunity; he even applied for a position at Amazon at one point.

Cocoa mentioned in her interview that her rise to the academy “was an unexpected trajectory.” She spent over a decade in her field before considering academia. Eventually, Cocoa “ran into somebody at my local university that, basically in short, introduced [her] to this whole new world of academia... and here I am,” which she mentioned during her interview. Thus, the path to the academy was non-traditional for all of the participants.

The literature reviewed in Chapter Two of this study aligned with responses offered by participants. The section on the current state of diversity in higher education faculty acknowledged the quantitative and qualitative status of diversity at post-secondary institutions; the data collected here affirmed the ideas shared in that section. Postsecondary institutions and their historical duplication of society presented comparable ratios between the racial makeup of the majority of American citizens and the racial makeup of the majority of faculty members (Museus et al., 2014). Despite knowing this information, these statistics have not changed much over recent years (Gassam, 2019). The participants’ documented experiences echoed the sentiments from the literature review.

This specific theme resonated with the researcher’s choice of CRT for the theoretical framework. The development of the framework “spoke to the need to ‘fight the power’ and critique ‘the hell out of the system’” (Lynn et al., 2013, p. 604). The participants shared a collective desire to challenge the status quo of their respective fields

and joined the academy to be the change they wished to see. Delgado and Stefancic (2015) shared, “[CRT] not only tries to understand our social situation, but to change it; it sets out not only to ascertain how society organizes itself along racial lines and hierarchies, but to transform it for the better” (p. 3). The participants’ interest in becoming faculty members stemmed, albeit indirectly, from CRT.

### *Interest Convergence*

The participants discussed different individual experiences that aligned with the concept of interest convergence. Interest convergence was defined by Derrick A. Bell as the idea that the demands of minority people would be met only if that particular action also serves White interests (Lynn et al., 2013). The first participant to explicitly acknowledge the concept was Cocoa. Her experience being recruited by institutions pushed her to reflect on the fact that she “had something that they wanted” as a Black woman in her field. During the focus group conversation, Cocoa expounded during the focus group,

My major professor at the time said to me ‘Listen, you have to negotiate like a mediocre White man. I know you’re excited about this job opportunity, but don’t forget you have something that they want. They wouldn’t be checking for you, basically, if you didn’t have something that they wanted.’ That gave me leverage to negotiate this and that.

Mahogany talked about different situations that fell under interest convergence as well. Professional opportunities presented to Mahogany were not under the guise of good faith, according to his focus group responses. In response to Cocoa’s story, Mahogany replied “it is definitely what is happening” with regards to prospective projects. Mahogany’s example of interest convergence centered around a presentation he planned to give to assorted audiences. The project was initially met with confrontation from his department

chair because of the sensitivity of the subject matter, until Mahogany's work garnered attention from media organizations. Afterwards, Mahogany was informed that his department chair not only supported the project but also expected to be a part of the panel. Mahogany expressed his continued disdain towards the event, while the other participants commiserated with him. Kobicha shared his thoughts towards interest convergence and his learning that, despite the challenges faced during his career, his department "really needs" his work and accomplishments.

Data analyzed within this theme directly correlated with CRT. Demaske (2019) offered,

Any given culture constructs its own social reality in its own self-interest, and in the United States this means that minorities' interests are subservient to the system's self-interest; and that the current system, built by and for White elites, will tolerate and encourage racial progress for minorities only if this promotes the majority's self-interest (p. 1)

All of the participants spoke to different experiences that aligned with interest convergence. Efforts made by the participants were met with conflict or concern, unless there was a way those in power directly benefitted or garnered positive attention. Bourlin (2013) noted, "Bell saw racism as 'an integral, permanent, and indestructible' feature of American life, because of what he called the 'interest convergence dilemma,' which posited that Whites would never eliminate racism unless it was in their own self-interest" (p. 1). The participants in this study shared examples of this dilemma during their interviews and focus group.

#### *Being Better than Great to be Considered Average.*

Hazelnut's grandmother embedded in him he had to "be better than great to be considered average" in everything he did, which he shared during his individual

interview. That piece of insight encouraged Hazelnut to pursue niche experiences that seemed uncommon to prospective or current faculty members. Kobicha acknowledged his lived experiences around recruitment during his individual interview. In the focus group, he shared,

I was mad because I said I knew I had to advocate for myself. And I think it's important that we say and do that because [Black faculty members] don't teach ourselves how to advocate for ourselves—whether that's academia, in the professional world, it doesn't matter. We're just not taught as a group of people to say it. We know, in our minds, that we're ten times smarter and ten times more talented. We can do everything. But when it comes time to, like, basically make our checks come for they neck, we always lowball ourselves.

Cocoa mentioned the idea of having “White, uneducated folks” place expectations on her and other Black faculty members without first assessing their skillsets or talents. Cocoa shared, “I had people in my department who were trying to teach me how to teach [at her institution], but I’ve taught 14 years—I don’t need you to tell me how to teach. I know how to teach. That’s what I do.” The expectation placed upon Cocoa was, as a new faculty member, she was not prepared to fulfill the responsibilities that came with being in the academy.

During the focus group, Sandy talked about being challenged by other faculty members and leadership. She stated, “the most challenge that [she gets] is from students,” much to her surprise and the surprise of other participants. While students did not explicitly tell Sandy she was not suited to teach courses at her institution, the students “challenged” the things she taught them. She acknowledged in the group conversation,

Here I am, at the front of this classroom, teaching blue-eyed blond-haired people concepts of forensic psychology and I receive push back and challenge from simply trying to educate, or mentor, or get somebody to do a homework assignment. And so, it terrifies me thinking what the challenge is going to look like when [those students] are sitting in front of a defendant who doesn't look like them.

Sandy's experience, although minimized by her, reflected a need for institutional support to curtail behavior that undermined her professional acumen (Daut, 2019).

Data analyzed within this theme directly correlated to CRT, as the literature acknowledged deterrents between capable Black professionals and the spaces they occupied. Bell (1995) stated, "In more recent times, discrimination aimed at skilled or talented Blacks is a well-understood fact of life in the Black community" (p. 895). The challenges of the participants in this study echoed a number of experiences faced by others; Daut (2019) acknowledged, "while the racist haters may not be able to completely derail your career, they can make it infinitely harder, more frustrating, and sometimes impossible to keep on track" (p. 1). The data produced by the participants spoke to comparable experiences.

### *Discussion*

The purpose of the multiple case study was to understand the recruitment and retention of Black faculty members at predominantly White institutions. Five participants, who identified as Black faculty members at PWIs, shared their lived experiences with the researcher. There has been a lack of institutional change to the recruitment and retention of Black faculty members in the last fifty years (Daut, 2019; Modica & Mamiseishvili, 2010). Therefore, the research questions in this study were designed to help different stakeholders understand how to assess and address those concerns.

The research questions (RQs) were created to collect information from Black faculty members about their experiences and decisions made to work at a PWI. The following research questions were posed,

1. What factors led Black faculty members to consider faculty positions at a PWI?
2. What factors encourage or discourage Black faculty members to accept positions at PWIs?
3. What factors currently exist at PWIs that contribute to a Black faculty member's decision to stay at the institution?

*Research Question 1: What Factors Led Black Faculty Members to Consider Faculty Positions at a PWI?*

Analysis of the individual interviews and focus group conversation led to the following findings:

- Participants did not consider academic roles when initially pursuing their terminal degree.
- Relationships with family, coworkers, colleagues, and mentors drove interest in pursuing faculty positions.
- Participants sought opportunities that best utilized their subject matter expertise and felt confident going through the recruitment process.

*Participants did not consider academic roles when pursuing their terminal degree.* All of the participants acknowledged their pursuits of terminal degrees were not driven by a desire to enter the academy. Participants possessed different career goals associated with their terminal degree, including private practice, special education, law, and other opportunities. Sandy mentioned a need to “supplement income” during her interview, and Kobicha spoke to applying to numerous jobs before ending up in academia. Despite the lack of explicit interest in the field, the participants were ready and well suited for their respective roles.

*Relationships with family, coworkers, colleagues, and mentors drove interest in pursuing faculty positions.* The participants in this study found support in their pursuit of



faculty positions at their respective institutions. All participants spoke to specific individuals that encouraged, supported, or even dared them to pursue their goals. Hazelnut spoke to a bet that encouraged his doctoral pursuit in his interview. Cocoa was encouraged to seek opportunities outside of her purview, with passionate pleas. The idea of being a subject matter expert was a factor in pursuit of employment, as well. Mahogany, Kobicha, and Hazelnut were told during their recruitment efforts their expertise was needed in the field. This finding proved to resonate with all of the participants.

*Participants sought opportunities that best utilized their subject matter expertise and felt confident going through the recruitment process.* The researcher learned about different faculty experiences from the participants, with a common thread of all participants having possessed specific appointments. The different appointments were offered to the participants based on their desire for ideal entries into academia. Mahogany, Hazelnut, and Cocoa spoke about dual appointments in their respective interviews and how those opportunities positively impacted their recruitment. Throughout their experiences, the participants felt well equipped to enter the academy.

*Research Question 2: What Factors Encourage or Discourage Black Faculty Members to Accept Positions at PWIs?*

Analysis of the individual interviews and focus group conversation led to the following findings:

- Participants were not encouraged to pursue careers in the academy.
- Connections at different institutions introduced participants to otherwise unknown opportunities.
- Participants believed in their skills and abilities and did not settle.

*Participants were not encouraged to pursue careers in the academy.* The participants echoed the idea that working in the academy was not something that was encouraged during their terminal degree pursuit. Every participant possessed a different job before and during the attainment of their doctoral degree. Kobicha shared during his interview that he “still didn’t know how [to become] a professor” even after completing his degree. Cocoa stated, in her interview, every intention to “go back and be a schoolteacher” after completing her degree. The lack of encouragement to enter the academy for these participants was telling.

*Connections at different institutions introduced participants to otherwise unknown opportunities.* Participants mentioned support being received from members of the academy, prior to considering the pursuit. All of the participants’ experiences reflected indirect or direct recommendation from mentors and faculty members to look into faculty roles. Kobicha and Mahogany cited support and direction from their non-academic colleagues, while Sandy had former faculty explicitly request for her to apply for her role. The participants were open to the idea of pursuing academic roles but needed a push in the right direction.

*Participants believed in their skills and abilities and did not settle.* Despite varying levels of experience with academia, a common finding among participants was their willingness to wait for ideal entrances into their roles. Hazelnut was adamant about his ability to say no to different opportunities, leading to his extended recruitment process. Mahogany mentioned a search process that “took about a year,” during his

interview, and his desire for a position that best suited his skillset. Participants were confident in their abilities and their pursuits reflected this.

*Research Question 3: What Factors Currently Exist at PWIs that Contribute to a Black Faculty Member's Decision to Stay at the Institution?*

Analysis of the individual interviews and focus group conversation led to the following findings:

- Participants created their own personal goals to pursue, that supported their goals.
- Institutional support, from different stakeholders, encouraged participants.

*Participants created their own personal goals to pursue, that supported their goals.* Participants stated their desires to ensure their current roles in academia suited their professional goals. Dual appointments were cited by three different participants during their respective interviews which fulfilled their interests along with their respective institution's needs. Sandy stated in her own interview a desire to directly affect and impact the future of her field, along with her regular roles within her job description. Kobicha's passion to represent Black people in the academy is not asked of him, but further enhanced his relationship to his institution. The combination of formal and informal roles and responsibilities correlated with the participants' desires to continue in their positions.

*Institutional support, from different stakeholders, encouraged participants.*

Participants acknowledged the support received from their institutions, lending to positive regards towards retention. Kobicha's institutional support presented itself before the completion of his search process; Mahogany's institutional support was spoken about

during his search process. Cocoa stated during the focus group that she, and all of the participants “have something that [their institution wants]” and Mahogany resonated with the statement. The buy-in from deans, chairs, and their programs—whether an instance of interest convergence or otherwise—allowed the participants to recognize their importance and capitalize upon it.

### *Connections to the Literature Review*

The findings from this research study connected with the information provided in the literature review from Chapter Two. The data from the participants spoke to different points shared in the literature. These connections further supported the themes discovered and presented information associated with the recruitment and retention of Black faculty at PWIs. Table 4.1 illustrates how the findings aligned with themes from the literature review, including the current state of diversity in higher education faculty (Gassam, 2019) and the value of recruiting and retaining diverse faculty (Jennings & Marvin, 2005).

One of the findings that aligned with the literature review acknowledged that participants pursued terminal degrees without initial interest in academia. The participants shared their interest in several different paths considered before breaking into academia. The literature perspective expressed a lack of role models. The literature review spoke to the current state of higher education and the dearth of Black faculty members in tenured roles (Daut, 2019). Without those Black faculty members in place, prospective Black faculty members were unable to see themselves in these positions and the trickle-down effect impacted students and their professional trajectory. Students also took note of the disparity of diversity in their faculty members, as institutions found

themselves subject of exposés regarding their lack of racial diversity (Gassam, 2019). The data echoed the literature, and these findings align with that information.

Another finding which aligned with the literature review recognized the participants' belief in their subject matter expertise. The participants in this research study expressed an initial drive to pursue their terminal degrees based on becoming subject matter experts, opposed to a specific goal to become a member of the academy. In the literature review, the importance of culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) was resounding; Jennings and Marvin (2005) stated, "the need for the development of a critical consciousness in students that would help to transform society" (p. 17). Subject matter expertise assisted Black faculty members in multiple ways; the ability to teach a subject, along with efforts to implement culturally relevant pedagogy, worked two-fold for students of color (Miller, 2018). The unique combination served multiple student groups and positively reflected the importance of the work done by Black faculty members.

A third finding in alignment with the literature review spoke to the creation of personal goals in support of professional goals. The literature shared a perspective around academic and cultural benefits that connected with this finding. Participants from the study spoke to the need to adhere to job responsibilities and took on other projects and processes. Black faculty members found themselves more likely to perform other duties because of the benefits to their diverse students (Umbach, 2006). The literature and research aligned and Black faculty members at PWIs were left more prone to working harder to achieve within the academy.

The findings from the data collected demonstrated the importance of the research as it pertained to the diversity of faculty within the academy. These findings were important because the information addressed the research questions posed. The data revealed factors leading the participants in this study having considered faculty positions at a PWI, as well as what factors encouraged or discouraged Black faculty members to accept positions at PWIs. Participants spoke to specific experiences in alignment with the literature, in conjunction with the research questions. The findings were important to the research as it further contributed to the narrative and, consequentially, provided more information for stakeholders to understand and work with.

Table 4.1

*Findings Aligned with Literature Review*

Findings	Literature Perspective
1—Participants pursued terminal degrees, without faculty interests	Lack of role models (Gassam, 2019; Daut, 2019)
2—Participants’ belief in subject matter expertise	Implementation of culturally relevant pedagogy (Jennings & Marvin, 2005; Miller, 2018)
3—Creation of personal goals in support of professional goals	Academic and cultural benefits (Umbach, 2006)

*Connections to the Theoretical Framework*

The findings from this research study connected with information associated with the theoretical framework referenced most recently in Chapter Three. The framework selected for the research was Critical Race Theory (CRT). The findings pertaining to the recruitment and retention of Black faculty at PWIs correlated with CRT in more than one perspective. Table 4.2 illustrates how the findings aligned with themes from the

theoretical framework of CRT. CRT aspects reflected in the findings included the idea racism was built into the infrastructure of American society (Demaske, 2009), interest convergence (Lynn et al., 2013) and counter-stories (Ladson-Billings, 2013).

One of the findings that aligned with CRT pertained to the lack of interest in faculty roles by Black faculty members. The researcher's direct experience, as well as participant responses, agreed with this claim; none of the participants expressed initial interest in the academy, while the researcher's personal experience with Black students confirmed a lack of interest in academic positions. One of CRT's tenets "challenges traditional notions of scholarly objectivity by promoting a radical scholarship that goes beyond the experience of whites as the normative standard" (Lynn et al, 2013, p. 607). In the instance of the research, "radical scholarship" inferred the notion of a Black faculty member leaving their field of expertise to join the academy.

Another finding from the research recognized the lack of initial encouragement to pursue academic careers, which correlated to a tenet of CRT. Participants reflected upon their foray into academia and spoke to a need to seek out support systems after having completed their respective terminal degrees. When asked what they believed prevented earlier exposure to the idea of becoming a faculty member, participants shared more about the lack of narratives suggesting Black faculty members were desirable. Gloria Ladson-Billings (2013) stated, "Stories reflect a perspective or point of view and underscore what the teller, audience, society, and/or those in power believe to be important, significant, and many times valorizing and ethnocentric" (p. 41–42). The stories told to Black faculty members about positive faculty experiences proved few and far-between, furthering the gap of inspired academics within that demographic.

A third finding in alignment with the chosen theoretical framework acknowledged the institutional support received by Black faculty members working at PWIs. Participants of the study stated several examples of projects or processes that received varying levels of support from their colleagues, supervisors, or schools. The spectrum of support was a direct result of interest convergence, recognized by Bell in his creation of CRT (Demaske, 2009). Findings acknowledged the challenge that came with interest convergence as it pertained to efforts Black faculty members made within their roles.

Table 4.2

*Findings Aligned with Theoretical Framework*

Findings	Theoretical Perspective
1—Lack of interest in roles	The lack of exposure to the academy was due to higher education infrastructure (Lynn et al, 2013)
2—Participants were not encouraged to pursue academic careers	Counter-stories deterred pursuit of academic careers (Ladson-Billings, 2013)
3—Institutional support	Interest convergence developed mutually agreed circumstances (Demaske, 2009)

The findings reflected tenets of the theoretical framework selected for the research. CRT was created with the intention of better understanding how race impacts society and justice served within that society; “the movement [championed] many of the same concerns as the civil rights movement, but [placed] those concerns within a broader economic and historical context” (Demaske, 2009, p. 1). Data collected and analyzed revealed information that mirrored the very tenets that Bell presented in the 1970s. The



findings shared in this section, among others within this chapter, presented implications and opportunities to affect change within the educational community.

### *Implications*

The purpose of this study was to assess and better understand the recruitment and retention efforts made towards Black faculty members by PWIs. The research conducted presents implications for different stakeholders to consider. Stakeholders include human resource offices within higher education, provosts and other recruiting entities, as well as Black faculty members. These implications provide insight and recommendations, based on the literature reviewed, as well as the research conducted.

### *Human Resources in Higher Education*

The results of the research study have implications for human resources (HR) departments in higher education. A lack of qualified Black professionals is the reason for the lack of Black faculty at PWIs. However, through different interviews with participants, as well as supporting literature, the perceived lack of qualified Black faculty candidates is inaccurate. Gassam (2019) acknowledged, “universities and colleges that claim they don’t have enough diverse candidates applying for faculty positions should create their own diverse pipeline” (p. 1). The historic discouragement towards Black professionals from majority White spaces has been an issue that institutions should intentionally address. Daut (2019) acknowledged, “no cluster-hire or diversity policy in the world will increase the number of Black [people] at the full-professor rank, if the campus environment is hostile, abusive, and even violent” (p. 1). Concerns around the quality of Black faculty candidates comes up in conversation among HR offices at PWIs, as well. In response, Gasman (2016) shared, “the word ‘quality’ is used to dismiss people

of color who are otherwise competitive for faculty positions” (p. 1). The tools HR departments use must be assessed and adjusted to support their historically underrepresented populations, regardless of social capital and in spite of systemic racism.

### *Provosts and Other Recruiting Entities*

The results of this study also present implications for provosts and other recruiting entities. Provosts must work with their current faculty to better understand what opportunities presented to their Black faculty in particular, if they were of true interest, and then work to make changes in their assessment of those employees. These factors include, but are not limited to tenure, access, and other retention tools indirectly related to professional roles. Retention efforts do not only apply to items under institutional control, but also to environmental factors. Baloch (2020) shared, “people in administration don’t know the quality-of-life issues that many Black folks care about” (p. 1). Because of this, recruiting entities presume that Black faculty, simply, are not interested in working at the institutions that seek to address these seemingly innocuous components of the retention process. Recruiting entities, at times, sought the assistance of a chief diversity office or diversity panel; however, Gardey (2019) stated,

There was no change in the amount of minority faculty members before a chief diversity officer was hired and the amount of minority faculty members after a chief diversity officer was hired... the diversity of tenured faculty hires actually fell after the arrival of a chief diversity officer (p. 1).

Furthermore, recruiting professionals and other hiring entities tend to lack the training or desire to expand the diversity of their ranks (Gasman, 2016). Efforts to attain and retain Black faculty members is dependent on systemic change as opposed to being the responsibility of one person or team.

### *Implications for Black Faculty*

The results of this study offer implications for Black faculty members because they can pursue opportunities and roles at PWIs and their ability to do so should not be denied because there is no formal pipeline in place to aid them in securing employment. Pursuing a faculty position is usually not determined by age, gender identity, or race. From a professional standpoint, the prospective faculty members in this study did not have to follow a specific path to become faculty members. The variance of paths in the participants is reflective of a statement made by Cocoa, who shared, “Black people are not a monolith, neither are Black faculty members.” Black professionals who seek to become faculty members are in a position where their talents and skills can be utilized under the right circumstances. Black faculty also have the wherewithal to dismantle systemic concerns and affect longstanding change with their presence and culturally responsive pedagogy (Perry, 2016). Those learning outcomes do not only affect Black students, either; Perry (2020) acknowledged,

Because of the lived experience that comes with being a person of color, minority teachers are able to identify and deconstruct the racial and cultural biases present in school systems, making it more likely that classroom discussions include a social justice orientation. (p. 1)

Continued support from mentors, professors, and networks—from people within and outside of their demographic group—will prove beneficial for future Black faculty members.

### *Conclusion*

This study’s results and the implications discussed here provide insight into the lived experiences of Black faculty members and participants’ recruitment and retention processes. The study explored the recruitment and retention efforts aimed towards Black

faculty members as they navigated their most recent employment experiences at predominantly White institutions (PWIs). The literature associated with this research acknowledged the inherent desire for diversity in the academy was not supported by direct efforts to implement solutions to the problem. This research recognized the necessity for diversity in faculty, as well as the importance of investment in the recruitment and retention of these diverse faculty members.

Three themes emerged from the research: (1) the academy was not a primary interest, (2) interest convergence, and (3) “being better than great to be considered average.” Each theme category was presented, and thorough attention was paid to the connection of the discovered themes to Critical Race Theory (CRT). Data produced from the case study through participant’s individual interviews and focus group interview(s) informed the research design (Yin, 2014) and themes. The creation of themes from the data gathered revealed the relationship of these themes to CRT framework. Implications were provided to different stakeholders for future consideration.

The research conducted provided information to offer stakeholders in the recruitment and retention process. Information provided included implications and suggested next steps for human resources departments, provosts and other hiring entities, as well as aspiring and current Black faculty members. These findings represent the change needed in the academy and acknowledged how important diversifying the academy is.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Distribution of Findings

#### *Executive Summary*

This qualitative study explores the issues predominantly White institutions (PWIs) face regarding recruiting and retaining Black faculty members. This study is necessary because there is a notable lack of effort in place that actively seeks diverse faculty members within different levels of institutions of higher education. Recent statistics acknowledge Black faculty represent six percent of the academy, compared to 76% of the academy identifying as White (Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development., 2016). This work aims to account for the lack of Black faculty members recruited and retained at PWIs. The study examines how Black faculty members experience recruitment, onboarding, and retention efforts across colleges and universities in the United States. The research also prompts an examination of efforts (or lack thereof) in places that continue or maintain the current state of affairs in higher education institutions.

Diversity and inclusion in the United States have been relevant topics since before the Civil Rights era; these concepts apply to multiple facets of the American landscape, including, but not limited to, higher education. The diversity of educators within higher education system does not reflect the diversity of learners, nor the variety of modern-day thought (Modica & Mamiseishvili, 2010; Kim, 2018; Krupnick, 2018). This research focuses on how diversity in education proves beneficial for all but remains a challenge to execute.

The literature review within this research presents reasons why institutions need better recruitment and retention efforts of Black faculty members. The history of integration in higher education acknowledges the progress made for Black people in academia but highlights the shortcomings of modern-day education (Harlow, 2003). Furthermore, the current state of diversity in higher education addresses the lack of Black faculty in the academy and varying reasons associated with the hiring and retention gaps. Cognitive diversity, or diversity of thought, suggests a solution that falls short of true diversity and the achievable goals associated (Kim, 2018). Some benefits come with a diversity of persons, lending positive outcomes for multiple stakeholders, such as students, faculty and administrators, and society as a whole. These benefits reflect the importance of the utilized theoretical framework in Critical Race Theory (CRT). CRT, coined by Dr. Derrick A. Bell, speaks to the importance of considering race and its effects on different aspects of life, including education (McCoy & Rodricks, 2015). A major tenet of CRT acknowledges the idea racism was built into the infrastructure of American society, allowing the racial majority to seek out higher education, with the sole purpose of the self-service of those who created the very system—well-to-do White people (Demaske, 2009). With further research and review, the phenomenon that denies options and opportunities to Black educators may be curtailed and, with time, alleviated.

#### *Overview of Data Collection and Analysis Procedures*

The study answers the following primary question: What are the experiences of recruitment and retention of Black faculty members at a PWI? A multiple case study design aids in the discovery of perspectives and disparities associated with recruiting and retaining Black faculty members. The theoretical framework utilized in this research is

Critical Race Theory, which forms the foundation of the study and confirms that many benefits come from diverse educational opportunities. This research points to the need for inclusivity of non-hegemonic people and points of view in the educational system. Data was collected in two ways: 1) individual interviews with participants and 2) a focus group with all participants. First, for the first part of the data collection process, the researcher scheduled interviews with each participant, via email, and offered multiple options of availability during the fall semester of 2020. Second, once each participant chose a date and time suitable for their schedule, the researcher followed up with a calendar reminder to confirm the conversation. Third, the researcher engaged in each individual interview.

The researcher used a multiple case study to collect and analyze data. The data collected include the lived experiences of five Black faculty members at predominantly White institutions over their first year. Specifically, this study explores the recruitment and retention efforts of Black faculty members as they navigated their most recent employment experiences at PWIs. The data unpacks the participants' experiences with recruitment and retention, as well as their successes and challenges of navigating academia. The study encourages stakeholders within institutions to better understand how to best recruit and retain Black faculty members. The researcher utilized a qualitative method of research for this study in an attempt to better understand those lived experiences. The data analysis process consisted of five steps: (1) organization of information collected during individual interviews, (2) acknowledgement and identification of key terms that appeared across interview transcripts, (3) determination of common terms and emerging themes, (4) engagement in discussion with all participants about preliminary themes, and (5) identification of relevant themes and sub-themes for

further assessment and presentation. Steps one, two, and three of data analysis were conducted between the individual participant interviews and the focus group interview. Step four consisted of confirming information during the focus group itself, and step five was conducted after the focus group interview was complete.

### *Summary of Key Findings*

The research findings are categorized into three themes, addressed in Chapter Four; each theme category is expounded upon. These themes result from cross-case analysis and a thorough examination of the connection of the findings to Critical Race Theory (CRT), the chosen theoretical framework for this work. CRT reflects the importance of race in education and the necessity to address race in this space (Bell, 1995). The findings associated with CRT encourages stakeholders to become better regarding their recruitment and retention efforts.

Results of the research findings reveal three major themes: (1) the academy was not a primary interest, (2) interest convergence, and (3) “being better than great to be considered average.” Each theme category was presented, and thorough attention was paid to the connection of the discovered themes to Critical Race Theory (CRT). The results of this study prove useful for different stakeholders, including but not limited to, faculty search committees, hiring managers, provosts, other hiring entities, Black faculty members and other stakeholders that value diversity in the academy. The data analysis process describes in detail the results as they relate to the themes that directly connect to the theoretical framework. The chapter ends by discussing the need to encourage more attention to the recruitment and retention efforts of Black faculty to PWIs.



The first revelatory theme present in the research denotes that the academy was not a primary interest for participants. Becoming a member of the academy was not a preconceived notion for participants. The participants in this study held prior career experiences and goals. The choice to pursue a terminal degree for each participant meant being a subject matter expert; however, a strong association and knowledge set was not a proof of causation. The information gathered in data collection and analysis speaks to the importance of investing efforts into discovering Black faculty to add to the academy in the future.

The second revelatory theme from the research findings acknowledges the concept of interest convergence. Interest convergence was one of the proponents of Critical Race Theory discovered and developed by Derrick Bell, Jr. Interest convergence stipulates that Black people achieve civil rights victories only when White and Black interests converge (Ladson-Billings, 2013). Interest convergence was cited directly by participants as they described their recruitment and retention experiences. Though these Black faculty members represent different subjects and institutions, the shared experiences of the participants were notable. This data is poignant and needs to be addressed by those who shape the academy.

The third revelatory theme of the research findings is the idea of being better than great to be considered average. Participants in this study shared their concerns with the meritocracy of their lived experiences as Black faculty members. The experiences spoke to how challenging their academic and professional experiences were, compared to their White peers. As the participants best understood and shared, the idea of being a successful Black faculty member at a predominantly White institution was always an

uphill climb for prospective Black academics, especially based on historic issues of access and opportunity. The information gathered and synthesized in the study drives the desire to affect change in the current iteration of access.

### *Informed Recommendations*

This research is conducted to better understand the recruitment and retention efforts made towards Black faculty members by PWIs. The purpose of the work is to share recommendations for stakeholders to utilize in their respective positions. Those stakeholders include human resources offices within higher education, provosts and other recruiting entities, as well as Black faculty members. The recommendations are based on the literature reviewed, as well as the research conducted.

*Human resources in higher education.* The results of the research study have implications for human resources (HR) departments in higher education. Through different interviews with participants, as well as supporting literature, the perceived lack of qualified Black faculty candidates by PWIs is inaccurate. Gassam (2019) acknowledged, “universities and colleges that claim they don’t have enough diverse candidates applying for faculty positions should create their own diverse pipeline” (p. 1). Concerns around the quality of Black faculty candidates comes up in conversation among HR offices at PWIs, as well. Recommendations include updating the tools HR departments use to assess candidates from historically underrepresented populations. Regardless of social capital and in spite of systemic racism, HR departments have the ability and responsibility to adjust their processes to better serve prospective Black faculty.

*Provosts and other recruiting entities.* Results of this study present implications for provosts and other recruiting entities. Provosts must work with their current faculty to understand what opportunities are present for their Black faculty and seek to implement change in their assessments of this specific population. The factors under consideration should include, but are not limited to, tenure, benefits, access, and other opportunities to boost retention. Retention efforts also apply to environmental factors; a comfortable working space along with the opportunity to grow is a must. However, recruiting professionals and other hiring entities tend to lack the training or desire to expand the diversity of their ranks (Gasman, 2016). Efforts to attain and retain Black faculty members is dependent on systemic change and presenting better opportunities to those individuals.

*Implications for Black faculty.* The results of this study also offer implications for Black faculty members, as their ability to pursue and keep positions in academia should not be denied due to circumstances out of their control. The research shows the prospective faculty members in this study did not have to follow a specific path to become faculty members. Cocoa shared, “Black people are not a monolith, neither are Black faculty members” and this statement spoke volumes. Black professionals who seek to become faculty members look for their talents and skills can be utilized, as well as opportunities to contribute CRP to their academic community. Black faculty members must continue to uplift and support on another. Mentors, professors, and networks—from people within and outside of their demographic group—prove beneficial for future Black faculty members.

### *Findings Distribution Proposal*

Findings from the research study present useful information for a number of stakeholders. The goal of the findings distribution includes identifying a target audience, determining the ideal distribution method and venue, as well as ensuring the materials for distribution are ideal for consumption. This proposal presents the information collected from the study in a form that is easy to receive and implement.

#### *Target Audience*

The research conducted presents implications for different stakeholders to consider. The researcher narrowed the scope of implications to specific persons, or offices, that directly impact the recruitment and retention of Black faculty members at PWIs. Stakeholders include human resources offices within higher education, provosts and other recruiting entities, as well as Black faculty members. These findings provide insight and recommendations, based on the literature reviewed and the research conducted.

#### *Proposed Distribution Method and Venue*

The distribution plan for this research study utilizes industry publication and professional presentation. Distribution to key stakeholders and target audiences includes active participation and professional presentation; those presentations occur at national higher education conferences. Additionally, the researcher offers independent consultation with institutions. The publication options would include education-driven websites and matching publications, as well as peer-reviewed journals aimed at higher education audiences.

The first method of distribution is via a professional presentation to target audiences at a major conference for the American Council on Education (ACE). ACE, a membership-only organization, shapes policy and practice in higher education in all facets. Those facets include assessing and reshaping how education is implemented and enhanced to keep up with an everchanging world. The research acknowledges the importance of diversity within academia and ACE has a large space within their organization dedicated to faculty. The presentation implements new considerations for audiences to take back to their institutions and implement.

The second method of distribution directly correlates with the first, in the production of industry publications. Those publications connect to major higher education websites, including *Inside Higher Ed* and *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. These sites provide up-to-date information and articles to higher education professionals. The research is provided via the executive summary and further access to the full research is available from the researcher at request.

### *Distribution Materials*

The distribution materials from the researcher include an article and a PowerPoint presentation. Conferences present the best opportunity to utilize the PowerPoint presentation. The slides present information pertaining to assorted parts of Chapters One, Three, and Four. The article summarizes the research and offers recommendations for different stakeholders to implement. Other distribution materials, such as a fact sheet or one-pager, are available to accompany the PowerPoint presentation at conference presentations. The same information is also available, upon request, as noted at the end of the researcher's article via pamphlet.

### *Conclusion*

The research and subsequent documentation of findings acknowledge the challenges Black faculty members face at PWIs. Diversity in the academy is recognized, but not well addressed. Institutions have made slow progress toward diversifying the academy, leading to a number of participants sharing their experiences with recruitment and retention, with a desire to impact change in those areas for Black faculty members. Participants offered ways to address the shortcomings of institutional stakeholders and better recruit and retain faculty members from different walks of life. Additional research and implementation of recommendations from researchers will hopefully change the diversity, equity, and inclusion of faculty members for the better because they desire to—and will be—seen.

## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

### IRB Exemption Confirmation



INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD – PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS IN RESEARCH

#### **NOTICE OF DETERMINATION OF NON-HUMAN SUBJECT RESEARCH**

Principal Investigator: Suraju Jolaoso  
Study Title: When They See Us: A Multiple Case Study to Understand Recruitment and Retention of Black Faculty at Predominantly White Institutions  
IRB Reference #: 1757362  
Date of Determination: May 3, 2021

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The above referenced research project has been determined to not meet the definition of human subject research under the purview of the IRB according to federal regulations at 45 CFR 46.102(e) & (l). Specifically, the sample size is insufficient to generate generalizable findings.

The following documents were reviewed:

- Non-Human Subjects Research Determination Form, submitted on 04/30/2021

This determination is based on the protocol and/or materials submitted. If the research is modified, you must contact this office to determine whether your modified research meets the definition of human subject research.

If you have any questions, please contact the office at (254) 710-3708 or [IRB@baylor.edu](mailto:IRB@baylor.edu)

Sincerely,



Deborah L. Holland, JD, MPH, CHRC, CHPC  
Assistant Vice Provost for Research, Research Compliance



## APPENDIX B

### Interview Questions

1. How were you introduced to academia? What encouraged you to become a professor?
2. How did you go about finding a role in academia? How you learn about the recruitment process to become a faculty member?
3. Tell me more about what drove the decision to apply to your current role? I am curious about the length of search process, and how you balanced the job search with other, and possibly competing, duties/responsibilities.
4. Do you think your identity as a Black individual impacted your professional journey? If so, how?
5. Do you think your recruitment process with your institution was impacted by your identity as a Black individual? If so, how?
6. Were there any systems of support that aided you through your recruitment process? If so, what were they and how did they help?
7. Is there anything additional that you would like to share about your recruitment experience with your current institution?
8. What responsibilities have you been given as a faculty member at your institution?
9. Do you think your identity as a Black individual has impacted the responsibilities you have been given? If so, how?
10. Do you feel as if your identity as a Black individual mandates or infers additional tasks or demands, outside of your job description?
11. Do you feel as if these extra responsibilities aid in your professional goals?
12. Is there anything additional that you would like to share about your retention experience with your current institution?

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