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A Mixed-Methods Study Investigating the Relationship Between Minority Student Perceptions of the Climate and Culture of Their Institution and the Climate and Culture of Higher Education

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by

Melodie Carr-Winston

A Dissertation submitted to the Education Faculty of Lindenwood University

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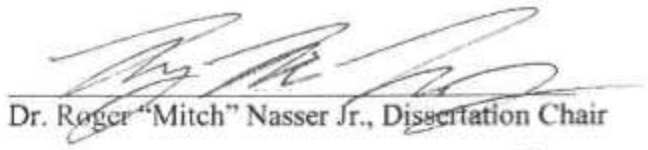

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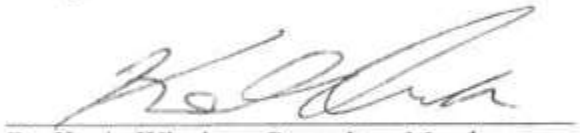

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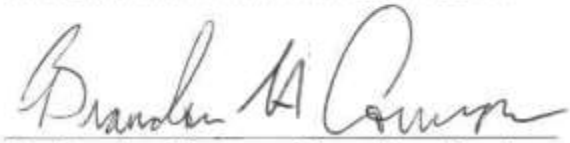

Dr. Brandon Common, Committee Member — 10/26/18 Date

Declaration of Originality

I do hereby declare and attest to the fact that this is an original study based solely upon my own scholarly work here at Lindenwood University and that I have not submitted it for any other college or university course or degree here or elsewhere.

Full Legal Name: Melodie Ashley Carr-Winston

Signature:  Date: 10/26/18

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Abstract

The researcher conducted a mixed-methods study at a private, Midwestern, Predominantly White institution in order to determine the relationship between minority student perceptions of higher education and minority student perceptions of their institution. The goal of the study was to determine whether minority student perceptions of the climate and culture of their institution influenced their perception of higher education as a whole. Another objective was to determine whether minority student perceptions connected to minority student retention. To determine the relationship, the researcher surveyed 20 undergraduate, African American students and conducted one-on-one interviews with three of the students between the fall of 2017 and the summer of 2018.

The researcher analyzed the results of the climate and culture perceptions survey instruments to determine relationships between minority student perceptions of the culture of higher education and minority student perceptions of the culture of their school. Secondly, the researcher analyzed the relationship between minority student perceptions of the climate of higher education and minority student perceptions of the climate of the school. Through quantitative analysis, the researcher determined there was no relationship between minority student perceptions of the culture and climate of higher education broadly, and their perceptions of the culture and climate of their institution.

Qualitative analyses suggested students believed their perception of school climate and culture mirrored the climate and culture of higher education. Perceptions included facing racism and microaggressions, a lack of support from faculty, and not feeling intentionally included in campus programming all while having a sense of safety

on campus. Regardless of whether student perceptions of higher education were positive or negative, each student who did not graduate that year intended to return the following academic year. Individual reasons for intent to return determined the relationship between minority student perceptions of higher education and minority student retention.

Recommendations from the researcher included exploring mentoring programs geared toward minority students, investigating the benefits of a diversity course for all students, implementing an African American Studies program, conducting research focused on reasons minority students remain at an institution, and the functionality of other groups considered minority in higher education. Exploring the aforementioned suggestions in depth could lead to a better overall understanding of how minority students can receive support and experience more retention in higher education.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Introduction

> The first thing is to realize that people of every race, ethnicity, nationality, gender and sexual orientation have a role in some form of "ism" as either a recipient, purveyor, or accommodator. We all should make a careful examination of what policies and procedures in our society or on our campuses benefits or harm members of certain groups, actual or perceived. (Sedlacek, 2017, p. 61)

This study derived from the historical exclusion of minorities in the educational setting- American higher education in particular. Interest was rooted in whether the exclusionary factor had influence over minority student perceptions of the culture and climate of Predominantly White Institutions (PWI's) of higher education. In addition, the researcher was interested in whether there was a relationship between these perceptions and minority student retention. The research indicated there may have been a relationship and uncovered a host of additional considerations, which may have influenced minority student perceptions. Information gathered exposed a connection to retention.

Research revealed minority student connections to feelings of belonging, retention, mental health, racism, and a host of other topics. What remained unknown though was the current perception of minority students' perceptions and the influence on retention. Many researchers sought the opinions of higher education staff and students of different backgrounds. There remained a gap specific to African American undergraduates who attended PWI's.

Rationale of the Study

When higher education became a part of American society in the 1600's, Black people were enslaved and unable to benefit from educational experiences. This circumstance created an exclusionary factor for racial minority groups to have access to higher education. After the passing of emancipation laws, more laws were created "limiting the freedom of the former slaves" (Constitutional Rights Foundation, 2017, para. 7). These laws included the "Black Codes of 1865" (Constitutional Rights Foundation, 2017, para. 10) which made educating Black people illegal in some states. Due to such laws, there were high prices to pay for Black people learning or teaching other minorities, including beatings. Over time, the education laws ceased to exist yet, once Black persons gained admittance to the educational setting, Jim Crow laws mandated educational segregation in schools of lesser quality than that of White people (Public Broadcasting Service, 1996-2017).

In the 1954 ruling of "*Brown v. Board of Education*… the U.S. Supreme Court rule[d] that racial segregation in schools is unconstitutional" (Titcomb, 2017, timeline). Prior to this ruling, African American students suffered legal educational discrimination but, after the ruling, integrated into an educational system in which they were not welcomed. As representatives of a small portion of the student population, minority students were victims of blatant racial discrimination and microaggressions. As stated by Shyman (2015), "inclusive education be[came] an issue that extend[ed] beyond merely practice or approach… [but was] a means of calling into question a socially unjust and discriminatory system in [favor] of a system… designed to enhance the schooling environment for all individuals" (p. 354). Considering integration is less than 70 years

old, there was still a chance some traditions of the past had yet to fade. This possibility left an opportunity for minority students to have negative perceptions toward some aspects of higher education. So, "Black undergraduates [had to] learn to excel and productively navigate campus racial climates that historically (and in many instances, contemporarily) have been characterized as racist" (Harper, 2013, p. 186).

Over time, the minority student population at PWI's increased, but Black students' feelings of belonging continued to struggle. Eventually, cultural spaces and programs erected on campuses, the amount of minority faculty increased, and staff positions formed to focus on making minority groups feel more included. Research indicated, although there were many steps taken to create inclusive campuses, minority students continued to experience discomfort based on race. Institutions continued to follow procedures and maintained cultural practices deemed controversial to minority groups. There was a lack of minority staff available to act as mentors and, sometimes, White mentors did not place equal efforts into the support of minority students (Johnson, 2015; Luedke, McCoy, & Winkle-Wagner, 2015). Some information indicated minority students felt discomforted while in higher education due to such negative experiences (Cabrera, Franklin, & Watson, 2016; Johnson, Wasserman, Yildirim, & Yonai, 2013; Means, 2016). In understanding the history of minority students in higher education, the researcher examined the minority student perception of the various components to higher education.

Critical Race Theory (CRT) was a "movement… in studying and transforming the relationship among race, racism, and power" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, p. 3). Through the years, scholars used critical race theory to study, among other topics, racial

microaggressions and inclusion of minorities on college campuses (Ceja, Solorzano, & Yosso, 2000; Davidoff, Griffin, Nadal, Sriken, & Wong, 2014). CRT brought to life experiences of racism through use of stories to highlight racial injustices. When paired with education, it "simultaneously attempt[ed] to foreground race and racism… as well as challenge the traditional paradigms, methods, texts, and separate[ed] discourse on race, gender, and class by showing how these social constructs intersect[ed] to impact on communities of color" (Ceja et al., 2000, p. 63). The theory accounted for the historical marginalization of minority groups and the relationship to higher education experiences for Black students.

The history of exclusion in higher education may have played a role in minority students' retention rates and the comfortability of those students at PWI's. According to the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Educational Statistics (2017), graduation rates for Black students within six years from the 2008 starting cohort was 23.9% while White students graduated at a rate of 43.3% based on open enrollment (Table 326.10). The disparity in the graduation rates could possibly be the result of historical exclusion of African Americans in higher education. PWI's:

> effectively [kept] the door closed to many historically marginalized students whose level of access and societal power were… lagging behind their majority counterparts. No higher educational model that was founded upon, draws from, or perpetuates Eurocentric power or privilege is capable of adequately serving historically marginalized populations. Exclusion is at their very foundation. (Arroyo & Gasman, 2014, para. 13)

This history may have bled into the school cultures of contemporary PWI's and may have sent "constant and consistent messages about the way things should be" (Shyman, 2015, p. 359).

While higher education institutions made great strides toward diversity and inclusion, some African American students were at risk of not perceiving such inclusion. If the students' perceived inclusion or "the signals that the individual receive[d] from the group concerning his or her position within the group" (Jans, Jansen, Otten, & Van Der Zee, 2014, pp. 370, 372) was negative, then the impact on the student's education could have been negative. The literature provided some information about the link between student perceptions and student retention, but there was a gap about how these components related to minority undergraduates at four-year PWI's. The hope of this study was to fill the gap in determining if minority student perceptions of their institution influenced their perception of higher education and whether there were any connections to minority student retention. The goal was for the researcher to add information to the literature that helped administrators in higher education understand the type of support systems minority students possibly needed in order to improve their chance of graduating from college.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between minority student perceptions of their institution and minority student perceptions of higher education through a mixed-methods approach. In addition, the study had a goal of determining how these perceptions connected to minority student retention. This study focused on undergraduate minority students from a small, private, Midwestern institution

Information, gathered through surveys and interviews, provided perspective of a group of minority students for the institution. The researcher hoped to find information to help higher education institutions better support marginalized groups. The goal was also to create a method of tracking perceptions and using the information to increase retention.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is a relationship between students' perception of campus climate and their perception of the climate of higher education.

Hypothesis 2: There is a relationship between students' perception of campus culture and their perception of the culture of higher education.

Research Question 1: How do minority students perceive their institution?

Sub Question: How is inclusion related to minority students' perceptions of their institution?

Research Question 2: How do minority students feel about inclusion and retention at their institution?

Research Question 3: What factors contribute to minority students' determination to remain in college?

Sub Question: How is inclusion related to how minority students' determination to remain in college?

Study Limitations

The researcher experienced limitations while collecting data. To gain participation, the researcher initially met with the Black Student Union (BSU) where 13 students took the survey instrument. A week later, the researcher set up a survey station at the dining hall during dinnertime to recruit more participants. Only five students took

the survey. As one last effort, the researcher set up another survey station in the same dining hall at lunchtime two weeks after the second data collection process where three more students participated in the survey. Twenty total undergraduate, African American students participated in the survey instrument, which is a much smaller size than recommended to make a strong statistical significance. During data analyzation, one student revealed himself or herself as a graduate student on the survey instrument, so the researcher discarded those results. Ideally, there would have been a minimum of 50 participants to establish a relationship according to Fraenkel, Hyun, and Wallen (2015).

Another limitation experienced by the researcher was participation with the focus group. Upon completing the analyzation of the survey instruments, the researcher contacted students via email if they were interested in participating in the focus group. When the students received information about the session to select a date, three students responded. Once finalized, all students received the details of the focus group so those available could have the option to participate. During the designated focus group session, no students came to participate. The researcher waited approximately 40 minutes before deciding to end the session.

Due to the lack of participation with the focus group, the researcher submitted an amended IRB form requesting the option to conduct interviews with the interested participants. Once approved, the researcher contacted the students individually to request interviews. One student responded and interviewed within three days. After two more attempts to gain more participation, to no avail, the researcher contacted the advisor to the BSU to request access to the students for interview purposes. The advisor contacted several students to gauge interest in research participation. One student responded to the

inquiry and interviewed within a week. About one week later, one of the original students interested in participating in the focus group responded to the interview inquiry. She interviewed within a week. In addition, the researcher was only able to interview female participants as no male students responded to the requests. Due to four months of contacting students with little success, the researcher determined the best way to proceed with the qualitative analysis was with the data already collected although more participation would have been ideal.

Definition of Terms

*Belongingness: "*A sense of belonging to the group" (Jans et al., 2014, p. 370).

Colorblindness: To treat others without regard "of their race or socioeconomic backgrounds" (Luedke et al., 2015, p. 233).

Cultural Gap: "theoretical, conceptual, and practical disconnects and spaces between the culture (values, traditions, customs, beliefs, etc.) of the learners and the communities from which they come and the educational institutions and the proponents thereof" (Berry & Candis, 2013, para. 10).

Cultural Mistrust: for the purpose of this study, cultural mistrust refers to the theoretical lack of trust minority students have toward White culture on college campuses.

Exclusion: "the source does not value the target enough to include the target in the requested social interaction" (Beer, Freedman, & Williams, 2016, para. 9).

Inclusion: "a process of identifying, understanding and breaking down the barriers to participation and belonging" (Early Childhood Forum, 2015, p. 5).

Majority: for the purpose of this study, majority refers to members of the Caucasian race.

Minority Student: for the purpose of this study, minority student refers to an African American student in higher education.

Othermothering: "likening the behaviors of Black faculty to the women who supported a child's blood relatives in child bearing" (Griffin, 2013, p. 169).

Racial Microaggressions: "subtle and unintentional forms of racial discrimination" (Griffin, Hamit, Nadal, Rasmus, & Wong, 2014, p. 57).

Retention: "reenrollment or persistence to the attainment of a student's educational goal" (Absher & Pruett, 2015, p. 34).

Salience: "the relevance and significance of ethnicity-race in a specific situation" (Douglass, Wang, & Yip, 2016, p. 1397).

School Climate: "reflects students', school personnel's, and parents' experiences of school life socially, emotionally, civically, and ethically as well as academically" (Cohen, Guffey, Higgins-D'Alessandro, & Thapa, 2013, p. 369).

School Culture: "the system of beliefs, values, norms, and expectations that govern the feelings and subsequent behaviors of all school constituents" (Fiore, 2014, p. xvi).

Summary

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between minority student perceptions of higher education and minority student retention. A history of exclusion for minority students created many obstacles- some of which influenced retention. The factors leading to minority student perceptions and retention, needed

acknowledgement in order to create inclusive campuses and in order to encourage positive campus climates and campus cultures for all.

Chapter Two: Review of Literature

Minority students have faced an unusual path to higher education, which was "far from equal for all students… [where] minorities face[d] difficult challenges every step of the way" (Blackwell & Pinder, 2014, p. 45). The historical exclusion of minorities has played a major role in how Black students responded to the educational system and how certain groups perceived campus climates and cultures through the years. Although many laws have changed and programs implemented to allow access and support to minorities in higher education, there remain many practices, which, had not progressed. According to Shugart (2013), "[t]o ignore the influence of history on [the] work [of higher education institutions] almost guarantee[d] failure in [the] efforts to" (p. 9) continue to improve the perceptions of campus climates and cultures for minority students. The responsibility of molding positive perceptions belonged to the institutions. Johnson et al. (2013) determined from their study "institutions might play a role in mitigating the psychological effects of the college experience by attending to the campus racial climate and academic engagement issues" (p. 93).

When students experienced a welcoming and satisfying environment, "the probability of retention and graduation from the same institution increased" (Rizkallah & Seitz, 2017, p. 47). The information gained from the aforementioned researchers directly supported the study works of Alvarado and Hurtado (2015) and Strayhorn (2012), which positively related belonging to college retention. Boatright-Horowitz, Crockett, Frazier, and Harps-Logan (2013) also presented a relationship between academic accomplishments and social climates for African American students. Throughout the review of literature, information revealed connections between the history of higher

education opportunities and the current perceptions for Black students. Topics related to minority student perceptions of higher education, belongingness, mental health, mentors, and persistence decisions is forthcoming.

Historical Background

The history of African Americans in higher education was deeply rooted in exclusion. Patel (2015) shared how "[e]ducational research has documented the ways in which education often serve[d] problematically to create barriers for nondominant populations and apertures of access for culturally dominant populations" (p. 660). The previous statement, evidenced by the multi-century long exclusion of African Americans in higher education, suggested the genetic make-up of the original college student. In the early 1600's, when higher education institutions first formed in the United States, attendees were White males; women and members of other races were not included (Harper, Jones, Schuh & Associates, 2011; Thelin, 2017).

Illegal to be Educated

For the first few hundred years of American higher education institutions existence, African Americans experienced enslavement. Harvard University, "the oldest institution of higher education in the United States" (Harvard.edu, 2017, Established) erected in 1636 while slavery remained legal until 1865 (Civil War Trust, 2014). During this time, learning individually or from others to read or write was illegal (Fleming, n.d.). Many states created 'Black Codes' which were "special laws that applied only to Black persons" (Constitutional Rights Foundation, 2017, para. 11). In implementing these laws, the goal was to manage different aspects of the lives of Black people. These laws governed civil rights, labor contracts; vagrancy; apprenticeships; courts, crimes and

punishments; and education among other things (Constitutional Rights Foundation, 2017).

The Virginia Revised Code of 1819 stated "all meetings or assemblages of slaves, or free negroes… for teaching them reading or writing… [was] deemed and considered as an unlawful assembly… and [the] corporal punishment on the offender or offenders… [was] not [to exceed] twenty lashes" (Hening, Leigh, & Mumford, 1819, pp. 424-425). The aforementioned code created a precedence to the acceptance of African Americans in education; inflicting corporal punishment for helping a Black person learn was legal. The code in Virginia was not the only one created to stigmatize the educating of Black people. In North Carolina, the punishment for teaching or learning was "thirty-nine lashes on his or her bare back" (Walbert, 2009, para. 5). Many Southern states followed suit in banning Black children from learning despite education being free of charge at the time (Constitutional Rights Foundation, 2017).

Separate but Not Equal

Once slaves received freedom, The Freedmen's Bureau formed "to alleviate physical suffering, provide legal justice and education, and redistribute southern lands to former slaves freed by the Emancipation Proclamation" (Cortes & Sloan, 2013, p. 905). Although African Americans were beginning to have organizations fight for their rights, they still faced educational challenges. When schools became accessible to Black students, some states granted several more dollars per pupil to White schools than Black schools (Smithsonian National Museum of American History, n.d.) and the "educational opportunities for African American children… could be described, at best, as substandard" (Giesberg, Johnson, Kopaczewski, & Motich, 2017, para. 1). Situations

such as these gave life to the term "separate but not equal" because, while the Black students were educated apart from the White students, Black students did not receive equal access to learning resources.

Minority students were at a disadvantage due to the structure of the policies and procedures of education. Although there was documented unfair treatment, "inequalities were minimized and passed off as flaws with the students' respective cultures" (Luedke et al., 2015, p. 237). Some people felt as though Black students should not attend college: "[d]riven by strong prevailing shared values about the biological and cultural inferiority of the Negro, virtually all institutions of higher learning in the United States adopted a universal rule of racial exclusion" (The Editors, 2017, para. 6). Once allowed to enter college, Black people continued to experience exclusion through segregation. There were a few African Americans who attended Predominantly White Institutions (PWI's), including Alexander Lucius Twilight and Edward Jones (Titcomb, 2017), but Black students mostly had one option for schooling: Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU's). According to Johnson and Strayhorn (2014), "[p]rior to 1950, virtually all Blacks who aspired to college attended historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs), as there were few other options" (p. 387). The first institution to grant higher education opportunities to Black students was The Institute for Colored Youth, now Cheyney University of Pennsylvania, which was "the oldest Historically Black College/ University (HBCU) in the nation" (Cheyney University, 2015, para. 5). The opening of this college paved the way for more Black institutions to offer opportunities for African Americans.

While individuals within the HBCU's led Black students to receiving degrees, opportunities were not always equal to the PWI's. For example, in Missouri in the 1930's, the educational options for Black students attending Lincoln University were not the same as those for the White students at the University of Missouri. The law held if an opportunity was not available at Lincoln University, a Black student could not complete degree requirements at the University of Missouri (BlackPast.org, 2017; Cornell University, 2017). Instead, students were required to attend, at the expense of the University of Missouri, colleges in nearby states where Black students could learn in their school community (BlackPast.org, 2017; Cornell University, 2017). Lloyd Gaines challenged this law in an attempt to gain admittance to the University of Missouri to obtain a law degree. After denying Gaines access to the University of Missouri's law school, due to the laws of segregation, the Missouri Courts upheld the school's actions. The United States Supreme Court, on the other hand, required he gain admittance to the program or there be an equal program to become available at Lincoln University (Missouri Digital Heritage, 2017).

The state of Missouri made great strides to prevent Black students from gaining access to everything needed to become more educated. According to Coleman and Gannong (2014), "[B]lack schools were frequently inferior to white schools in terms of the resources they had to draw on and the advantages they could provide students" (p. 148). Missouri was not the only state that implemented segregation laws. When Jim Crow Laws, "barred African-Americans from being full American citizens… [and] allowed de jure racial segregation to exist in the South and de facto segregation to thrive in the North" (Lewis, 2017, para. 2), the educations of African American students were

highly influenced. Some states did more than keep students in separate learning environments- learning materials sometimes received restrictions. For example, the state of Kentucky would not redistribute textbooks previously issued to Black students (Shepard & Stonaker, 2014).

After years of Black students being exposed to poor quality schools and having dealt with legal segregation, "the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) began a successful assault on educational segregation" (O'Neil, 2016, para. 2). The fight against exclusion lasted until the case of Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka (1954). In this case, "[t]he central question considered was whether legally imposed racial segregation in public primary and secondary education violated the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment" (O'Neil, 2016, para. 1). Judges of the Supreme Court held: "the public schools' racial segregation of children was a direct violation of the equal protections clause… and a lack of a decent education could hinder a person's socialization and ability to succeed" (Coleman & Gannong, 2014, p. 149).

School Culture and Climate

The roots of higher education segregation had implications for many members and different cultures of society. Not only did a history of exclusion cause infliction upon members of the Black community, exclusion may have encouraged members of higher education communities to settle in a school culture, which perpetuated the ideals of the past. According to Shugart (2013) "much of our academic culture ha[d] ancient roots—and the older the roots, the deeper they [were] likely to go. Attempts to shape the culture of a college or university must [have] accounted for" (p. 10) the history if the institutions wanted to become more inclusive. The cultures of campuses in higher

education often depended on efforts toward diversity and inclusion, especially when "taking into consideration the historical absence of minority students and faculty at [predominantly white] institutions" (Deckman & Warikoo, 2014, p. 974). Berry and Candis (2013) suggested being a part of a school environment called for a person to behave particular ways- often times different from the behavior in the cultural communities of African American students.

School cultures reflected the norms and belief systems of an institution (Fiore, 2014) and received different interpretations from one person to the next. Undergraduate minority student perceptions of the culture in higher education was not a widely studied topic. Many studies discussed the perceptions of middle school students, high school students, as well as graduate students, but there was a gap in the current literature about the undergraduate African American population. Instead of focusing on literature about the minority student perceptions of the culture of higher education, the researcher decided to focus on perception shaping factors. Understanding how people perceived higher education often began with connecting the role of history to people's mental well-being.

Mental Aspects

When considering the influence of the history of exclusion in higher education toward African Americans, one must consider the possible emotional and psychological consequences these students endured. There were theorists who addressed the role of exclusion to one's whole development. According to the Theory of Social Economy, as stated by Groom, "exclusion inhibit[ed] individual and collective potential for sustainable production" (Jackson, 2010, p. 747). Exclusion from full access to higher education may have prevented some African Americans from reaching full potential. Barring African

Americans from colleges prevented Black people from obtaining advanced educations and thus, prevented opportunities for life improvement. In addition, when Black children attended school, often times, quality resources were not available. Low quality education would also have hindered the opportunities a Black person might have had at a better life. What would also have been of concern were "various sociological and psychological" (O'Neil, 2016, para. 4) distresses.

What research showed was how African American students may have valued themselves compared to White students if constantly excluded and treated as if Black students had "the status[es] of second-class citizens" (Nittle, 2016, para. 3). Groom also theorized how one's "identity [was] shaped in relation to others" (Jackson, 2010, p. 748), so one must question how the identities of Black students formed in relation to their peers during times of exclusion. The identities formed through the era of segregation may still be of concern for some Black students of today. In identifying a connectedness, Groom asserted, as stated by Jackson (2010):

> A potential source of disconnectedness or exclusion as emergent from culturally transmitted meanings that shape[d] how we interact[ed] and the value we ascribe[d] to social interactions. If negative or limiting, these interactions [could have] plague[d] generations and even entire cultures, making it difficult to comprehend the latent potential of embedded persons within those contexts. (p. 748)

The multi-century history of exclusion of African Americans from higher education possibly afflicted generations of people. From parent to child, "[t]he constant

psychological strain that [exclusion] cause[d] was enormous and relentless" (Sankar, 2014, para. 23).

Jackson (2010) was not the only researcher showing connections between exclusion from higher education to generations of discomfort and disconnect. Ewing and Hajrasouliha (2016) shared "[r]etention and graduation rates [were] important for students… affect[d] self-esteem and future careers of students… and, overall, the well-being of a generation" (p. 30). Facing racism on a regular basis created distress in some minority students. As found by Chao, Dasgupta, Fear, Longo, and Wang (2014), "when [minority students] perceive[d] more racism, African Americans experience[d] more difficulty in maintaining low psychological distress" (p. 265). Racism caused psychological distress but academic stress was also an outcome. When minority students sensed inequalities, visual or experienced on campus, the academic environment became more stressed (Johnson et al., 2013). Stress, considered beneficial to growth, was a good thing when viewed positively. Conversely, "when academic stress [was] perceived negatively or [became] excessive, it may [have] hurt academic performance and mental and physical health of the student" (Sinha, 2014, p. 47). Minority students sometimes found challenges in managing these different stressors.

African American students faced discouraging situations in higher education, which created more stress. As found by Camart, Romo, and Saleh (2017), racist encounters endured by "African American students may [have created] additional stressors… that may [have] place[d] [minority students] at higher risk for academic difficulties due to increased distress" (p. 583). Other studies have uncovered similar results. The students who participated in the study conducted by Johnson et al. (2013)

shared how "observations of and encounters with racism on campus increased their academic environment stress and…affect[ed] commitment to the institution, and ultimately [student] persistence decisions" (p. 92). The aforementioned results were not unique to the correlating study. Firmin and Rose (2013) found minority students "ha[d] more psychological distress than [did] their fellow White students… [because] minority students… face[d] racism and discrimination from their peers, faculty and administration and the overall university environment" (p. 59). Stress was high for minority students who attended PWI's.

The additional racial stressors created other concerns for minority students. Johnson et al. (2013) and Means (2016) identified racism as a burden minority students experienced while attending PWI's and discussed how racism had a relationship to academic stress as well as perceptions of campus environments. As stated by Boatright-Horowitz et al. (2013), "the effects of racial discrimination [were] psychologically harmful and cumulative" (p. 700). When minority students experienced psychological trauma, adjusting to the college atmosphere became more challenging. Based on the research by Camart et al. (2017), African American students predisposed to trauma may have found difficulty navigating higher education and persisting through degree completion. For minority students, race sometimes acted as a perceived barrier to academic advancement. Participants of the Sinha (2014) study shared "external or social attributions including being a minority…as [one of the] most hurtful barriers" (p. 159).

Some minority students found minority identification interfered with social progress. Sinha's (2014) study also revealed how "participants noted social issues such as race… as barriers… [with] race-related stress [as] a strong predictor of barrier

attributions, particularly social issues… [and] [p]articipants [who] were high in racial dissonance were significantly more likely to select social level" (p. 164) as preventing advancement opportunities. Racial dissonance played a role in safety and social comfort (Cabrera et al., 2016) and may have factored into race relations being identified as segregated in higher education at some PWI's (Means, 2016). Although campuses had diverse student bodies, many students were operating within groups, which mirrored racial identity. Feelings of constantly facing barriers may have been a source of stress and such instances "play[ed] an important role in promoting feelings of belonging" (Asher & Weeks, 2014, p. 293). Critical Race Theory (CRT) influenced many African American students' feelings toward belongingness and racial identity.

Critical Race Theory

CRT was the foundational theory behind the research. According to Delgado and Stefancic (2017), CRT was a "movement [which] consider[ed] many of the same issues that conventional civil rights and ethnic studies discourses [took] up but place[d] them in a broader perspective that include[d] economics, history, setting, group and self-interest, and emotions and the unconscious" (p. 3). The theory emphasized the different forms of racism through storytelling to help minority students present an alternative perspective to that of the majority culture. For example, if a highly rated school, primarily serving White students, indicated how pleased the student body was, counter stories provided the narratives of the minority student who was isolated because of their skin color (McCoy, 2015). Critical Race Theorists "used first-hand accounts of students' experiences to offer stories that counter dominant narratives that link achievement disparities as a function of oppositional culture, cultural deficits, lack of motivation or other supposed pathologies

held by students and communities of color" (Anderson & Dixson, 2017, p. 35). Anderson and Dixson (2017) also suggested the counternarrative should be "only the starting point for a deeper analysis of the operation of racism in education" (p. 38).

Undergraduate minority students carried with them racist experiences of their own, so using CRT as a foundational theory was important to this research. Berry and Candis (2013) found "[t]he narratives, stories, and actions of the survivors intertwine[d] to provide a clear account of the past that include[d] the triumphs and offenses that comprise[d] the 'American voice' hidden within the institutions, norms, and biases… established by the ruling class" (para. 17). Through storytelling, CRT allowed students to hear the stories of others and feel less isolated. Ceja et al. (2000) shared "those injured by racism discover[ed] that they [were] not alone in their marginality. They [became] empowered participants, hearing their own stories and the stories of others, listening to how the arguments [were] framed, and learning to make the arguments themselves" (p. 64). The use of storytelling also provided opportunities for questioning through counternarratives. As stated by Anderson and Dixson (2017), counternarratives "interrogate[d] and analyze[d] the ways that the reforms reif[ied], quite literally, the CRT tenet of Whiteness as property that essentially consign[ed] African American students to a limited choice of schools that offer[ed] equally limited educational options and experiences" (Anderson & Dixson, 2017, pp. 37-38).

Scholars have used CRT to identify inclusion in the American higher education system. Barone, Davis, and Harris (2015) discovered "[s]tudents of color may [have been] given access to higher education, but they [were] not set up for success once they arrive[d] on campus" (p. 23). In addition to a lack of preparedness for a successful

college career, minority students had to manage the history that accompanied their race. According to Berry and Candis (2013), "African American students... exist[ed] within multiple and intersecting identities… [and] at least one of these identities carrie[d] with it the historical burden of oppression" (para. 13). CRT examined the oppression experienced by minority students. Delgado and Stefancic (2017) suggested "[CRT] question[ed] the very foundations of the liberal order" (p. 3) in higher education. American higher education, founded on the principles of the original attendees- White students, treated majority culture as the campus standard. Treating "whiteness as normative, or an ideal way of being, forcing racially minoritized students to assimilate to [W]hite culture to succeed" (Barone et al., 2015, p. 26) was a form of oppression. Another form of oppression faced by many minority students was microaggressions.

Racism

A part of breaking from oppression for minority students was overcoming racial microaggressions. Many forms of racism, as previously discussed, were overt and challenging to ignore. Microaggressions, on the other hand, were subtle (Harper, 2013) and difficult for minorities to have addressed which "[led] to self-doubt as to whether or not specific incidents [were] even racial" (Cabrera et al., 2016, p. 127). An example of a racial microaggression would be if a member of a different race commented on the intelligent speech of an African American (Boatright-Horowitz, Crockett, Frazier, & Harps-Logan, 2013; Harper, 2013).

As discussed by Boatright-Horowitz et al. (2013), "[p]ersons of color may [have felt] discomforted or insulted, but they [were] likely to experience difficulty discussing it because they expect[ed] to be perceived as overreacting by [W]hites to minor or

nonexistent racist offenses" (pp. 698-699). The feelings of discomfort may have prevented minority students from addressing any such concerns. Researchers also determined "[o]ftentimes, victims of microaggressions need[ed] to feel validated when a microaggression occur[ed]" (Griffin, Hamit, Nadal, Rasmus, & Wong, 2014, p. 63) instead of having ignored the encounters. Disregarding the influence of racist encounters toward everyday life may have placed minorities at a disadvantage. As found by Chao et al. (2014), "ignoring the role of perceived racism may [have] exacerbated [minority students'] distress" (p. 266). Students could not pretend such situations did not occur and confrontations about race were not avoidable as racist actions sometimes occurred unintentionally (Harper, 2013) due to a lack of exposure.

From the research of Alvarado and Hurtado (2015), the suggestion was "some degree of discrimination and bias on campus [was] likely to occur when individuals [were] unfamiliar with the cultures, backgrounds, and worldviews of others" (p. 4). People on campus were likely to operate under the norms and views of their own cultures- sometimes carrying with them preconceived ideas about other races. Information, based on student experiences, determined "members of race groups have race-specific perspectives on the world" (de Novais & Warikoo, 2015, p. 861). Gaining an understanding of how people from different cultures viewed the world would have been an opportunity for students to be more culturally sensitive. Ideas of viewing the world only through the perspective one's own culture needed attention because of the relationship of "prior knowledge of race" (de Novais & Warikoo, 2015, p. 860) to the socialization of students in the college setting and the connection to "the educational process" (Alvarado, Guillermo-Wann, & Hurtado, 2015, p. 133).

Preconceived notions of minority student abilities became obstacles. Harper's (2013) research indicated, "[d]oubts concerning [minority student] deservingness of admission [was] related more generally to questions about Black students' intellectual competence" (p. 192). What researchers have also discovered were the racial stereotypes minority students attempted to disprove while interacting in the higher education setting (Ceja et al., 2000; Harper, 2013; Means, 2016). "This signal[ed] readiness to have conversations about race in classrooms and among peers" (Alvarado et al., 2015, p. 133). Harper and Yeung (2013) also referenced the connection to "students' precollege and college socialization patterns" (p. 27) as related to perceptions of diversity.

Instead of encountering race related dialogue, some students constantly faced public humiliation by professors as well as racist humor and comments by others (Boatright-Horowitz et al., 2013; Firmin & Rose, 2013; Thelin, 2017). Encounters such as these exacerbated psychological disadvantages (Davidoff et al, 2014), which included being on the defense from "racialized classroom experiences" (Means, 2016, p. 24). Harper's (2013) qualitative study identified an experience of a Black student whose professor questioned his perfect score on a college exam while the perfect scores of his White peers went unchallenged. Minority students encountered, from others, a sense of low expectations and belittlement in the college setting in "both overt and subtle forms of discrimination" (Alvarado & Hurtado, 2015, p. 2). Students battled stereotypes and humiliation constantly as they represented small portions of the campus demographics.

Firmin and Rose (2013) found students were at risk of "becom[ing] defined by others" (p. 58) and shared how minority students reported "feelings of alienation, loneliness, [and] increased stress" (p.59). The risks minority students faced was

continuous. Harper (2013) explained how "the cumulative sum of [microaggressions] and constant exposure to everyday racism negatively affect[ed] minoritized students'…psychological wellness" (p. 195). Students were internalizing their experiences, which began to take a toll on their emotional well-being. Constant exposure to racist ideals magnified "the salience of negative diversity experiences" (Blaich et al., 2017, p. 301) and the minority student reaction to racist situations. Some minority students faced racism as often as daily (Harper, 2013) and modified their behaviors to mentally prepare for such situations.

When minority students experienced constant exposure to microaggressions they, once again, found themselves "constantly on the defensive" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, p. 144) which created the lenses through which students perceived the climate of the college community. Minority students perceived campuses at PWI's as a potentially hostile toward them. The work of de Novais and Warikoo (2015) discovered student experiences "shape[d] individuals' interpretations of the world around them as well as their behavi[ors]" (p. 860). Students sometimes found themselves minimizing their cultural attributes to attempt assimilation with the majority culture. Through student interviews, Firmin and Rose (2013) found "[s]ome students…did not feel comfortable expressing various aspects of their personalities or interests [and] held in check the outward manifestations of those personal characteristics" (p. 61). Students determined they would best navigate campuses of higher education if they practiced behavior modifications. Racial microaggressions caused many changes to minority students-intentional changes and unintentional changes.

Once again, several researchers found adverse relationships between different forms of racism and mental health (Chao et al., 2014; Griffin et al., 2014; Smith, Solorzano, & Yasso, 2011). Experiencing racial microaggressions had "negative mental health symptoms, such as depression, anxiety, negative effect (or negative view of the world), and lack of behavioral control" (Griffin et al., 2014, p. 62). Several researchers have discovered different forms of mental anguish attributed to the repeated racist encounters (Chao et al., 2014; Harper, 2013). Minority students who experienced a racist campus climate were also more likely to become "vulnerable to low self-esteem" (Chao et al., 2014, p. 265). Low self-esteem also had other implications. According to Jans, Jansen, Otten, and Van Der Zee (2014), "self-esteem… indicate[d] the extent to which an individual perceive[d] himself or herself to be a socially valued member of the groups to which he or she belong[ed]" (p. 378). Students who functioned with low self-esteem likely experienced low race salience.

Identity and Interactions

Connections have risen about the relationship between race salience and college student interactions, despite the limited availability of research. Alvarado et al. (2015) determined "race may be at the forefront of students' minds because they [became] more aware of racial differences and it therefore may shape intergroup relations and campus climate experiences among college students" (p. 129). This study suggested race salience influenced the perceived campus climate and students' abilities to interact with others. Students should not have only be able to interact with same race peers, cross-racial interactions proved to have benefits also. Harper and Yeung (2013) shared how "[i]ncorporating engagement in cross-racial interactions into the college setting

enhance[d] students' development and prepare[d] them to address future challenges brought forth by an increasingly diverse society" (p. 26). Navigating social environments in higher education proved to be important.

As stated by Johnson et al. (2013), "feelings about the campus environment were directly affected by… feeling prepared for the social environment of college" (p. 92). The same study also identified a relationship between preparedness for social environments and diverse interactions on campus (Johnson et al., 2013). Having positive interactions with other members of the campus community was beneficial to students. Alvarado and Hurtado (2015) discovered how "[m]any campuses [began] to realize the benefits of diverse learning environments by working to improve intergroup relations on campus" (p. 4). Positive interactions helped minority students navigate college but they had to overcome the low racial salience in order to be receptive to helpful connections.

Minority students made the needed connections even though the students held such negative perceptions of their environment. Boatright-Horowitz et al. (2013) recognized the "difficult times for students of color on college campuses because the social climate [was] still racist" (p. 699) but the fact remained the amount of minority students attending PWI's was steadily increasing. Johnson and Strayhorn (2014, p. 387) discussed how, in the early 1960's, about 30% of Black students attended PWI's but by 2000, the number increased to about 80% to represent the Black college students who were attending PWI's. The amount of minority students increased yet the group remained a small percentage of the overall student population at PWI's.

Because Black students had such small representation on the campuses of PWI's they had limited options for social interactions amongst each other. According to

Johnson and Strayhorn (2014), "Black students [were] compelled to interact across race/ethnicity… if not easy… or of their own volition… [but] White students… [had] a greater ability… to choose same-race peers [and] acquaintances… with whom they want[ed] to interact frequently and meaningfully" (p. 394). Experiencing the higher education atmosphere while surrounded by friends with similar backgrounds and appearances, with the option to interact with diverse peers created a friendly experience for some students. Minority students attending PWI's did not likely have such experience and "research consistently demonstrate[d] that students of color perceive[d] the campus climate more negatively than [did] White students (Johnson et al., 2013, p. 77).

The Majority Perspective

Minority students benefitted from meaningful and positive cross-cultural interactions (Blaich et al., 2017; Harper & Yeung, 2013). White students, though, received greater benefits from interacting with minority students than the benefits minority students received from interacting with White students (Johnson et al., 2013). When provided with opportunities to interact with peers of different races, White students were able to better prepare to function in a diverse society. Specifically, the discovery was how "opportunities for interactions with different racial/ethnic groups on campus reduced [White students'] social difficulty stress and positively affected their feelings about the campus environment" (Johnson et al., 2013, p. 92). There were limited investigations to determine the perspectives of White students at PWI's.

Those who researched such connections discovered White students spent less time thinking about race (Alvarado et al., 2015) and some White students supported colorblindness approaches to interacting with minority students on campus (Cabrera et

al., 2016; de Novais & Warikoo, 2015; Means, 2016). Boatright-Horowitz et al. (2013) discussed how minority students in higher education faced many challenges due to race relations, yet "many [W]hites fail[ed] to acknowledge this problem" (p. 699) and "consistently reported less racial tension" (Sedlacek, 2017, p. 83). One such student who participated in Means' (2016) study emphasized color blindness, but continually stereotyped minority students during the interview. Labelling "involve[d] [W]hite students stereotyping [B]lack individuals as criminal, poor, or disadvantaged" (Boatright-Horowitz et al., 2013, p. 698). Failing to understand how such stereotyping influenced perceptions may have prevented White students from understanding consequences of being 'colorblind'.

A lack of recognizing concerns with race relations influenced "the perception that racism [was] only of minimal importance in contemporary society" (Cabrera et al., 2016, p. 121) and on college campuses. Means (2016) collected qualitative data from White college students, several of whom promoted use of the colorblindness perspective but acknowledged "campus race relations as 'segregated' and 'divided'" (p. 21). Although campus division was recognized, students did not see the division as problematic but identified stereotypes bestowed upon the minority population. On the other hand, there were student contributions to the research of de Novais and Warikoo (2015) who "acknowledged that racial discrimination in the past continue[d] to have lingering influences in the present" (p. 865). Some of these students also participated in stereotyping minority students in judging what life experiences aligned with being Black.

The conflicting reports from these students supported the findings of Cabrera et al. (2016) which stated, "White students [were] generally naïve about the existence of

racial inequality… [had] little awareness of their own racial privileges… and [did] not recognize the effects of racism on Students of Color" (p. 131). Students chose to view race through colorblindness and felt an attempt to merge minority and majority students on campus was hopeless. The students also made no connections to the benefits of not being the only member of their race in a class or the privilege behind not being stereotyped. Boatright-Horowitz et al. (2013) had similar conclusions in finding "Whites in modern society [were] socialized to unconsciously view the world through the lens of racism, without awareness of the privileges associated with being White" (p. 701). When students did not spend much time thinking about race, they did not have to recognize the benefits of being a part of the majority.

The experiences of division by the students who participated in the studies conducted by Means (2016) as well as de Novais and Warikoo (2015) were unique to their college campuses. Meanwhile, White students included in the data collected by Harper and Yeung (2013) "reported having diverse interactions at social events" (p. 39). Opportunities for diverse interactions were due to the steady increase of minority student enrollment at PWI's (Harper & Yeung, 2013; Johnson & Strayhorn, 2014). Johnson and Strayhorn (2014) found the "mere presence of more Blacks on campus-might [have] yield[ed] more cross-racial interactions" (p. 387).

Diversity programs erected on college campuses created more opportunities for minority student connections and for socialization between the races. White students showed mixed perspectives about the value of such programs. Through student interviews, Deckman and Warikoo (2014) discovered some White students interpreted one diversity initiative as having encouraged segregation. The program presented

opportunities for minority students to create bonds over the summer before arriving to campus for the fall semester. White students thought the program "prevent[ed] them from entering friendships with students of color who, they assumed, already formed their friendships during" (Deckman & Warikoo, 2014, p. 969) participation in the diversity program. White students from these particular studies viewed diversity programs as barriers to opportunities to interact with minority students.

What also seemed to be the perception of these students, was majority students could not initiate interactions with minority peers. Unknowingly, White students aided in the perception of minority students being responsible for implementing diverse interactions on campus. According to Means (2016), "[t]he [White] student felt like enhancing the racial campus climate was often put on Students of Color to make the first step" (p. 23). Approaching diverse interactions in this manner created more stress for minority students, and further "diminished their feelings about the campus environment" (Johnson et al., 2013, p. 92). Although little information was available about how White students perceived the implementation of diversity programs on college campuses, the studies conducted provided valuable information for consideration.

Some of the perceptions of White students and their role in initiating diverse interactions led researchers to question the continuation of sovereignty for White students. Patel (2015) found without addressing or ending "settler colonial racism… those in power display[ed] resistance to structural changes… Members of the nondominant cultures, then, experience[d] a myriad of messages… telling them that they do not belong, are not competent, and are interlopers" (p. 667). Feeling a sense of alienation is much larger for Black students. Twenty years of research conducted through

the Rensslaer Polytechnic Institute (n.d.) revealed Black students scored significantly higher than White students on alienation scales and usually held higher scores than other racial minority groups. These results held true for students attending PWI's and not for those attending Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

Belongingness

The research behind the psychology of belonging on campus suggested feelings of belonging have influenced how minority students perceived the institutional environment. As stated by Harper (2013), "little was done to ensure that students who had been previously excluded would encounter campuses that suddenly felt more inclusive and responsive to their cultural and educational needs" (p. 187). Although minority students had been able to participate in higher education for the last few decades, Black students still seemed to lack a sense of belonging. "Developing a 'sense of belonging' [was] critical to the success of college students" (O'Keeffe, 2013, p. 607) as the students' psyche needed comfort.

Several researchers (Alvarado & Hurtado, 2015; Means, 2016; Rensslaer Polytechnic Institute, n.d.; Strayhorn, 2012) identified the connection between racism in the educational setting and minority students' feelings of belonging. Some people believed being colorblind gave a sense of comfort to students when, in reality, color blindness unknowingly caused discord to the campus. Color blindness had multiple interpretations. Delgado and Stefancic (2017) explained, "[c]olor blindness can be admirable... But it can be perverse… when it stands in the way of taking account of difference in order to help people in need… if racism is embedded in our thought processes and social structures" (p. 27) minority groups would continue to struggle.

When people chose to see no color, they created opportunities to invalidate the challenges faced by minority students. As found by Alvarado et al. (2015), "it [was] important for people to become color conscious in order to critically engage in a diverse society marked by unequal power relations and status difference" (p. 131). The same color conscious concept held true for institutions of higher learning. If stakeholders in higher education refused to see color, recognizing concerns of minority students could have been challenging. Bonilla-Silva (2017) suggested being color-blind was a form of racism which "confused some issues [and] restricted the possibility of discussing others" (p. 16). Lacking the opportunity to discuss the perceived campus climate led to further perceptions of exclusion.

Several researchers determined belongingness directly related to self-esteem and anxiety (Bleidborn, Gebauer, Potter, Rentfrow, Sedikides, & Wagner, 2015; White, 2015) and sometimes numbness (Begen & Turner-Cobb, 2015). People who suffered from these types of psychological concerns had a harder time functioning in everyday routines. Goguen, Hiester, and Nordstrom (2014) found a relationship between anxiety and self-esteem in relation to college adjustment (depending on the level of anxiety of the student) in which low self-esteem "compromise[ed] students' adjustment across academic, social, and institutional domains" (p. 57).

Visual Differences

Another adjustment expected of minority students, upon enrollment, was conformity to the culture of the campus at PWI's. Although minority students did not think they needed to adapt to the cultures of PWI's (Firmin & Rose, 2013), sometimes, adaptation was the expectation. Majority race participants in the Luedke et al. (2015)

study thought minority students should assimilate in order to do well in higher education. In reality, minority students reported having the ability to maneuver higher education cultural norms while maintaining their own identities (Firmin & Rose, 2013). What was also discovered was "the mannerisms and behaviors of African Americans [were] not of the dominant culture…the social order established by Whiteness mandated that African American social, educational, and economic upward mobility [was] unnatural and in opposition of their cultural heritage" (Rodriguez, 2014, p. 294).

Ignoring the differences of minority students, as reflected by Luedke et al. (2015), implicated problems and suggested, "faculty mentors [were] reflecting larger historical trends" (p. 236) in minority student treatment. What society considered normal in the dominant culture could have been very different from what was familiar to minority students. What was also a concern, according to Sedlacek (2017) was, "African American students experienced greater racial and ethnic hostility [and] greater pressure to conform to stereotypes" (p. 82). In order to best support minority students in finding their niche on college campuses, "institutions need[ed] to understand how [racial identity was] fostered or diminished during the college years" (Alvarado et al., 2015, p. 129). There are researchers whose work showed minority students conforming to fit into the mainstream on campus and those whose research supported the idea of minority students, not conforming, but having fulfilled the expectation of acting stereotypically. The information on both foci of research was limited as was the information regarding psychological consequences for conforming.

Not only should institutions have provided education for its students, colleges should have been sure students received positive social and psychological supports to

encourage persistence. When students perceived self-acceptance on campus, holistic needs of the students felt more fulfilled. According to Bowker and Coplan, as stated in Asher and Weeks (2014), "[w]hen needs for connection to other people and to broader communities [were] satisfied, people experience[d] well-being, including positive affect, adaptive motivation, and physical and mental health" (p. 283). Institutions of higher education had to determine if the culture and climate of their campuses were welcoming to minority students. As Ward and Zarate (2015) stated, there was a "potential for campus racial climate to affect student perspectives and values" (p. 614).

There were also researchers who showed a relationship between belonging and the decisions to persist (Johnson et al., 2013; Strayhorn, 2012). Uncomfortable interactions included experiences in the classroom. Harper (2013) discovered students "who [felt] like they belong[ed] and [were] value[d] and respected by faculty and peers… [were] more likely to persist through baccalaureate degree attainment than students who negatively experience[d] their campus environment" (pp. 195-196). The information suggested when students felt included, there was an increased chance for a university to retain them. There were other researchers, though, who found a relationship between Harper's (2013) connection to negative experiences and a lack of persistence. Means (2016) found "racialized classroom experiences… [led] students to question their sense of belonging in academic spaces at PWI's" (p. 24). The lack of belongingness displayed a strong correlation to discrimination and hostile racial campus climates (Alvarado & Hurtado, 2015) and "point[ed] to the cumulative effects of the racial climate for students of color that contribute[d] to their persistence decisions" (Johnson et al., 2013, p. 93).

What also influenced the racial climate was the exhibition of monuments and relics on campus.

Historical Symbols

Influential cultural factors included dedications to historical symbols placed on college campuses. The structural symbol was what most minority students encountered first upon stepping foot on campuses. Cabrera et al. (2016) noted how "many buildings on college campuses (e.g., Yale) were built by slaves and often named after slave owners" (p. 124). In addition to the structural surroundings, likely built unwillingly by their ancestors, Black students faced customs, which evidenced racist history. Many members of institutional settings partook in traditions "that [were] generally unexamined because they [were] expressed in the deep architecture of tradition, unchallenged assumptions, procedures, ritual, and habit" (Shugart, 2013, p. 13). There were others though, who questioned these traditions and, in recent history, raised concerns about Confederate memorials in public spaces- including institutions of higher education. Wahlers (2016) described "Civil War era symbols [as] physical reminders that African Americans remain[ed] systemically disadvantaged in many ways" (para. 2). Yet, there was an expectation for minority students to learn in memorial-ridden environments on a daily basis.

Through interviews, Galuszka (2016) found Confederate "flags had been up since the 1930's" (para. 3) at Washington and Lee University. Until removing the flags, this school held on to a relic installed during the Jim Crow era. During Jim Crow, decisions were "based on the theory of [W]hite supremacy" (Constitutional Rights Foundation, 2017, para. 5). African American students, primarily those on campuses in the south,

often faced the symbols, which upheld White supremacy. Mangan (2015) stated, "statues, symbols, and relics of the past can affect a college's racial climate" (para. 10) and the perceptions of the values of a campus culture. Minority students had to develop their own interpretation of the culture campuses, which held sacred symbols of slavery and hatred. The environment played a major role in a students' reaction to school culture. Azibo, Casper, Cassius, and Marion (2013) stated, "the physical space in human social environments or ecologies affect[ed] behavior, states of well-being, and distress" (p. 184). Historical symbols and practices embedded in higher education may have caused distress for minority students.

Researchers uncovered the influence of school culture made by use of Confederate symbols and traditions at the University of Mississippi (Galuszka, 2016; Mangan, 2015; Ruff, 2016). Mangan wanted to know how people perceived the institutions use of Confederate symbols and "found that the racially divisive symbols were hurting the university's effort to recruit and retain minority students and harming its national reputation" (Mangan, 2015, para. 14). Although these researchers primarily had findings at the University of Mississippi in common, each researcher found, on multiple college campuses, how symbols influenced students' perception of school culture. Ruff (2016) discovered some institutions chose to display language with historical symbols to place context to their presence, some universities renamed spaces, while others moved relics to campus museums.

Oftentimes, there was a "focus on the historical narratives of non-whites that [were] often omitted from places of honor and challenge[d] the unequal representation within monument and naming decisions" (Wahlers, 2016, para. 3). Even when

universities mounted symbols geared toward the minority communities alongside their Confederate relics, a lack of historical explanation, or context, led to individual interpretations, which did not assist in creating an inclusive campus culture. Cabrera et al. (2016) eluded to how a lack of neutrality to the symbols on campuses created opportunities for interpretation based on relationships to "systemic racial power…[calling for the] finding [of] a balance between students' perceptions of their experiences and the realities of systemic racism which contextualize[d] these views" (p. 130). Creating a balance between perceptions and realities meant constructing opportunities for dialogue and understanding. "[W]ithout the ability to explicitly denote what these actions stand for… their messages [became] ineffectual" (Bogue & Riley, 2014, p. 183) which led students to continue to define the campus culture using their own terms, all the while creating a cultural gap. Berry and Candis (2013) suggested the consequence of cultural gaps was disconnection between the student and the learning community.

When students lived in a different reality than what the institution perceived, the challenge of closing the cultural gap increased. Sedlacek (2017) also noted a difference of student perceptions in writing "African American students consistently reported more negative experiences compared to… White students" (p. 82). Cultural gaps, exacerbated by the perceived racial hostility created by racist rituals and relics, created a less positive campus experience for minority students. The symbols displayed on a college campus influenced the school culture and guided the school climate. "[P]ublic commemorative monuments and actions often have limited messages" (Bogue & Riley, 2014, p. 181) and if students were left to self-interpretation, their perception of school climate may have been influenced.

The perception of a schools climate depended on multiple factors including the students' life experiences (Cohen et al., 2013). According to Ward and Zarate (2015), "scholars [had to] account for the ways in which a student's background and past experiences affect[ed] how they [thought] about diversity and how they interact[ed] with diversity on college campuses" (pp. 593- 594). If a student's experience with Confederate symbols had been positive, waiving a Confederate flag may not have seemed problematic. On the other hand, if a student had negative connotations to the image, the action may have appeared hostile.

The earlier referenced Mangan (2015) investigated the perceptions of the Confederate symbols displayed on the campus of the University of Mississippi, or Ole Miss. This investigation suggested how, "[p]erceptions… provide[d] a glimpse of how statues, symbols, and relics of the past can affect[ed] a college's racial climate" (para. 10). This same study discovered some minority students found certain campus rituals to appear hostile, in particular, the waiving of Confederate flags. Alvarado and Hurtado (2015) concluded from their research minority students reported being targeted with "verbal comments… exclu[ded] from events or activities, and… [having seen] offensive visual images" (p. 3) which they believed showed a relationship to minority students' "sense of belonging on campus" (Alvarado & Hurtado, 2015, p. 1). In addition, exposure to such situations helped frame students' perceptions of "diversity, inequality, and group identities" (Deckman & Warikoo, 2014, p. 978).

Students who perceived racism on campus were at risk of not feeling welcome to the campus environment and may have been at greater risk of leaving the campus. Recent studies showed how minority students faced continued forms of racism in higher

education, even in the wake of movements such as Black Lives Matter (Means, 2016). Shugart (2013) suggested how people had to "have [had] the courage to engage broadly with stakeholders in conversations about the deep culture of the organization and have the will to change the conversation toward a new culture" (p. 9). Encouraging such conversations may have helped relieve feelings of cultural mistrust for minority students.

Cultural Mistrust

The practices imbedded in the culture of higher education and the "physical geography of a locale [could] actually have [had] a predatory effect on People of Color" (Cabrera et al., 2016, p.119). Feelings of exclusion originating from a campus culture founded on a hurtful past for a group of students led to cultural mistrust. Terrell and Terrell (1981) described how cultural mistrust stemmed from African Americans having experienced discrimination and, as a result, developed a mistrust for the dominant culture. Minorities may have struggled with trusting the campus environment while administrators simply carried on traditions of the campus. The mistrust formed when the traditions on campus were perceived as racist and harboring mistrust was considered a "strategy[y] to cope with oppressive experiences" (Cheon, Kendall, & Kim, 2016, p. 5). Cultural trust, also influenced by the institutional architecture, may have "problematized the idea of safe spaces and perceptions of campus safety" (Cabrera et al., 2016, p. 127). Having mistrust could have led minority students to be apprehensive about creating connections with members of the dominant culture- even if for their own benefit. Rodriguez's (2014) study on trust revealed, "as cultural mistrust increase[d], academic achievement decrease[d]" (p. 296).

Firmin and Rose (2013) found evidence of lower academic performance in minority students when there was a perceived lack of support or cultural mistrust. Cultural trust also related to the social and racial climates, which were found to "have [had] a significant impact on the academic success of African American college students" (Boatright-Horowitz et al., 2013, p. 700) and "contribute[d] to [African American student] persistence decisions at [the] institution[s]" (Johnson et al., 2013, p. 93). Once again, a relationship was identified which showed how a perception may have influenced minority student retention. Another component to the cultural connection to minority student persistence was the lack of minority culture mainstreamed into higher educational practices.

Rodriguez (2014) noted how cultural values were "an asset toward academic achievement" (p. 296) and identified how "the mannerisms and behaviors of African Americans [were] not of the dominant culture… the social order established by Whiteness mandated that African American social, educational, and economic upward mobility [was] unnatural and in opposition to [minority students'] cultural heritage" (p. 294). The findings by Rodriguez (2014) indicated the foundation of higher education created a cultural clash for minority students. Other researchers also identified cultural concerns of institutions, which may have influenced minority students' retention. Cabrera et al. (2016) indicated how higher education institutions were the creations of White males, which signifies how campuses of PWI's reflect the experiences of White culture. Fairly, Hoffman, and Oreopoulos (2014) discovered how minority students, at a particular PWI, experienced higher rates of dropping out (28 %), lower grade point averages (2.6 on a 4.0 scale), as well as markedly worse degree completion and retention.

The inability to relate to the culture of campuses created a barrier to persistence for minority students and further perpetuated the racial climate.

Policies and Programs

Deckman and Warikoo (2014) determined how decisions toward policies and procedures in higher education influenced the "student understandings of diversity on campus" (p. 960). There were also considerations to how "structural of institutional barriers [may have] influence[d] Students' of Color experiences" (Luedke et al., 2015, p. 236). There were some students, whose precollege school experience were racially homogeneous, which means, "[higher education] institutions… [had] an important role to play in developing their students' frames around diversity, inequality, and group identities" (Deckman & Warikoo, 2014, p. 978). The previous socialization experienced by students influenced their expectations for the college experience (Alvarado et al., 2015; Ward & Zarate, 2015). Students who have not experienced racial diversity may not understand how to interact versus simply coexisting.

Actively participating in higher education cultural programs would have allowed students to "increase [their] cross-cultural understanding and competencies" (Ward & Zarate, 2015, p. 593). Students, who lacked cross-cultural interactions prior to college, would have benefited from such diverse exchanges. Abdul-Raheem (2016) suggested cultural diversity in higher education would create cultural sensitivities for others. Chang and Park (2015) determined "critical engagement with racial diversity during college is essential given the general racial homogeneity of many precollege environments and the lack of meaningful engagement with diversity" (p. 359). LePau (2015) shared how participants of the study "agreed that the lack of diversity in relation to the educational

experience at the institution short-changed all students" (p. 109). Lacking an understanding of how to interact with people of different races may have created opportunities for students to exercise bias or be ill equipped to face it.

The diversity of American higher education created a challenge regarding a pleasing campus culture for all. Arroyo and Gasman (2014) suggested "[a]s the diversity of America increase[d], every higher education institution across this nation need[ed] an active, ongoing plan to improve its culture of educational equity" (para. 56). Some colleges and universities implemented foci on diversity to "create safe spaces and programs for students to engage in such interactions to promote more inclusion and harmony" (Davidoff, Griffin, Nadal, Sriken, & Wong, 2014, p. 470). Offering safe spaces created an opportunity to acknowledge and address the impact exclusion had on minority students' opportunities for higher learning. Hoffman and Mitchell (2016) believed minority student spaces on college campuses played an important role in "the continued promotion of access and equity for minoritized students on college campuses, but also as spaces that [had] the potential to foster student activist movements aimed at changing the structures and systems of exclusion and injustice" (p. 278).

One study, conducted by Deckman and Warikoo in 2014, investigated whether or not diversity programs at particular institutions were beneficial. They completed research to determine if diversity programs, at two universities with similar demographics, influenced the cultures of the campuses and found "campus diversity programming shape[d] both race relations on campus and students' race frames" (p. 978). Their work revealed both positive and negative perceptions, but showed a relationship nonetheless. Researchers have found courses and events about diversity influenced students'

perceptions (Alvarado & Hurtado, 2015; Bogue & Riley, 2014; Chang & Park, 2015; Harper & Yeung, 2013; Ward & Zarate, 2015) and may have better prepared them to lead in a diverse society (Alvarado & Hurtado, 2015; Harper & Yeung, 2013). Before transitioning into society, though, Armstrong, Boyraz, Horne, and Owens (2013) found student engagement on campus increased academic success and persistence. Such opportunities were encouraged through the implementation of cultural organizations and events.

Other researchers focused on the implementation of diversity initiatives, for those in leadership positions, to be more inclusive of minorities in the school culture (Jones, 2013; LePau, 2015). LePau (2015) focused on collaborations between Academic Affairs (AA) and Student Affairs (SA), and found both divisions could have "work[d] together to implement diversity and inclusion initiatives" (p. 119) although collaborative efforts may have been more challenging for SA because they lacked the status of 'academic'. Jones (2013) researched the adoption of race-neutral policies and whether leaders were still able to serve historically marginalized groups through the programs created for these groups. The results indicated a decrease in the number of African American student-bridge program participants and recruits (p. 712) and a reduction in funds to sustain such programs (p. 714). The significance was the identification of how policies in higher education determined the availability of support programs to minority students.

Chen, Ingram, and Davis (2014), determined minority students identified the supports provided in the campus environment as a significant indication of satisfaction with an institution. When implementing policies and programs, PWI's needed to understand which ones were of most importance for a diverse student body. As Ward

and Zarate (2015) indicated, "[u]nderstanding attitudes about diversity at colleges and universities [was] especially important [then] due to changes in policy environments and shifting university demographics" (p. 590). The policies in higher education can be a determining factor to the culture of an institution and, sometimes, students benefited from the experience of voicing their opinions. Chen et al. (2014) determined "[p]roviding a medium for students to offer their responses to current events, policies, and institutional services [could have] ease[d] the tension" (p. 574) on campuses.

Bogue and Riley (2014) suggested, although minority students enrolled at PWI's, there was segregation among the student body. There may have been cultural spaces on campus to support minority students but did not necessarily encourage interaction between multiple racial groups. Bowman and Denson (2013) found even when opportunities were available some students needed additional encouragement because of student discomfort from such engagement. Bogue and Riley (2014) suggested "university officials [needed to] be incredibly intentional to promote opportunities for diverse learning while offering multiple outlets for meaningful multicultural group memberships and experiences" (p. 181). The findings of Johnson and Strayhorn (2014) and Blaich et al. (2017) determined providing a diverse campus did not ensure meaningful interactions across the races. Johnson and Strayhorn (2014) proceeded to explain how "[i]nstitutional strategies also must [have gone] the next step to facilitate meaningful cross-racial interactions among students" (p. 394).

Chief Diversity Officer

In order to support diversity programs, and possibly encourage minority student enrollment and retention, many higher education institutions "created the position of

Chief Diversity Officer (CDO)" (Leon, 2014, p. 77). Wade-Golden and Williams (2013) described the role of the administrator as one who prioritized change to the organizational structure to incorporate diversity and create a sense of inclusion in the higher education setting. This administrative position, designed to improve campus cultures and climates as well as promote respect and inclusion, still had challenges (Leon, 2014; Wilson, 2013). Wilson (2013) found "[a] potential threat to the CDO's effectiveness [as] the unwillingness of members of the campus community to abide by and comply with the policies and initiatives generated out of the diversity office" (p. 433). Those who took on this task needed to be creative in finding ways to combat resistance to change so minority students could have had a positive perception of belonging in higher education at PWI's.

While some institutions relied on the CDO position to help create inclusive campuses, some scholars had reservations. Barone, Davis, and Harris (2015) stated, some initiatives "function[ed] to limit critical discussions about race and racism…the hiring of diversity officers or the implementation of offices that focus[ed] on campus diversity…often allow[ed] institutions to compartmentalize their efforts toward combating racism" (p. 27). Others decided a different approach to campus diversity needed implementation. Flores and Park (2013) indicated institutions of higher education had to prepare for the change in demographics in order to serve "more racially and ethnically diverse" (p. 115) populations. Some institutions chose to prepare for the shift in demographics through the hiring of a more diverse faculty.

Minority Faculty and Staff as Mentors

An increase in minority faculty and staff were a part of some of the diversity initiatives created for minority students to experience gains in higher education. Some

investigations found minority students benefitted greatly from access to minority faculty-including an improvement to academics and the overall campus environment (Dittmer, 2017; Fairly et al., 2014). When minority students had minority instructors, there was an improvement to academics. As found by Fairly et al. (2014), the achievement gap for minority students was "smaller in classes taken with minority instructors… [m]inority students obtained better grades… and [were] more likely to have a grade of at least a B. [Achievement] gaps [were] reduced by 20 to 50 percent and translate[d] into [improved]… retention" (p. 2569). Firmin and Rose (2013) found a relationship between the amounts of minority staff related to the support of diversity initiatives. The less minority groups reflected the whole faculty, the more likely inclusion programs remained overlooked. To assist in diversity goals, many campuses hired more minority faculty and staff, but the increase of minorities in higher education employment was slow (Dittmer, 2017; Thelin, 2017). Based on the findings of Thelin (2017), "African Americans constitute[d] 9 percent" (p. 117) of higher education professors within all of the institutions in America, which created concerns for minority students. The low percentage of such faculty may be why "[r]acial and ethnic minority group students face[d] several challenges when it [came] to securing faculty mentors during college" (Johnson, 2015, p. 190).

Having such low numbers of minority faculty minimized student opportunities to learn from and build relationships with people who shared similar experiences. A lack of opportunities to be mentored was not a desirable situation because, according to DeAngelo, Mason, and Winters (2015), "interaction between students and faculty members [was] the cornerstone of high quality undergraduate education" (p. 318) and

"[r]egular faculty-student interaction often develop[ed] into a mentoring relationship" (p. 318). A lack of minority staff made intricate the building of these relationships, yet these staff members were needed "due to the increase in minority high school graduates and higher education enrollees" (Abdul-Raheem, 2016, p. 54).

When the growing rate of minority students (Johnson, 2015) had limited access to minority faculty and staff, the message about diversity and inclusion was clear from the institution. As stated by Dittmer (2017), "[e]very college and university ha[d] its own culture and the culture [was] perpetuated through… learning from the current faculty, staff, and administration" (p. 132). Considering "the academic profession in the United States has historically been dominated, both in numbers and perspectives, by White males" (Thelin, 2017, p. 117), the culture of educational institutions reflected White culture (Dittmer, 2017; Haberler, Jackson-Boothby, Levin, & Walker, 2013). White culture was weaved into the fabric of higher education but Abdul-Raheem (2016) shared how "minorities [were] inclined to mistrust predominantly White institutions due to social experiences of discrimination and prejudice" (p. 55). The solution suggested by Abdul-Raheem (2016) was to increase minority faculty to support minority "student… comfort… and equity advocacy" (p. 56).

Gomez, Lachuk, Ocasio, and Powell (2015) determined "faculty and staff of color [were] in short supply, often [were] supportive of one another's work, but [were] pulled in many directions around issues concerning educating diverse student populations" (p. 680). The information from the study suggested the facilitation of diversity and inclusion was a responsibility placed on the small number of minority faculty. While "[m]inority faculty members [were] important resources to facilitate education regarding cultural

diversity" (Abdul-Raheem, 2016, p. 54), the task was a large burden (Johnson et al., 2013). Considering, at PWI's, the minority faculty was a small percentage of the employees, managing diversity concerns, along with day-to-day responsibilities, little time remained to devote to mentoring minority students.

Another stressor for minority faculty was gaining the trust of non-same-race students and peers. When the knowledge and abilities of minority faculty were constantly questioned (Gomez et al., 2015; Patel, 2015), feelings of oppression may have discouraged minority faculty. Other feelings, which influenced minority faculty, identified by Abdul-Raheem (2016) included distress due to prejudice or discrimination. Uncomfortable working conditions, which may have influenced the retention rates of minority faculty, meant less minority mentor options for minority students. Dittmer (2017) discussed how minority faculty were likely to depart institutions quickly if the site lacked a sense of community, mentors, and if the faculty felt isolated. Gomez et al. (2015) discovered "staff members of color often report[ed] feeling marginalized due to their racial and ethnic identifications, and their sense of diminished professional status on campus relative to other faculty" (p. 677). Faculty who identified with minority groups did not feel as though their treatment, as scholars, was proper.

Interviews related to the study determined minority faculty were dissatisfied in their positions, felt disrespected by students, felt devalued by supervisors, and felt pushed into diversity advocacy (Gomez et al., 2015). According to Dittmer (2017), "faculty retention [was] dependent on how satisfied the faculty member [was] with all aspects of the job including institutional culture, the departmental culture, the students, and the location of the institution" (p.137). The ability to retain minority faculty held large

implications for minority students. Maintaining a diverse faculty would have "improve[d] student body support and representation [would have] increase[d] the comfort level of minority students when they display[ed] their various cultures" (Abdul-Raheem, 2016, p. 55). While building relationships with mentors were integral to student success (DeAngelo et al., 2015), a lack of options to connect to minority faculty created more opportunities for minority students to disengage from institutions.

Research showed how "[t]he lack of minority instructors may [have] imposed severe limits on the availability of role models, increase[d] the likelihood of "stereotype threats" and discrimination against minority students, and restrict[ed] exposure to instructors with similar cultures and languages" (Fairly et al., 2014, p. 2568). The results of the study by Fairly et al. (2014) indicated students had more positive experiences when faculty and staff where minorities. "The increase of minority faculty serve[d] as examples and representations for minority students" (Abdul-Raheem. 2016, p. 55) as well as provided more options for mentors and less exposure to microaggressions- an overall supportive environment. Through research, Chen et al. (2014) found "creating a supportive campus [was] the most important practice colleges and universities [did] to promote African American student satisfaction" (p. 574). The supports of mentors had large influences to the experience of minority students. In the study conducted by Arment, Kendricks, and Nedunuri (2013), students responded positively to the family environment, which created increased performance in "different academic areas such as class performance, curricular advancement, scholarly pursuits and career aspirations… [and] significantly and positively correlated to students' cumulative GPA" (p. 40). Having feelings of satisfaction with campus experiences may have encouraged minority

students to persist at an institution but, unfortunately, support and satisfaction were not always the experience.

Abdul-Raheem (2016) found "[m]inority students value[d] the interaction and commonalities they ha[d] with minority faculty" (p. 54) and the students of the study by Arment et al. (2013) attributed mentoring to their academic success. Connecting to faculty of the same race provided students with a positive role model and an opportunity to confide in someone who understood the barriers faced by minority students. As stated by Johnson (2015), "culture inform[ed] all our interpersonal interactions; at times this [meant] sensitivity to culturally driven nuances in the way mentor and mentee relate; at other times, this [meant] emotionally laden exchanges around racial/ cultural experience" (p. 190). When students made emotional connections with their mentors, trust was established. Griffin (2013) determined "[s]hared experiences seem[ed] to [have] serve[d] as a foundation for a certain level of trust" (p. 176) between minority students and mentors which encouraged the feelings of support. When the trust and support were not available, minority students had a different experience. Firmin and Rose (2013) discovered, "minority students sometimes report[ed] that they [did] not have adequate social support, which result[ed] in… decreased academic performance" (p. 59).

Supportive campuses for minority students included access to faculty mentors with whom minority students could relate. As stated by Harper and Yeung (2013), "[i]t [was] important for university personnel to be cognizant of the factors that support[ed]" (p. 41) minority students including interactions with faculty. Griffin (2013) found student perceptions of "Black faculty as more student-centered than… faculty from other backgrounds, comprised of a set of behaviors that implied commitment to students'

growth and development, such as comprehensive academic and socioemotional support, advocacy and student encouragement, and high academic expectations" (p. 169). Student advancement would have been more likely a result from having the aforementioned supports in place. The perceptions described by Griffin (2013) supported the findings of Abdul-Raheem (2016) which stated, "[s]uccessful retention of minority faculty [would have] increase[d] the comfort level of minority students because they [would have felt] adequately represented and supported" (p. 55).

Some research suggested, "racial minority students may [have] express[ed] a preference for an advisor of the same race" (Johnson, 2015, p. 191) but for students who attended PWI's, minority faculty was not always available. As stated by Dittmer (2017), "organizations tend[ed] to hire individuals who fit into [the school] culture, which translate[d] into hiring individuals who [had] traits and values similar to current employees" (p. 132). Institutions with predominantly White stakeholders were likely to continue hiring those who fit White culture which created a chance for race to have become a "barrier for students looking for mentors" (Lin-Sommer & Lucek, 2015, para. 3). The possible perception by minority students may have suggested having less access to minority faculty mentors would lead to fewer opportunities for faculty support. Griffin (2013) discovered some minority faculty "desire[d] to see members of [the minority] community excel" (p. 175) which could also be why minority students responded positively to minority faculty mentors.

While suggesting interactions with minority faculty was important for minority students (DeAngelo et al., 2015; Griffin, 2013), the culture of higher education institutions played a major role in supporting faculty-student relationships. DeAngelo et

al. (2015) discovered "the workload [faculty] face[d] as a result of tenure requirements… was a significant barrier to engaging with students outside of formal channels" (p. 328) so, "[t]he specific values and goals of an institution play[ed] an important role in whether faculty" (p. 325) became mentors. If institutions of higher education valued research more than student engagement, mentoring students was more of a challenge, but when mentoring was a part of the institutional culture, building relationships with students seemed to be less of an additional duty for faculty members.

Most of the studies found by the researcher emphasized the perspective of faculty while limited information was available about the minority student perceptions of interactions with minority faculty. From interviews with minority faculty, researchers discovered benefits of minority student-faculty mentor relationships included additional support systems for minority students (Abdul-Raheem, 2016; DeAngelo et al., 2015; Griffin, 2013; John & Stage, 2014) along with family-like relationships (Arment et al., 2013; Griffin, 2013), and higher expectations in academic performance (Abdul-Raheem, 2016; Griffin, 2013). Research also indicated a possibility for higher academic achievement for minority students who experienced traumatic events, but had the support of faculty. Armstrong et al. (2013) determined, "[a]cademic integration [was] related to students' perceived intellectual development… [student] perceptions of the faculty concern for teaching and student development… [and] increase[ed] student access to supportive faculty may [have] play[ed] a role in the academic achievement and retention" (p. 590) of minority students who were exposed to trauma. Traumatic events for minority students refers to racism, which lead to psychological distress, and a need for mentors.

Minority students "[had] more psychological distress" (Firmin & Rose, 2013, p. 59) and benefitted from having mentors who shared similar experiences. As stated by Harper and Yeung (2013), concerted efforts toward encouraging diversity included "providing and publicizing mentoring programs that address[ed] the needs of minority students" (p. 39) at higher education institutions. Connecting minority students with same race mentors created openings to talk about racial incidences experienced by the students. Alvarado at al. (2015) found when students spoke about race, salience to racial identity increased. Providing opportunities to minority students to have mentors created "safe spaces for racial grievances to be aired" (Cabrera et al., 2016, p. 127) and allowed students a chance to receive guidance on how to navigate such encounters. Receiving such guidance was not always the norm with same-race mentor-mentee relationships though. Although minority faculty were more likely to relate to and guide minority students, they too sometimes held biases. Lin-Sommer and Lucek (2015) revealed, "even minority faculty members displayed the same biases as their [W]hite counterparts" (para. 3) toward minority students.

Non Same-Race Mentors

Certain studies also found concerns of structural racism when minority students had White faculty mentors. The information provided by Lin-Sommer and Lucek (2015) revealed "minorities may [have] face[d] an even more troubling barrier in their pursuits of higher education: unconscious…racial biases that pervade[d] academia" (para. 1). Oftentimes, majority faculty "perpetuat[ed] a view of [B]lacks as substandard learners who [were] failing the institutions" (Arroyo & Gasman, 2014, p. 11). Such faculty had personal biases, which, unintentionally interfered with their abilities to mentor minority

students adequately. Luedke et al. (2015) conducted a qualitative study focused on White faculty with minority student mentees where participants assumed minority students lacked educational preparedness for higher education programs. These faculty members also thought minority students needed to assimilate to majority culture to advance while simultaneously becoming disengaged from their [cultural] backgrounds.

Similarly, Harper (2013) suggested there was "a presupposition that Blacks [were] not very smart, well read, or serious learners, but instead [were] lazy and therefore undeserving of opportunities to attend postsecondary institutions of a certain caliber" (p. 192). The White perceptions described by both researchers exhibited views countering the necessary traits of cross-racial/cultural mentoring described by Crutcher (2014) and Johnson (2015) and supported the writing of Abdul-Raheem (2016) in sharing how minorities "continue[d] to experience inequities in higher education" (p. 53). Perceiving the inequities may have prevented minority students from building a trustful relationship with non-same-race mentors. According to Crutcher (2014), "trust and understanding between mentor and mentee [was] a crucial element in the [mentor-mentee] relationship" (p. 26).

If there were more minority faculty with which to create these trustful relationships, minority students were more pleased. As determined by research, "minority students… [were] more comfortable in institutions of higher learning when they [saw] minority faculty that represent[ed] them" (Abdul-Raheem, 2016, p. 56) but, "it [was] not always possible for students of color to find a faculty mentor of the same racial/ethnic background" (Luedke et al., 2015, p. 226). While "the [intense] and personal mentoring Black students need[ed] [was] disproportionately done by Black

professors" (Griffin, 2013, p. 177), there were some students who relied on White mentors to provide support.

Minority students with White mentors compared to no mentor, received benefits from the mentoring relationship although, "White faculty still grappled with how to work well with [s]tudents of [c]olor" (Luedke et al., 2015, p. 232). Johnson (2015) made several indications about how cross-racial mentoring experiences could be of most benefit to minority students. The requirements included the mentor having "experience, appropriate attitudes, and an increasing fund of knowledge regarding (1) the historical experiences and values of different minority groups and (2) a commitment to discovering the unique concerns and developmental needs of each of [the] culturally different mentees" (Johnson, 2015, p. 198). Crutcher (2014) identified the need for mentors of different backgrounds to have been "adept at navigating cultural boundaries… [and] mentors need[ed] to possess certain attributes or virtues, including active listening skills, honesty, a nonjudgmental attitude, persistence, patience, and an appreciation for diversity" (p. 30). The research conducted by Crutcher (2014) referred to cross-cultural to include any differences (race, class, gender, etc.) versus cross-racial which was solely focused on race.

Although previous research identified several components to cross-racial mentoring (Crutcher, 2014; Johnson, 2015), information also suggested "faculty member[s] may [have] with[held] investment in and support of a minority group student… until he or she [proved] the professor's negative racial stereotype incorrect" (Johnson, 2015, p. 195) and "professors [were] less prone to mentor across race" (Johnson, 2015, p. 191). If minority students perceived the professors to interact

differently between White and Black students, there may have been feelings toward campus cultures of PWI's. Stereotypes of minority students included implications of academic inferiority to White students according to Luedke et al. (2015) who also suggested faculty had to exercise caution of this mind frame which may have "shape[d] the way in which [faculty] engage[d] with students" (Luedke et al., 2015, p. 235). Sometimes, faculty were not aware their interactions, when perceived as biased toward minority students, discouraged the students. According to Lin-Sommer and Lucek (2015), some faculty members appeared progressive while unconscious bias deterred minority student interaction. Minority students constantly found "the need to prove themselves in the face of negative stereotypes" (Means, 2016, p. 22) while White students did not have to prove abilities to mentors nor did they have to compete for time. Sometimes the perception was minority students required more time and would be more draining on their mentors' energy and time (Griffin, 2013).

There was a perceived lack of educational preparedness for minority students (Arroya & Gasman, 2014; Harper, 2013). Due to this perception, faculty may have been less likely to devote time to these students. Luedke et al. (2015) discovered some faculty lacked "investing the same amount of time for [s]tudents of [c]olor as they [did] for White students… [the faculty] did not engage in conversations about graduate school, nor [sought] to nurture the mentoring relationship with undergraduate" (p. 234) minority students. The mentors in the particular study by Luedke et al. (2015) maintained a colorblindness approach to interactions with students. The concern de Novais and Warikoo (2015) had with colorblindness was the "suggest[ion] that race [had] little social meaning… [with] [o]ne normative consequence of the [color]-blind frame [being how]

one should ignore racial identities and racial differences" (p. 861). Racial identity warranted acknowledgement when faculty interacted with minority students, otherwise, unconscious biases could have been an outcome. While the participants in the study by Luedke et al. (2015) implicated "their students' racial identities [had] no effect on how students were treated" (p. 232), Crutcher (2014) suggested, "[m]entors must [have] maintain[ed] a dual perspective, seeing the mentee as an individual as well as a part of a larger social context" (p. 30). Acknowledging the many components to being a minority student at a PWI may have helped the student feel more supported by school faculty.

Socializing with peers and mentors alike was a large component to the minority student experience. Data gathered by Luedke et al. (2015) stated "[t]here [was] some evidence that [s]tudents of [c]olor may not have [had] access to the same level of socialization with faculty mentors as their White peers" (p. 226). Interactions with faculty in learning settings did not suffice. As stated by Ewing and Hajrasouliha (2016), "[t]he supportive learning environment extend[ed] beyond the classroom to embrace the entire educational environment" (p. 31). The entire educational environment referenced a variety of experiences, including individualized time with faculty mentors. With limited access to mentors at PWI's, minority students continued to be at risk of feelings of isolation and lack of belonging.

Another indication in the literature was the direct relationship between blatant racism and feelings of belongingness in higher education. Asher and Weeks (2014) discussed how "[b]elonging uncertainty [was] the result of a person-context interaction in which an individual whose social identity (e.g. race/ ethnicity, gender) could be the basis of negative treatment [became] vigilant to belonging-related cues in situations in which

their identity [was] activated" (296). As minority students represent a small portion of the population on campus, an activated identity was a regular part of attending a PWI. Sometimes, activation occurred when the expectation was for minorities to speak for their race while in the educational environment (Firmin & Rose, 2013; Harper, 2013; Jones, 2013; LePau, 2015).

Identities were also activated when other forms of representation was low. When "racial minority students… [found] their experiences and perspectives missing or devalued … they may [have] sense[d] limited access to culturally relevant academic coursework, academic advising, and mentoring. Racially or culturally focused scholarship may [have been] deemed irrelevant or less worthy" (Johnson, 2015, p. 192). A lack of minority integration into the everyday happenings of higher education could have left students wondering how much minorities mattered to a PWI. Harper and Yeung (2013) discovered institutions encouraging of diversity "provid[ed] a variety of courses that specifically relate[d] to issues of diversity, multiculturalism, and ethnic studies… [had] encouragement of support networks related to... ethnicity; and provid[ed] and publiciz[ed] mentoring programs… [for] minority students" (p. 39). Without the proper supports in place at higher education institutions, minority students may have felt as though equal treatment did not exist for those who were not majority students, which may have also influenced student satisfaction. Having a satisfactory perception of a college experience influenced student motivation and had "a direct effect on [student] graduation" (Ewing & Hajrasouliha, 2016, p. 40).

Motivation

There is little research available regarding the motivation of students in general but there were connections between motivation and retention. D'Lima, Kitsantas, and Winsler (2014) stated both "[i]ntrinsic and extrinsic motivations share[d] integral roles for students' success in college" (p. 342). The information indicated students had to experience internal drive and use the supports surrounding them to matriculate through higher education. While some minority students may have had the internal drive, racism and a lack of same-race mentors showed possible limitation in extrinsic motivation available at PWI's. Hanson, Jach, Pascarella, and Trolian (2016) supported the influence of faculty interactions on academic motivations. What was discovered during the study was "all five measures of student-faculty interactions, including quality of faculty contact, frequency of faculty contact, research with faculty, personal discussions with faculty, and out-of-class interactions with faculty, were positively associated with academic motivation" (pp. 821-822). Maintaining these types of interactions to encourage motivation were a challenge when there were limited same-race mentors and the interactions with White mentors would possibly result in the opposite of desired outcomes (Johnson, 2015; Luedke, et al., 2015).

Mentors were not the only influential persons with regard to minority student motivation. Blackwell and Pinder (2014) determined there were several influences on student motivation, which included "parental influences and peer influences… [and] environments [were] believed to play a role in the process as well" (p. 47). Some students received extrinsic motivation but there were students attending PWI's with limited access to these other forms of motivation.

Self-Efficacy

Minority students who attended PWI's constantly had to prove their abilities and faced peers who upheld a colorblindness perspective (Luedke et al., 2015; Means, 2016). When viewing race through a colorblindness lens, White students were not able to provide the type of external motivation needed to minority students because of the challenges in identifying obstacles faced by minority peers. Motivation from peers was important though because institutions of higher education played a role in student socialization (Deckman & Warikoo, 2014) and "peer group academic socializations may [have] influence[d] a student's self-efficacy" (Blackwell & Pinder, 2014, p. 47). Managing low self-efficacy was important due to the possibilities of having led to low self-esteem, low motivation, and low academic performance. Agonafer, Bentley Edwards, Edmondson, and Flannigan (2016) found there were "supports and barriers in place that may [have] specifically influence[d] the goal efficacy of Black college students" (p. 151).

Some of the barriers to reaching goals for minority students included the side effects of low self-efficacy. Schwarzer (2014) made a number of connections showing how self-efficacy influenced motivation by stating:

> In terms of feeling, a low sense of self-efficacy [was] associated with depression, anxiety, and helplessness. Such individuals also ha[d] low self-esteem and harbor[ed] pessimistic thoughts about their accomplishments and personal development. In terms of thinking, a strong sense of competence facilitate[d] cognitive processes and academic performance. When it [came] to preparing action, self-related cognitions

> [were] a major ingredient of the motivation process. Self-efficacy levels enhance[d] or impede[d] motivation. (preface)

Minority students were more susceptible to low self-efficacy due to negative encounters on college campuses, which may have led to lowered motivation. D'Lima et al. (2014) indicated the importance of motivation and the crucial need for minority students to gain motivation early in their higher education careers. Motivation appeared in different forms for minority students. Agonafer et al. (2016) found motivation to stem from cultural resources because such resources "serve[d] as a safeguard against negative psychological outcomes resulting from race-related… stressors" (p. 154).

Another way to gain motivation was to find an intrinsic drive. Research revealed high intrinsic motivation had a great influence (Blackwell & Pinder, 2014) and led to higher academic performance (D'Lima et al., 2014). Students exhibiting intrinsic motivation were more likely to have better academic performance, but the internal push may have been more challenging to maintain while battling negative external forces, or racism. Sometimes, "African-American students faced racism and outright discrimination, including verbal taunting and threats, physical abuse and academic pressure from teachers and administrators" (Firmin & Rose, 2013, p. 58). When being faced with conflict, low motivation and low academic results, minority students were less likely to persist through to degree attainment.

Admissions Policies

The federal policy created to influence diversity through opportunity for higher education is Affirmative Action. This policy, when used in higher education, "refers to admission policies that provide equal access to education for those groups that have been

historically excluded or underrepresented" (National Conference of State Legislators, 2017, para. 1). This policy has allowed many persons of minority groups to gain access to higher education, but not without opposition. Chrisman (2013) found some people to view "affirmative action as an instrument which inflict[ed] racial abuse and hardship upon America's Caucasian population" (p. 71). When minority students attended college and faced frustrations from those who opposed affirmative action, the perceived culture of the campus may not have been pleasant for minority students. There were people who found the use of Affirmative Action unfair and preferred the use of race-neutral policies (de Novais & Warikoo, 2015). What such persons failed to realize was "seemingly race-neutral policies [could have] promote[d] racial inequality" (Deckman & Warikoo, 2014, p. 960).

Affirmative Action created tensions on college campuses for many years. According to Harris (2017), "[t]he notion that race-conscious admissions [were] systemically biased against some applicants- particularly white ones- ha[d] been a rallying cry for critics for decades" (para. 5). Affirmative Action, though, was not the only form of additional considerations for admissions in higher education. Legacy status gave institutions the power to show preference to students whose parents or grandparents were alumni (Bok, 2015; Jaschik, 2017; Hoover, 2017). To know the beneficiaries of admission to a university as a legacy was nearly impossible, but minority students faced criticism for Affirmative Action even if they were not recipients of the policy. Harper (2013) found the frequent assumption was minority students did not qualify for college admissions and benefitted from Affirmative Action.

Further assumptions included minority students having particular behaviors. Members of the study conducted by de Novais and Warikoo (2015) indicated frustration toward Black students who defied behavioral expectations especially if the perception was the minority students benefited from Affirmative Action. The commonality between both studies was the assumption of Black students gaining college entrance based on Affirmative Action and not merit. What was important to acknowledge was legacy status because students who benefited from this type of admissions advantage did not seem to face the same backlash for their admission advantage (Hoover, 2017).

The literature did not address those who could not benefit from legacy status. Considering the history of student demographics at PWI's legacy status, granted initially to students who were wealthy and Caucasian, were the main beneficiaries of higher learning opportunities. If White students were the only members of American society initially allowed into higher education, only their children were able to benefit from legacy status. Minority students could not take advantage of the institutional policies for the first few hundred years at PWI's. The exclusionary system also influenced the ability for minorities to navigate the higher education system. According to Lawrence (2016), "[a]ccess to a parent with personal knowledge of how to successfully plan for the college transition ha[d] been linked to advantageous information about… how to search for institutions, and what strategies to pursue in order to gain admission" (p. 74). If denied admissions for hundreds of years, minorities' ability to support students into and through a higher education experience would have been limited.

The data showed how there were "much higher admit rates for legacies… [with] the average acceptance rate [being] 31 percentage points higher for legacy applicants than

the colleges' published acceptance rate for all students" (Jaschik, 2017, para. 10). Legacy influence excluded opportunities for many other students in gaining higher learning. Legacy status, in higher education, had influence over campus demographics. The policy may have encouraged the continuance of non-inclusive traditions at PWI's. As stated by Hoover (2017), "some advocates for underrepresented students say legacies are easy scapegoats for all the inequities in higher education" (para. 5). These historic traditions dated back before school integration could create a negative perception of school cultures and climates. Deckman and Warikoo (2014) suggested understanding the relationship between higher education policies, practices, and the attitudes of students would have helped stakeholders understand the influence on race-based rejection and discomfort for minority students.

Persistence and Retention

With a lack of "comfortable campus interactions" (Johnson et al., 2013, p. 92), minority students were less likely to persist through higher education. Students who tried to adjust and connect in an environment away from home were continuously facing race-based rejection. Alvarado and Hurtado (2015) discovered Black students suffered the strongest negative relationship between discrimination and a sense of belonging- even those who were the most high-achieving students. Encounters across the campus proved to be unwelcoming to minority students. Despite the level of self-efficacy of a student, constant occurrences of discrimination throughout the institutional setting discouraged retention.

The poor treatment students experienced throughout the academic community ranged from exclusion from student organizations (Thelin, 2017) to verbal and physical

abuses (Firmin & Rose, 2013). Some states even created laws to prevent minority students from pursuing higher education at PWI's (Constitutional Rights Foundation, 2017). Exclusion, discrimination, and the discomfort endured by minority students created hostile campus climates. Not only were campuses unwelcoming for the minority scholars, but the intimidating environment influenced self-efficacy, self-esteem, and motivation. All of these components also influenced students' persistence decisions.

Summary

When considering the exclusionary past of higher education, a relationship between minority student perceptions of higher education and minority student retention developed. Although the cultures of campuses became more inclusive and the climates less hostile, there were still occurrences of aggression toward minority students in recent history. This literature review discussed the overall view of the treatment minority students received at higher education institutions- by both the representatives and students. The review also discussed how these relationships molded the perspectives of minority students.

To begin, the history showed how exclusionary practices towards minorities influenced access, which led to exploring racial tension, Black Codes (Constitutional Rights Foundation, 2017; Walbert, 2009), and Jim Crow laws. History showed the channels through which minority populations began to enter the educational sector and the unequal services minorities received compared to White schools (Giesberg et al., 1990-2017). Eventually, laws allowed the creation of higher education institutions for minorities (HBCU's) with the intention of keeping minorities separate from White students (Blackpast.org, 2007-2017; Cornell University, 2017). Segregation laws ruled

the abilities of minorities to gain educations for decades. In 1964, the Civil Rights Act granted more opportunities to minorities and presented the chance to learn at more than Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Once allowed to enter PWI's, minority students' endured different abuses from peers, staff, and faculty (Firmin & Rose, 2013) and, in order to combat racial injustice and to increase educational opportunities for minorities, initiated equality movements on college campuses.

While the movements created change, mistreatment of minority students did not completely vanish. Managing the additional racial stressors influenced minority students' sense of belonging, which created higher rates of low self-esteem, and increased academic stress (Bleidborn et al., 2015; White, 2015). The perceived cultures and climates of PWI's were mostly negative for minority students according to the available limited research. Students were uncomfortable and felt as though, policies changed, but attitudes about minorities did not. Minorities attended college on campuses built by slaves (Cabrera et al., 2016; Patel, 2015) which displayed relics representing the Confederacy. In some cases, statues of pioneering minorities received nooses around the neck while campuses maintained traditions, perceived as hostile, toward minority groups. Members of these groups, once again, did not feel a sense of belongingness on college campuses.

Lacking feelings of belonging had a direct relationship to self-esteem and anxiety (Bleidborn et al., 2015; White, 2015) which led to concerns with college adjustment (Goguen et al., 2014) and eventually college retention. In an attempt to combat the negative feelings of minority students and to change the climates and cultures of higher education institutions, many PWI's created programs to support minority students. The

programs received mixed reviews. Some students perceived the programs as supportive and to bring enlightenment to campuses while others thought the programs caused divide between the races of the students at their institutions. Positions called Chief Diversity Officer were created to help guide these programs and to help various campus departments understand how they could be a part of the changing of the school cultures and climates.

In addition to the creation of the CDO position to help promote change in higher education, initiatives to increase the diversity of the faculty arose. The hiring of minority faculty and staff was slow and did not match the growth of the minority student population (Thelin, 2017) but created a few more opportunities for minority mentors. Research discovered when minority students found mentorship in minority faculty students received more support and had higher expectations for academic performance (Abdul-Raheem, 2016). Perhaps the increase in minority staff allowed an opportunity for minority students to gain access those with whom they felt safe and could discuss the racial climate (Pratt, 2016).

The climate and culture of higher education at PWI's had not been a strongly studied topic in relationship to minority student perceptions and retention. Research conducted of the different topics indicated a connection did exist. When minority students felt the school culture encouraged a hostile racial climate, they experienced less feelings of belonging (Harper, 2013), suffered higher rates of psychological disturbance (O'Neil, 2016) and had lower rates of retention (Fairly et al., 2014). In creating different types of support systems for minority students, institutions sparked conversations about campus climate and campus culture and how both influenced minority student

comfortability, perceptions, and retention. Kim, Krumrei-Mancuso, Newton, and Wilcox (2013), implicated institutions carry a responsibility to commit to the success of the students. For minority students, as suggested by the research detailed throughout the review, success begins with receiving supports related to racial identity and experiences. The next chapter will explain the research methods and design along with details of the research questions and null hypotheses, which will later help to identify the perceptions of minority students at a small, private, Midwestern, predominantly White institution.

Chapter Three: Research Method and Design

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between minority student perceptions of their institution to their perceptions of higher education through a mixed-methods approach. Gathering information about the connection to retention was also a goal. This study focused on undergraduate minority students from a small, private, Midwestern institution. Information gathered through surveys and focus groups during the 2017-2018 school year helped identify minority student perceptions and retention at the research university. Information gathered through surveys and focus groups during the 2017-2018 school year helped identify minority student perceptions and retention at the research university.

The quantitative data provided information that identified specific perceptions that may or may not have influenced students' decisions to remain enrolled at the institution. These instruments investigated students' perceptions of the school culture and climate. Coverage of these questions included institutional inclusiveness (socially and academically), campus diversity, and racial tension on campus. Completing the qualitative component allowed further analysis of student perceptions of the campus culture and climate and a more detailed conversation about why the students did or did not want to return to the campus.

There is currently limited information on the relationship between minority student perceptions and the connection to minority student retention. The researcher hoped to find information to help higher education institutions identify ways to support

marginalized groups. Another goal was to use the information on perceptions to increase minority student retention.

Quantitative Data Collection

Upon approval to submit the study to the Institutional Review Board (Appendix A) and receiving approval from the board (Appendix A), the researcher gained permission to access the Black Student Union (see Appendix B). Next, the researcher requested permission to attend the Black Student Union meeting to present the study and request participation (see Appendix B). The agreed upon meeting was attended and students were informed of the study. As a group, the consent form (see Appendix C) received a review and students asked questions as needed. Once comfortable with the study and participation requirements, students signed and placed the consent form into a manila envelope. Upon submitting consent forms, students received culture, climate, and perceptions inventories (see Appendix D).

The school culture section of the inventory was adapted from portions of a Diversity survey created by Sedlacek (n.d.) while the school climate section of the inventory received modifications and reprints with permission of Teach Tolerance, a project of the Southern Poverty Law Center (n.d.). Once complete, students placed their survey in a manila envelope and after receipt of every survey, the instruments remained in a safe at the researcher's home. After the meeting, the university received another tabling request (see Appendix E) for space use in the dining hall to try to gain more participants. On the designated date, the recruitment table was set up and students received information about the study. Those who were interested in participating read the consent form, after which, they had an opportunity to ask questions. Once ready,

participants placed their signed consent forms in a manila envelope then received the culture, climate, and perceptions inventories. Upon completion, the participants placed their own inventories into the designated manila envelope. After the collection of all inventories, the consent forms and data went into the safe at the researcher's home.

Due to the small number of participants, the researcher set up another data collection opportunity. The tabling request was completed and, on the approved date, the researcher set up another table to gain student participation. This visit was during the lunch hour of the dining hall where student participation remained minimal. Students who chose to participate received the consent form and the opportunity to ask questions. Then, students received the survey instrument after they placed their consent form in the manila envelope. Once done, students placed their completed surveys in the appropriate manila envelope. All consent forms and data went into the safe at the researcher's home.

According to the research university website (Lindenwood University, 2015), there were 1,042 African American undergraduate students enrolled (Lindenwood University, 2015, p. 1). The goal was to secure a convenience sample of 105 participants for the study. This was the goal because, based on a target population of 1,000, a "sample that has less than 20 to 30 individuals is too small… a sample of 250… [is] needlessly large… [so] a sample should be as large as the researcher can obtain with a reasonable expenditure of time and energy" (Fraenkel, Hyun, & Wallen, 2015, p. 103). To reach 105 African American undergraduates, or approximately 10% of the population, seemed to be attainable. The minimum number of participants was 50 because that number was "deemed necessary to establish the existence of a relationship" (Fraenkel et al., 2015, p. 103).

Methodology

In order to analyze the results, the researcher identified two statements from the survey instrument to represent the culture of higher education, one statement to represent the culture of the school, one statement to represent the climate of higher education, and two statements to represent the climate of the school. The statements chosen to represent the culture of higher education include "Respect for the beliefs and values of others in higher education" and "Inclusiveness of minority students at colleges and universities". Next, school culture was represented by the statement "This college promotes respect for diversity". To represent the climate of higher education, the statement "College campuses are safe for ethnic minorities" was selected. Last, school climate was represented by the statements "Faculty and staff on this campus work actively to create a safe and welcoming environment for every student" and "Every student on this campus feels like he or she belongs here". The questions selected for data analysis best represented the culture and climate sections due to their ability to encapsulate all other statements in their respective categories.

Responses for each of these questions, after transferred to an Excel sheet, received quantification then analyzation. First, the researcher translated the Likert Scale into numbers. Strongly disagree became one, disagree became two, neutral became three, agree became four, and strongly agree became five. Next, the researcher inserted the student responses into an Excel file. Then, the researcher grouped together the correlating numbers to the statements used to represent the culture of higher education and averaged the scores. The two statements used to represent the school climate

responses received the same quantification. Numbers to represent the student responses for the school culture and higher education climate received placement in the Excel file.

Upon averaging the culture of higher education and school climate responses along with inserting the school culture and higher education climate responses, the researcher calculated the Pearson Product –Moment Correlation (PPMC). A relationship was determined by inserting the averages for the climate of higher education, the independent variable in the test, and the averages for the climate of the school, the dependent variable. Next, the test determined the relationship between the average scores for the culture of higher education, the independent variable, and the culture of the school, the dependent variable. Both significances then received *t*-tests. The PPMC's nature of "determin[ing] the strength of the linear relationship between two variables" (Bluman, 2013, p. 533) made it the best choice for this study. The hypotheses of the study involved exploring the relationships between the way minority students perceived the culture and climate of their school to their perceptions of the culture and climate of higher education. The tests performed provided analyses of these relationships.

Qualitative Data Collection

The instruments requested students to indicate their willingness to participate in a focus group. Participants who were interested received communication via email to determine the best date. Once the students selected a date, the researcher requested permission from the institution to use a classroom space to conduct the focus groups (see Appendix F). Once approved, students received information about their meeting time. On the scheduled date, the researcher arrived to the meeting location for the group and

waited for their arrival. After waiting approximately 40 minutes for the students to arrive, the researcher left after none of the participants showed up.

Next, the researcher amended the IRB application (see Appendix G) to include interviews of participants. Upon receiving approval of the updated application, the researcher contacted the students to request interviews. One student responded and completed a 30-minute interview a few days later. Approximately two weeks after the initial interview request, the researcher made another attempt to interview students, to which, no participants responded. Two weeks later, the researcher contacted the advisor to the Black Student Union (BSU) to request access to students as another attempt to interview students. During a routine conversation with the executive board of the BSU, the advisor made the students aware of the interview opportunity. One student expressed an interest and interviewed within three days. One week after the interview of this student, an original participant contacted the researcher about completing an interview and spoke to the researcher within a few days. No other students expressed a desire to participate in the interview process.

Interviewed participants seemed very eager to share their stories. Each student spoke about the experiences that helped shape their perceptions of the institution. While speaking, students sounded relaxed and forthcoming with information as though they were comfortable with the researcher. Upon completion of the interviews, the researcher raffled a $50.00 gift card for the students who interviewed. To move forward in the analyzation process, the researcher created pseudonyms for the participants then coded the information based on their responses. After coding the responses, the researcher re-analyzed the data to ensure proper grouping then assessed and recorded how the answers

related to each research question. Three years after the defense of the dissertation, the researcher will destroy the data.

Null Hypotheses and Research Questions

Null Hypothesis 1: There is not a relationship between students' perception of campus climate and their perception of the climate of higher education.

Null Hypothesis 2: There is not a relationship between students' perception of campus culture and their perception of the culture of higher education.

Research Question 1: How do minority students perceive their institution?

Subquestion: How is inclusion related to minority students' perceptions of their institution?

Research Question 2: How do minority students feel about inclusion and retention at their institution?

Research Question 3: What factors contribute to minority students' determination to remain in college?

Subquestion: How is inclusion related to how minority students' determination to remain in college?

Reliability and Measurement

Two instruments created the culture and climate survey for quantitative data collection purposes. First, the culture survey was adapted from portions of a Diversity survey instrument created by Sedlacek (n.d.). This survey, constructed of multiple sections, used the Likert scale to determine how much a respondent agreed or disagreed with statements. Sections addressed racial and ethnic climate, the schools addressing of diversity, general campus experiences, personal campus experiences, and diversity

programming. The last section, future intentions, required yes and no responses, multiple choice, and short answer responses.

The survey, used at different higher education institutions to gain an understanding of campus culture, gained insight of student thoughts on campus culture improvement. One such institution was the University of Maryland where the instrument explored student thoughts on diversity and campus climate. The survey investigated student perceptions of how the institution promoted ethnic and racial diversity. Only portions of the survey deemed relevant to the research questions and hypotheses were included in this research. Other uses of the instrument include publications of research in the *Journal of College Counseling,* the *Journal of Counseling and Development,* and in *Noncognitive Assessment in Higher Education.*

The next survey, modified and reprinted with permission of Teaching Tolerance, a project of the Southern Poverty Law Center (n.d.), gauged campus climate. The survey was composed of one Likert scale section that address student interactions, with students and adults, and one true/ false section which addresses racism and safety. Originally, the instrument encouraged institutions to identify differences between student and teacher perceptions of school climate, for professional development purposes, and for school climate assessments. The only components of the school climate survey used in the present study were the statements with a direct relationship. This instrument, created to steer discussions and to offer guidance on focus areas, does not have a scoring component. The researcher completed an exhaustive search to determine reliability but was not able to identify other institutions who used the instrument.

Limitations

The researcher experienced limitations while collecting data. To gain participation, the researcher initially met with the Black Student Union where 13 students took the survey instrument. A week later, the researcher set up a survey station at the dining hall during dinnertime to recruit more participants. Only five students took the survey. As one last effort, the researcher set up another survey station in the same dining hall at lunchtime about two weeks after the second data collection process where three more students participated in taking the survey instrument. Twenty total undergraduate, African American students participated in the survey instruments, which is a much smaller number than suggested by research. During data analyzation, one student revealed himself or herself as a graduate student on the survey instrument, so the researcher discarded those results. Ideally, there would have been a minimum of 50 participants to establish a relationship according to Fraenkel et al. (2015).

Another limitation experienced by the researcher was participation with the focus group. Upon completing the analyzation of the survey instruments, the researcher contacted students via email if participants indicated an interest in participating in the focus group. When information about the session went out to the participants to select a date, only three students responded. Once finalized, all students received information of the details so those available could have the option to participate. During the designated focus group session, no students showed up. The researcher waited approximately 40 minutes before deciding to end the session.

Due to the lack of participation with the focus group, the researcher submitted an amended IRB form requesting the option to conduct interviews with the interested

participants. Upon approval, the researcher contacted the students individually to request interviews. One student responded and participated in an interview within three days. The second attempt to gain participation resulted in no student responses to the interview inquiry. After low student participation, the researcher contacted the advisor to the Black Student Union who connected the researcher to students for interview participation. Once again, there was low participation from the students. The researcher made contact with the students suggested by the advisor, after which, one student responded agreeing to an interview but continuously rescheduled.

The Research Site and Participants

The research gained a convenience sample by conducting the study at the institution of the researcher. The researcher had no relationship with the participants other than attending the same institution. This private, Midwestern university consisted mostly of White students with African Americans creating 7.5% of the student body. Ideally, the range of students would have been 50 to 105 minority, undergraduates but the actual participation was 20 for quantitative data collection and 3 for qualitative data collection.

Students who chose to participate were African American undergraduates. Both males and females participated in the survey completion process while only female students participated in the interview component. Of the 20 survey takers, one held freshman status, three held sophomore status, six students held junior status, and 10 held senior status. The women who partook in the interview process were each juniors entering their senior years.

Reflexivity

The researcher, deeply reflected in this study, was an African American student who only experienced attendance at predominantly White higher education institutions. Feelings of exclusion, personal perceptions of higher education, and persistence drove the researcher to wonder how other minority students received their higher education experience at a Midwestern predominantly White institution. Research showed reflexivity as a positive component to phenomenological studies. As stated by McLeod (2015), "[r]eflexivity is not a matter of bias… researcher reflexivity allows the researcher to make the most of what he or she brings to the research process" (p. 98). As a person who identified with the participants, students were willing to be open about their views of the school, oftentimes, offering unsolicited information. For example, after completing a survey, one student offered information about a photo, he perceived as racist, hanging on campus. He shared his hopes of getting the image returned to storage.

McLeod (2015) provided insight for why reflexivity may have encouraged a level of comfort with the researcher from the students by stating, "previous personal experience of a topic may sensitize the researcher to the deeper significance of that topic in the lives of informants, and may make the researcher more credible and trustworthy to informants" (p. 98). The participants of the study were comfortable enough with the researcher to openly respond to questions and provide additional information. According to Georgiadou (2016), "the researcher's reflexivity and ability to explore… can improve the quality of the study" (p. 367). Reflexivity appears to have been of benefit to the current study as the questions became personal and sometimes required a connection between the researcher and the participants.

Summary

This study, conducted at a private, Midwestern institution, took place in the fall of 2017, spring of 2018, and summer of 2018. The purpose of the study was to learn the perceptions of minority students at a PWI and the influence of these perceptions on retention. Specifically, the researcher was interested in the African American perception of the institutional climate and culture. Information, gathered using a mixed-methods approach, allowed the researcher to have test data along with supportive statements to help explain results. In the next chapter, the researcher provided an explanation of quantitative and qualitative results.

Chapter Four: Results

Introduction

Based on the methodology of Chapter Three, the researcher was able to respond to the following null hypotheses and research questions:

Null Hypothesis 1: There is no relationship between students' perception of campus climate and their perception of the climate of higher education.

Null Hypothesis 2: There is no relationship between students' perception of campus culture and their perception of the culture of higher education.

Research Question 1: How do minority students perceive their institution?

Subquestion: How is inclusion related to minority students' perceptions of their institution?

Research Question 2: How do minority students feel about inclusion and retention in at their institution?

Research Question 3: What factors contribute to minority students' determination to remain in college?

Subquestion: How is inclusion related to minority students' determination to remain in college?

Review of Collection Methods

In order to answer the hypotheses and research questions, students responded to a survey instrument, which measured student perceptions of culture and climate at the institution. Participation, initially gained through meeting with the Black Student Union (BSU), also happened through recruitment by setting up survey tables twice on campus. At the end of the survey, students received instructions to leave their email address if they

were interested in participating in a focus group. Thirteen of the 20 participants indicated an interest in the focus group. Three of the 13 students agreed to the focus group time, but none of the students came to participate. Due to a lack of participation in the focus group, the researcher amended the IRB and received approval to conduct interviews. After the first outreach for interviews, one participant responded. The next attempt to gain participation went unanswered by the students. Next, the researcher contacted the advisor to the BSU to request assistance. The advisor reached out to students to inform them of the interview opportunity, to which, one student responded. Then, one of the original participants reached out to the researcher to participate in the interview component.

Results: Quantitative Data

Null Hypothesis 1: There is no relationship between students' perception of campus climate and their perception of the climate of higher education.

In order to determine whether a relationship existed between participants' perception of the culture of higher education and their perception of the culture of their school, the researcher conducted a test of correlation. The analysis revealed there was not a relationship between the two perceptions, $r= .076$, $t(18)=0.323$, $p = .7501$. The results created a failure to reject the null hypothesis. When averaged, students' perceptions of the culture of higher education was 2.975 while the average student perception of the culture of the school was 3.6, which did not prove to be significantly different. These results indicated the students were relatively neutral in their perception of higher education and, on average, had confliction between neutral perceptions and positive perceptions of the school culture.

Null Hypothesis 2: There is no relationship between students' perception of campus culture and their perception of the culture of higher education.

In order to determine whether a relationship existed between participants' perception of the climate of higher education and their perception of the climate of their school, the researcher conducted a test of correlation. This analysis revealed that there was not a relationship between the two perceptions, $r = -.022$, $t(18) = -0.093$, $p = .9266$. The researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis.

Table 1

Student Average Survey Responses to Culture of Higher Education, School Culture, Climate of Higher Education, and School Climate

	Culture		Climate	
Student	Higher Education	School	Higher Education	School
1	1	4	2	2.5
2	1	4	2	2.5
3	2	4	4	1.5
4	4	4	4	4.5
5	3	4	4	2
6	3	2	4	2.5
7	3	2	2	2
8	3	4	4	3
9	4	4	4	1.5
10	3	2	4	3
11	3	2	2	3
12	3	4	2	2.5
13	4	4	4	3
14	1.5	4	1	2.5
15	3	4	4	2.5
16	3.5	4	2	4
17	5	4	2	3
18	3	4	4	3
19	2.5	3	2	2.5
20	4	5	2	2.5
Student Averages	2.975	3.6	2.95	2.675

When averaging, the results indicated a mostly neutral perception of the climate of higher education with a score of 2.94. The average perception of the culture of the school just barely leaned toward neutrality with an average of 2.68, which did not prove to be significantly different.

Results: Qualitative Data

Research Question 1*: How do minority students perceive their institution?*

The first research question investigated how minority students perceived their institution and how student perceptions related to inclusion. Common themes included institution created opportunities for inclusion- including campus programs, acknowledgement of African American students on campus, campus safety, and experiences of racism including microaggressions, slurs, and epithets. Interviewees revealed detailed information about their perceptions but survey responses varied and sometimes seemed contradictory. For example, one survey indicated a belief the institution promoted respect for diversity but did not agree on whether the university made an effort to improve relations between people of different ethnic backgrounds, did a good job providing programs to promote multicultural understanding, nor provided balanced coverage of racial and ethnic issues in the school publication.

Research Question 1, Theme 1: Institutional respect for beliefs and promoting respect for diversity. Student survey instruments indicated the perception of the culture of higher education to be respectful of the beliefs and values of others, many believing the institution promoted respect for diversity. Upon further analysis, students recognized opportunities to be in diverse environments on campus but also suggested diversity was not a reason they chose to attend the institution. Overall, surveys showed

participants believed there was a lack of encouragement to explore the history and cultures of different ethnic groups. According to students, the institution did not provide enough programs and activities to promote multicultural understanding and the student newspaper did not represent a balanced view of racial events and issues. One shared view was at least one course on the role of ethnicity and race should be a graduation requirement, and the students believed attending programs on diversity contributed to the goal of community building.

Community building from the perspective of the interviewees would involve the institution encouraging students to partake in programs despite to which student group an event caters. When asked if the institution promoted inclusion between the different cultural peer groups, Kimberly, a junior student entering her senior year, did not believe so due to a lack of student recruitment for programs and due to a perception of African American student oppression. Similarly, Maria, also a junior, and Nikki, another junior, suggested a lack of community building through their views of a lack of variety in programming. The perceptions of these students indicated community building as challenged because they suggest not all students have equal encouragement to engage with students who differ from themselves.

The students who agreed to interview further elaborated on the survey responses about minority student perceptions though discussion. Kimberly, indicated feelings of invisibility toward minority students and stated the institution should 'have [had] a program that help[ed] acknowledge the presence of African American students on campus' to help ease minority student anxiety due to the culture shock. Maria shared how '[m]ostly everything was geared toward White students… Administrators… [did

not] ask our input… performers are country or pop stars. I've been here three years and there have never been hip hop or R&B artists'. Nikki also suggested, 'most of the events [were] catered to the White students.'

Kimberly described a lack of an African American Studies program, which she believed would help African American students 'figure out who they are and who they want to be'. She also believed the institution lacked cultural events in stating, 'I think there aren't any at all or there are very few…Although it's a Liberal Arts institution, it has a lot of Conservative values and [administrators] are hesitant to approve many multicultural events'. The previous statement suggested there was a lack of opportunities for programming, which could have allowed students to learn about other cultures. Maria also shared the institution should have created 'more events geared toward the Black community or any other community like Hispanic or Asian'. In relation to opportunities to learn about other cultures, Nikki identified a lack thereof through campus programs. Nikki stated, '[t]he majority of the events for diversity only [came] during specific times like Black history month, which [were] attended mostly by minorities… but most of the events [were] catered to the White students.'

Research Question 1, Theme 2: Campus safety and belongingness. Climate related survey responses provided more details about the minority student perception. Students indicated having seen and analyzed campus safety data and reports along with having discussed the campus climate with others. Slightly more survey participants agreed college campuses were safe for ethnic minorities and believed students received respect from other students, faculty, and staff in higher education. Contrary to the belief of safety, many students recognized the presence of bias on college campuses. The

indication was witnessing the use of derogatory remarks including racial slurs or epithets, the teasing or ridiculing of students, and having seen biased vandalism or graffiti on campus. When asked to indicate a number of times they witnessed these incidences, most responses ranged from one to five or more. A few students indicated countless times of having witnessed racial slurs, epithets, and derogatory put-downs on campus. Exposure to the aforementioned situations may have influenced the students' sense of belonging.

Other survey responses included perceptions of students mostly interacted with people like themselves although they mostly believed the campus created opportunities to learn about others. Noteworthy responses were comprised of most students believing not every student felt as though they belonged on campus and they did not perceive the faculty, staff, administrators, and students as listening to one another. Although students thought there was a lack of listening across roles on campus, students who partook in the survey still understood how and felt comfortable reporting harassment or racial abuse to school officials.

When interviewed, students made similar implications to the perceived culture of the institution. Kimberly perceived the campus as a safe environment for African American students and regarded the security staff as friendly with no weapons. She shared how, 'the thought of being racially profiled has never been a worry' at the institution. Although she perceived a safe campus climate, Kimberly noted being stereotyped and as having 'racial slurs and derogatory statements sometimes appear[ing]' on her Residential Advisor white board. Kimberly also discussed encountering the 'N'

word when in groups with non-African American students where she felt forced to speak up.

Some of Kimberly's other experiences involved feelings of judgement from African American students, majority students, as well as students of African descent. She shared how, 'based on people's prejudices [she was] already judged'. She also said how once people learned her personality and judged her on her character, she received 'microaggressions [such as] you're so well spoken, you're so well rounded, and, oh, you're not here on an athletic scholarship?' Kimberly also asserted feelings of having to have constantly kicked down doors- with minority and majority students. Another perception of Kimberly was, in comparison to her non-minority peers who had the 'privilege to be able to move into different contexts and be seen as intelligent, or authoritative, or beautiful, while [she had] to prove [she was] capable of" all those things as well.

Maria also shared feelings of a safe campus but discussed a time where she witnessed racial tension through a phone application called YikYak. Her story described the application as fun because information about parties and campus events were often posted 'but people began to post racially charged comments [which] caused arguments'. Another interesting piece of information shared by Maria was how 'she [could] tell peoples mindsets- [students would not] do anything blatant, but from conversations, [she could] tell White students [had] racism and tension but not on purpose'. The experiences of Nikki was unique compared to the other two interviewees because she perceived the campus as a safe place and had not witnessed any racially charged events at the institution.

Research Question 2: How do minority students feel about inclusion and retention in higher education? Research question two investigated how minority students felt about institutional inclusion and retention. Related themes included institution created opportunities for inclusion, comfortability of minority students, organizational membership, and retention. Deep analysis of the surveys showed some relationships between students with a perception of inclusion and campus involvement. Interviews represented similar relationships and showed a higher sense of inclusion for the student who had a closer connection to White peers on campus. Survey responses also captured different perceptions of higher education inclusion.

Research Question 2, Theme 1: Inclusion of minorities. Minority students had nearly equal views on whether or not the institution was inclusive of minority students. One form of inclusion participants identified was the chance to learn about other cultures. There were opportunities to learn about different cultural groups through socialization, participation in school programs, and in courses. Interestingly, students did not identify activities and programs in residence halls as an opportunity for such learning. Most of the students attended or participated in diversity programs during the academic year the survey was completed.

During interviews, students expressed a variety of perceptions of inclusion and retention in higher education. Kimberly discussed how the institution 'did a good job creating opportunities but not recruiting' students. She suggested there were plenty of organizations to join but the responsibility was on the students to seek membership. Kimberly perceived students to have 'created [their own] culture of inclusion, getting to know each other and chances to [have] experienced new things'. This student further

attributed her sense of belonging to her attractive personality when she stated, 'I fit because I bring a different perspective to anything I'm a part of so people feel invited by that. [I] will listen to and value your opinion no matter what… so people are attracted and engaged.'

Maria described inclusion as a push by the institution to create a diverse environment. This perceived goal of diversity helps Maria 'to be around people of [her] culture' which is how she felt included although she later eluded to there not being enough African American students on campus. Compared to minority students, Maria felt included because there were 'different organizations to cater to different races'. Contrarily, her perception of inclusion, related to non-minority students, was not as inclusive. Maria indicated the institution made an effort to offer many events for students, but 'most events the campus offer[ed] cater[ed] to the likes of the White students'. Her suggestion was for the university to make a committee who would speak to minority students about what events they would like to have on campus to feel more included.

Maria attributes her comfortability on campus with the amount of time she had been on campus. She shared, 'I think now that I am about to be a senior, I feel comfortable. When I first came, I didn't feel comfortable because I was new but I definitely feel comfortable now.' Although she found a level of comfort at the university, Maria recognized she was likely not as comfortable as White students 'because there are not a lot of Black people here. They (non-minorities) are always around their race and have people to flock to, but I'm also always around their race.' This statement indicated a lack of feeling completely included on campus.

Nikki did not notice any specific actions from the university to make minority students feel included. She perceived it to be 'more on the individual to take the first step to feel included and involved.' Her identification of a lack of events geared toward minority students was a reason for there being a lack of inclusion on campus. She seemed to have felt more included as a member of a sorority she identified as predominantly White. This membership allowed her more opportunities for socialization within the majority community. Although sorority membership helped, she stated how she 'fit in less than majority peers' and she 'noticed that it [was] a bit separated between minority students and White students in general.'

What these three interviewees had in common was their initiative to be involved in campus programs and organizations. Their affiliations ranged from the Black Student Union to campus employment to sorority membership. The significance of the campus involvement was most of the students' survey instruments indicated involvement as well. Although there were several students who participated in campus programs, many of those students still did not believe the campus environment was inclusive for minority students.

Research Question 2, Theme 2: Retention not by student choice. Some of the feelings of inclusion, or a lack thereof, had implications for retention as well. All of the survey participants who were not seniors had plans of returning to the institution with one student sharing, 'unfortunately, I will have to. If I had the choice, I would not.' During the interview process, Kim disclosed she would return the following year due to it being her senior year. Maria shared how she really enjoyed the diversity presented on campus and her intention to return was so she could 'take on the role of getting more diversity on

campus.' Nikki also planned to returned but stated, 'Honestly, I don't like it that much but I'm already two years into my program so I don't want to leave. I already transferred in from [another institution] so I don't want to leave, I just want to get it over with.'

Other interesting comments regarding retention surfaced during interviews. In particular, Kimberly identified a lack of resources and support systems as significant in the influence of minority student retention, and shared, 'there is nothing to keep African American students here.' She went on to say the presence of an African American studies program 'could help with retention, [she] knows students who left because of a lack of the program and go somewhere that offers it.' Additionally, Kimberly suggested 'students leave due to financial, academic, and social reasons.' Maria pointed to a seeming 'decline in the Black student [population]… over the years.'

Research Question 3: What factors contribute to minority students' determination to remain in college? The final research question asked what factors contributed to minority students' determination to remain in college and the role inclusion played. Recurrent themes included inclusionary practices of the institution, support systems, and membership in student organizations. Although student involvement, support systems, and views of inclusion varied from one student to the next, each experience formed reasons to support student determination to remain in higher education.

Research Question 3, Theme 1: Student determination. Multiple factors seemed to have influenced minority students' determination to remain in college. Survey instrument participants mostly agreed faculty and staff worked to create a welcoming campus environment, acknowledged students on campus seemed to get along well, and

felt the college promoted respect for diversity. Responses that leaned more favorably toward inclusionary practices of the institution might have been driving factors as previously discussed. The students who interviewed provided additional details to some of the survey responses, but their perceptions sometimes seemed counter to survey responses.

Each interviewee mentioned their perception of the institution providing opportunities for inclusion, despite their view of the institution lacking recruiting tactics. Kimberly thought the university 'did a good job creating opportunities, but not recruiting.' Maria identified the institutions goal for diversity and shared there were 'different organizations to cater to the different races', and Nikki's view was the institution 'could definitely [have] include[d] more because we [were] such a diverse campus.' The similarity between the survey responses and the interviews was the overall agreeance of inclusionary opportunities on campus, but the interviews revealed more details about a lack of recruitment for minority students to become involved on campus. Interviews also revealed the perception of support from faculty and staff.

Research Question 3, Sub theme 1: Faculty support. The students who interviewed had different views on the contribution of faculty, staff, and administration contributing to their determination to remain in college. Kimberly shared, 'professors don't seem to feel like it's their responsibility to help students- they just teach class… If the professors just directed minority students it would [have] help[ed] them.' She also mentioned how faculty and staff provide more education to the students about academic services available at the institution, adding, 'if minority students just knew what to do, they would find their way more easily.' At the completion of her third year of

attendance, Kimberly was able to recall only receiving 'advice related to the class being taught such as networking skills and making connections [from] just a few professors.' She received additional support from the advisors of the BSU and recalled receiving much support her freshman year through meetings with various advisors.

Maria also voiced a concern about being able to receive support from faculty. She mentioned 'there [were] definitely not enough minority faculty. I have only had one Black teacher… There seem[ed] to be many Black faculty in offices but not in the classroom. There [was] definitely not enough (minority faculty) to help us academically.' Maria also mentioned not receiving much support from professors but she would rely on the Student Life faculty and academic advisors. Maria also made multiple references to feeling more supported by minority staff in their efforts to bring programming to campus to appeal more to the African American students. She mentioned a particular staff member on a few occasions and shared how the staff 'who want diversity try to make it inclusive, but it's not on everyone's mind… If it wasn't for Dr. Allen, all events would still be geared toward White people.'

Nikki referred to faculty as 'the middle man because they communicat[ed] with student and administrators, so it [was] important for them to understand minorities because if they [did not] understand, they [could not] represent [minorities] very well.' In her experience, she was able to build a closer rapport with some professors more than others but did not 'have just one professor [she could] go to with problems.' There were not any members of the administrative personnel Nikki could recall receiving support from. Considering the lack of minority faculty and general faculty support identified by

the interview participants, a deeper analysis of the survey instrument revealed low representation of minority faculty with whom the students could identify.

Research Question 3, Sub theme 2: Support systems. During each discussion, the participants mentioned the different support systems they relied on to overcome challenges through their higher education careers. Support systems for Kimberly included her family, church, employment as a residential advisor, and from being a member of different groups on campus. Maria's support system also included family, but she went on to explain her friends and sorority are helpful and listen to her when she needs to talk. Her advisors are also of support. Nikki had a similar support system to the other interviewees as her support system included her parents, sorority, friends from college and high school. Similarly, at least 13 survey participants were involved on campus as they were members of the Black Student Union and many of these students indicated campus connections through program participation.

The connections to student organizations, involvement in campus programs, and connections to faculty and staff was significant because it may have related to retention. All survey participants who were not seniors expressed an intent to return to the institution the following year. Of these students, most indicated extracurricular involvement to some extent. The same analysis holds true for the interview participants. Each student shared an intent to return and were each involved in different organizations. Reasons the interviewees planned to return included Kimberly's view of 'entering my senior year', Maria's goal of 'getting more diversity on campus' along with her liking the institution, and Nikki's responded she did not 'like it much but… [did not] want to

leave… [she] just wanted to get it over with' because she was already well into her program.

Summary

Students shared a variety of perceptions through the survey instruments, which determined relationships between minority student perceptions of school climate and culture compared to the climate and culture of higher education. The results indicated a lack of relationships but also showed mostly neutral perceptions. Some students had highly rated perceptions of the climate and culture of higher education and the school and, of non-seniors, all intended to return the following school year. Even students with low perceptions intended to return to the school.

Some of the perceptions, explained in the qualitative analyses, indicated a need of more support for and inclusion of minority students as well as more advocacy from the faculty and staff. Students generally felt safe despite encounters with racism, prejudices, and microaggressions and mostly relied on family, religion, and campus involvement as support systems. During interviews, students showed the relationship between minority student perceptions of higher education had a variety of connections to retention. One student indicated a knowledge of retention being due to a perception of a lack of inclusion. Her intent to return was due to her desire to create a more diverse and inclusive campus. On the other hand, another students' perception of the institution had no bearing on her intent to return- she just wanted to complete the program. The next chapter will explore implications for the practice and recommendations for future research based on the results discussed in the present chapter.

Chapter Five: Discussion

Introduction

Research conducted by the investigator showed a gap in information about the perceptions of minority students and the connection of these perceptions to retention at PWI's. The inquiries dove into the history of minority student acceptance in higher education and the role an exclusionary past played in higher education opportunities for such students. Information suggested minority students faced a lack of equal opportunities (The Editors, 2017), racism, and prejudices (Firmin & Rose, 2013; Johnson et al., 2013; Means, 2016), with these factors sometimes resulting in poor mental health (Chao et al., 2014; O'Neil, 2016; Sankar, 2014) and academic stress (Camart et al., 2017; Johnson et al., 2013). Some students identified their race as a social barrier (Sinha, 2014) sometimes preventing students from feeling a sense of belongingness. Previous studies also indicated when students felt welcomed on campus, retention and graduation was a likely result (Rizkallah & Seitz, 2017). In order to investigate the relationship between minority student perceptions of higher education and minority student perceptions of their institution, the researcher surveyed African American students at a private, Midwestern, predominantly White institution. Upon completion of quantitative data collection, the researcher interviewed three participants to explore minority student perceptions in detail and to gain insight on the connection to retention.

Study Limitations

The researcher experienced limitations while collecting data. To gain participation, the researcher initially met with the Black Student Union (BSU) where 13 students took the survey instrument. A week later, the researcher set up a survey station

at the dining hall during dinnertime to recruit more participants. Only five students took the survey. As one last effort, the researcher set up another survey station in the same dining hall at lunchtime about two weeks after the second data collection process where three more students participated in taking the survey instrument. Twenty total undergraduate, African American students participated in the survey instruments, which is a much smaller number than suggested by research. During data analyzation, one student revealed himself or herself as a graduate student on the survey instrument, so the researcher discarded those results. Ideally, there would have been a minimum of 50 participants to establish a relationship according to Fraenkel et al. (2015).

Another limitation experienced by the researcher was participation with the focus group. Upon completing the analyzation of the survey instruments, the researcher contacted students via email if they were interested in participating in the focus group. When the students received information about the session for date selection, only three students responded. Once finalized, all students received the details of the focus group so those available could have the option to participate. During the designated focus group session, no students came to participate. The researcher waited approximately 40 minutes before deciding to end the session.

Due to the lack of participation with the focus group, the researcher submitted an amended IRB form requesting the option to conduct interviews with the interested participants. Once approved, the researcher contacted the students individually to request interviews. One student responded and interviewed within three days. After two more attempts to gain more participation, to no avail, the researcher contacted the advisor to the BSU to request access to the students for interview purposes. The advisor contacted

several students to gauge interest in research participation. One student responded to the inquiry and interviewed within a week. About one week later, one of the original students interested in participating in the focus group responded to the interview inquiry. She interviewed within a week. In addition, the researcher was only able to interview female participants as no male students responded to the requests. Due to four months of contacting students with little success, the researcher determined the best way to proceed with the qualitative analysis was with the data already collected although more participation would have been ideal.

Test Results: Quantitative Data

The quantitative data revealed a lack of relationships between the minority student perceptions of the culture of higher education and their perception of the school. Analyses also indicated no relationship between the minority student perception of the climate of higher education and the perception of school climate. The researcher failed to reject both hypotheses.

Survey participants indicated an average belief of a positive perception of the school culture but the perceptions of the culture of higher education, school climate, and climate of higher education scored slightly lower. Students viewed the institution as diverse but perceived a lack of encouragement to explore different cultural groups, a non-balanced view of racial events and issues in school publications, along with a desire of graduation requirements to include at least one course on ethnicity and race. Although some students indicated several experiences of racism on campus, they feel safe.

Other survey implications included a lack of a sense of belonging and student perceptions that members of campus did not do a good job of listening to one another.

Although students identified a lack of communication around campus, they still felt that faculty and staff created a welcoming campus environment. All students who partook in the survey instrument, and who were not graduating, indicated an intent to return to the institution the following school year- although one student suggested their return was not by choice.

Test Results: Qualitative Data

Qualitative data provided an opportunity for deeper analysis of the minority student perception. One of the three participant's experience was unique due to her close affiliations with majority race students; nonetheless, this participant had some of the same experiences as the others. Discussions revealed student perceptions of the institution providing many opportunities for inclusion, but students emphasized how they had to seek the opportunities on their own. Each interviewee had membership in campus organizations, which acted as support systems, along with a few minority staff, churches, family members, and friends.

Despite having a wide range of support, participants identified low African American representation on campus as aiding to their level of belongingness. Those who interviewed expressed concern of an overall lack of support from faculty and staff. One perception was professors did not seem to help beyond classwork and there were too few minority staff members willing to advocate for minority student inclusion. The participants' sense of belonging was also due to a perceived lack of programming geared toward the Black student population and their experiences involving racism, stereotypes, and microaggressions.

A recurrent discussion involved students feeling the constant need to prove themselves as worthy of student status along with the need to address microaggressions and other forms of racism as encounters happened. A participant identified the ability of sensing unconscious racism and tension from White students during interactions. One student identified the need to prove their worthiness to other minority students along with their majority peers. Although two of the participants had some negative experiences, each student identified a sense of safety on campus.

Another concern expressed by a participant was feelings of invisibility as a minority student in feeling the institution could make more efforts to recognize minority students are a part of the campus community. The implication was more institutional effort toward minority student existence may decrease minority student anxiety. One interviewee acknowledged minority students have to make an effort to find one another on campus while people who look like them surround White students. In addition to being a part of the majority, these students have most events catered to them further adding to minority student feelings of invisibility. Minority students did not feel an acknowledgement of their existence on campus, but indicated feelings of campus safety, which included friendly, weapon-free security guards.

The responses differed about how well participants enjoyed their time at the institution ranging from an overall positive experience to simply taking the necessary steps to graduate. Students expressed an intent to return the following school year, mostly due to the upcoming year being their final year. These particular students decided to return to the institution but acknowledged knowing many other students who have decided to leave due to a low level of comfort, a lack of support systems, and a lack of

programs for African American students. Though each participant's experiences varied to some degree, they all felt their perceptions were indicative of the minority student experience at PWI's in general. Due to their perceptions, some participants hope to find ways to diversify campus programming, help minority students understand how to become involved, and create an overall better experience for other minority students.

Implications for Practice

The perceptions and experiences of the minority students from this study could represent a disparity in inclusionary practices and retention for African American students who attended PWI's. Implications include the possibility that higher education climates and cultures at PWI's failed to adjust to the changing demographic of the student body. Another implication was the idea of such institutions not adjusting policies and practices to meet the academic and social needs of the Black student population.

First, this study implied a possible disparity in the inclusionary practices of different racial groups. Nonetheless, the demographics of higher education continue to shift from the White male to include a multitude of genders, races, and ethnicities, but the lack of inclusion shows how institutions may not adjust quickly enough to these changes. With these adjustments would come modifications to policies and practices to address proactively the various needs of minority students to prevent their feeling like afterthoughts. Without feeling a sense of belonging, some student groups may feel less inclined to continue their educational journeys. Without providing equal considerations for all student groups, institutions may be aiding in oppressing the minority population.

The aforementioned implications were important because of the possible connection to retention for African American students. When there was a perceived lack

of support, guidance, or inclusion on campus, interview participants reported other students to have left the institution. Research indicated, students who "ha[ve] negative interactions and experiences [tend] to…withdraw from… the institution" (Rizkallah & Seitz, 2017, p. 47). Minority students may also need more guidance at institutions of higher education due to the exclusionary past preventing some of them from having family members who could help with institutional navigation. The interviews conducted in this study pointed to first generation college students sometimes lacking proper family support.

The research discussed in this writing helped provide a view of the African American experience at PWI's. To understand the needs of this population means institutions will better recognize how to address the needs of minority students. The concerns voiced in this study are an opportunity for administrators to become aware of racist events on campus as well as determine recruitment methods for minority student participation in campus programs to improve their sense of inclusion. Other concerns the institution may focus on include how staff can help students feel more empowered and knowledgeable with faculty members reflecting on insight they may be able to provide students that is not content related. In addition, the research implies a need for a mentoring program geared toward first generation, African American students. Providing mentors for these students may help reduce anxiety, improve student campus navigation, and may help students feel an overall sense of inclusion on their campus. A mentoring program could also imply better experiences and retention for minority students because they may perceive a true consideration for their presence on campus.

Recommendations for Future Research

Based on the present study, the researcher has developed several recommendations for future research. First, the benefits of a mentoring program is worthy of investigation. Specifically, the information would need to address first generation minority students. First generation students from the study indicated feeling lost on campus and in need of guidance. Interviews pointed to a lack of understanding of how to use resources available on campus. Providing a mentoring program may help improve the minority students' experience when attempting to navigate higher education as they will have guidance.

A second recommendation includes investigating the benefits of a required diversity course for all students at PWI's. Research should include the influence of an educational multicultural course exploring the disbanding of biases and prejudices toward different races. Questions to answer include whether diversity courses reduce the incidents of racism at PWI's, if minority students feel more included on campus when misinformation about different races are dispelled, and whether or not the overall comfort level of minority students increases as more of their peers complete the course. A study such as this could also explore if a culture related course could help students with a lack of exposure to people outside of theirs would help students see other cultures through a different lens.

The next future study recommendation is an exploration of how African American Studies programs have benefited Black students in higher education. The study could be comparative investigating how the results of an African American Studies program may differ between students from a PWI and those attending an HBCU. During

the present study, one student indicated several students left the institution due to the lack of an African American Studies program. One could research why the absence of such a course of study would make a student transfer institutions. The researcher would also suggest studying the retention rates of minority students at PWI's. This investigation should include reasons for departure and a tracking of whether a student enrolled in a different institution or completely dropped out of higher education. Results from this type of investigation would help identify more adjustments higher education institutions can make in order to retain minority students.

Last, the researcher recommends a future investigation of how well different minority groups exist at PWI's. The current study focused on the African American population, but other minority groups experience their own struggles. Asian students must manage the stereotype of being "the model minority" (Lin-Sommer & Lucek, 2015), along with other minority groups who must learn to balance various stereotypes. It would be worthwhile to see how these groups, and others manage their higher education experiences. Other groups to explore, outside of different racial groups, include the LGBTQ community, persons with disabilities, and women. Any group who once faced exclusion from higher education deserves an investigation to provide an understanding of how well PWI's are able to serve particular groups.

Conclusion

As society becomes more inclusive of people who do not identify as White male, institutions of higher education must adjust. Quantitative data indicates a lack of a relationship between perceptions of institution and perceptions of higher education, but qualitative results suggests minority students may have some concerns about fitting into

the setting of higher education at PWI's and provide insight for the connection to retention. The present research indicated, while African Americans can enroll at colleges and universities, their presence lacks reflection in the culture and lacks respect in the climate at PWI's (Firmin & Rose, 2013; Hoffman & Mitchell, 2016). Methods to make African American students feel more inclusive include talking to members of the Black student body to find out the needs for the population. To begin an approach this way would allow administrators to understand the day-to-day concerns of these students, their desires for campus programs and entertainment, and their desires to have course studies dedicated to their race. Those serving in higher education must receive the task of making all students feel welcome. As indicated by participants, students feel as though faculty and staff do not provide support and they feel like an after-thought to campus programming. Members of leadership should investigate how to address the minority student perception.

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Appendix A: IRB Approvals

IRBNet Board Action

ML

Michael Leary <no-reply@irbnet.org>

Fri 12/1/2017, 11:48 AM

CARR, MELODIE A (Student)
Inbox

Please note that Lindenwood University Institutional Review Board has taken the following action on IRBNet:

Project Title: [1160764-1] A Mixed Method Study Investigating the Relationship Between Minority Student Perceptions of Higher Education and Minority Student Retention
Principal Investigator: Melodie Carr-Winston, B.A. & M.A.T.

Submission Type: New Project
Date Submitted: November 21, 2017

Action: APPROVED
Effective Date: December 1, 2017
Review Type: Expedited Review

Should you have any questions you may contact Michael Leary at mleary@lindenwood.edu.

Thank you,
The IRBNet Support Team

www.irbnet.org

Appendix B: Permission to Access the Black Student Union

Dear Ms. Carr,

At the BSU meeting yesterday, the vote was in favor of participating in your study. Your BSU contact will be Ms. Jewell Paine; she will work with you to finalize the details and get good participation from our members. While Jewell is not a member of the Executive Board, she is eager and interested to help with your project. I have copied her on this email to provide her the pertinent background information we've shared to this point. Jewell can be reached at (314) 324-9922, or by email at jp981@lindenwood.edu.

I have absolute confidence in Jewell's ability to assist you. Of course, if there's any way I can be of help, please feel free to contact me, as well.

Sincerely,
Cathy Hart

Cathy Hart / Coordinator, Student & Academic Support Services
Lindenwood University / 209 South Kingshighway • St. Charles, MO 63301
636.949.4768 *(o)* / 636.949.4763 *(f)* / **LinkedIn** / **Facebook** / **Twitter** / **lindenwood.edu**

Hi Melodie!

Thank you so much for reaching out. We are good to go for next Tuesday January 16!

That day, there is a MLK inspired event that the BSU will be attending, because of this, our meeting will be starting a little late. We will be starting our meeting at 4:45 pm and will be done with all business by 5:00 at which point we will invite you to speak. We have the room until 6:00, will that be long enough for your presentation in its entirety?

Best,

Jewell Paine | Lindenwood University - Class of 2020
School of Arts, Media, and Communication
Member, Alpha Phi Omega | Black Student Union | Delta Zeta Sorority
Website: https://www.linkedin.com/in/jewell-paine-4845ba10b
(c): 314-324-9922 (e): jp981@lindenwood.edu

Appendix C: Adult Consent Form

Research Study Consent Form

A Mixed Method Study Investigating the Relationship Between Minority Student Perceptions of Higher Education and Minority Student Retention.

Before reading this consent for, please know:

- Your decision to participate is your choice
- You will have time to think about the study
- You will be able to withdraw from this study at any time
- You are free to ask questions about the study at any time

After reading this consent form, we hope that you will know:

- Why we are conducting this study
- What you will be required to do
- What are the possible risks and benefits of the study
- What alternatives are available, if the study involves treatment or therapy
- What to do if you have questions or concerns during the study

Basic information about this study:

- We are interested in learning about how minority students perceive the culture and climate of higher education and whether their perceptions relate to minority student retention.
- You will complete a survey about minority student perceptions of the climate and culture of higher education and the relationship to minority student retention. Those who are interested will participate in a focus group.
- There are no risks of participating in this study.

Research Study Consent Form

A Mixed Method Study Investigating the Relationship Between Minority Student Perceptions of Higher Education and Minority Student Retention.

You are asked to participate in a research study being conducted by Melodie Carr-Winston under the guidance of Dr. Mitch Nasser at Lindenwood University. Being in a research study is voluntary, and you are free to stop at any time. Before you choose to participate, you are free to discuss this research study with family, friends, or a physician. Do not feel like you must join this study until all of your questions or concerns are answered. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to sign this form.

Why is this research being conducted?
We are doing this study to determine if there is a relationship between minority student perceptions of the culture and climate of higher education and minority student retention in higher education. We will be asking about 104 other people to answer these questions.

What am I being asked to do?

In order to participate, you must:

1. read and sign the Adult Consent Form,
2. complete the culture and climate instruments, and
3. volunteer to attend a focus group session, during which, the researcher will ask you to respond to perception and retention questions- this component of the study is optional and you will be asked to submit an email address if you choose to participate.

How long will I be in this study?

It will take about 15 minutes to answer the culture and climate instruments. Those who volunteer to participate in the focus group will spend approximately 1.5 hours in the session.

What are the risks of this study?

- Privacy and Confidentiality:

  We will be collecting data that could identify you, but each survey response will receive a code so that we will not know who answered each survey. The code connecting you and your data will be destroyed as soon as possible.

What are the benefits of this study?

You will receive no direct benefits for completing this survey. We hope what we learn may benefit other people in the future.

Will I receive any compensation? Those who participate in the focus group will be entered into a raffle for a $50.00 Visa card.

To thank you for taking part in our study, we will conduct the raffle for the $50.00 Visa gift card at the end of the focus group session for those in attendance.

What if I do not choose to participate in this research?

It is always your choice to participate in this study. You may withdraw at any time. You may choose not to answer any questions or perform tasks that make you uncomfortable. If you decided to withdraw, you will not receive any penalty or loss of benefits. If you would like to withdraw from a study, please use the contact information found at the end of this form.

What if new information becomes available about the study?

During the course of this study, we may find information that could be important to you and your decision to participate in this research. We will notify you as soon as possible if such information becomes available.

How will you keep my information private?

We will do everything we can to protect your privacy. We do not intend to include information that could identify you in any publication or presentation. Any information we collect will be stored by the researcher in a secure location. The only people who will be able to see your data are: members of the research team, qualified staff of Lindenwood University, representatives of state or federal agencies.

How can I withdraw from this study?

Notify the research immediately if you would like to withdraw from this research study.

Who can I contact with questions or concerns?

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research or concerns about the study, or if you feel under any pressure to enroll or to continue to participate in this study, you may contact the Lindenwood University Institutional Review Board Director, Michael Leary, at (636) 949-4730 or mleary@lindenwood.edu. You can contact the researcher, Melodie Carr-Winston directly at (314) 322-0709 or mac760@lindenwood.edu. You may also contact Dr. Mitch Nasser at (636) 949-4570.

I have read this consent form and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I will also be given a copy of this consent form for my records. I consent to my participation in the research described above.

_____	_____
Participant's Signature	**Date**
_____	
Participant's Printed Name	

_____	_____
Signature of Principal Investigator or Designee	**Date**
_____	
Investigator or Designee Printed Name	

Appendix D: Survey Instruments

The Culture Perception Questions were created by the researcher to accompany the School Culture Survey.

Culture Perception Questions

How do you perceive the following aspects of the culture of higher education?	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Respect for the beliefs and values of others in higher education.				
Encourage behaviors that are conducive to learning in higher education.				
Inclusiveness of minority students at colleges and universities.				
The encouragement of students to explore the history, culture, and/social issues of different racial/ ethnic groups at colleges and universities.				
Opportunities to be in diverse environments on a college or university campus.				

The culture survey was adapted from portions of a Diversity survey created by William Sedlacek, PhD. http://williamsedlacek.info

School Culture Survey

How well is this school doing on diversity?	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
This institution has made an effort to improve relations and understanding between people of different racial/ethnic backgrounds:				

Please indicate to what degree you agree with the following statements:	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The campus has done a good job providing programs and activities that promote multicultural understanding.				
There should be a requirement for graduation that students take at least one course on the role of ethnicity and race in society.				
This college promotes respect for diversity.				
The student newspaper's coverage of racial/ethnic events and issues is balanced.				
Diversity is one of the reasons why I chose to come here.				

Attending programs on diversity contributes to the goal of building a community				

I have been informed about the history, culture, and/or social issues of racial and ethnic groups other than whites…	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Applicable
In course readings lectures and discussions					
In activities and programs in the residence halls					
In other school programs or activities					
In informal interactions and conversations with friends					

How many for-credit courses have you taken from *faculty members* of the following racial/ethnic groups on this campus?	Number of Courses
Hispanic Americans	
Native Americans	
Asian Americans	

African Americans	
Not sure of race/ethnicity of faculty member	

How many courses have you taken here that have focused primarily on the culture, history, or social concerns of:	Number of Courses
Racial and ethnic groups (other than whites) in the U.S.?	
Non-Western racial and ethnic groups outside the U.S.?	

	Yes	No	Unsure
Have you attended or participated in any diversity programs on campus this year?			

The Climate Perception Questions were created by the researcher to accompany the School Climate Survey.

Climate Perception Questions

How do you perceive the following aspects of the climate of higher education?	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
College campuses are safe for ethnic minorities.				
Students treat each other with respect in higher education.				
There is a presence of bias (verbal, written, vandalism, etc.) on college or university campuses.				
Faculty and staff treat students with respect in higher education.				
Please rate your comfortability with discussing race with college or university officials.				

The School Climate Survey was modified and reprinted with permission of Teaching Tolerance, a project of the Southern Poverty Law Center. www.tolerance.org

School Climate Survey

Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Students on our campus get along well.				
Students choose to interact primarily with people most like themselves				
Students on this campus know how to report harassment or racial abuse to school officials.				
Students on this campus would feel comfortable reporting harassment or racial abuse to school officials.				
Faculty and staff on this campus actively work to create a safe and welcoming environment for every student.				
Every student on this campus feels like he or she belongs here.				
This campus creates opportunities for students to get to know each other.				

On this campus, faculty, administrators, staff, and students listen to one other				
I look forward to coming to this campus				

During my time as a student on this campus …	True	False	If true, how many times?
I've seen biased vandalism or graffiti on campus.			
I've heard a student use a slur, epithet or other derogatory put-down.			
I've heard a student tease or ridicule another student.			
I've heard faculty, staff, or administrators make disparaging remarks about a particular group of students.			
I've seen — and analyzed — our campus safety data and reports.			
I've had a conversation with someone about our campus climate.			

Please answer the following questions:

1. What is your current year in school? (Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, Senior) _____
2. If you are interested in participating in a focus group, please provide your email address.
   _____
3. If you are not graduating, do you intend to return to this school next semester? _____

Appendix E: Tabling Requests

First Inventories Tabling Request

Involve U <postmaster@collegiatelink.mail.campuslabs.com>

Tue 1/23, 12:49 PM
The form 2017-2018 Evans/Spellmann Tabling Request Form that you submitted has been approved. Please see the comments below.

You are approved for a table at Evans from 5-7 on 1/26. You will see a reserved sign with your organization's name on the table. Please do not move the tables. Should you no longer need the table, please contact Rachel Tolliver at rtolliver@lindenwood.edu so that another organization can use the table. Thanks and best of luck with your research!

Second Inventories Tabling Request

Involve U <postmaster@collegiatelink.mail.campuslabs.com>

Tue 2/13, 9:02 AM
The form 2017-2018 Evans/Spellmann Tabling Request Form that you submitted has been approved. Please see the comments below.

You are approved for a table at Evans from 11-1 on 2/19. You will see a reserved sign with your organization's name on the table. Please do not move the tables. Should you no longer need the table, please contact Rachel Tolliver at rtolliver@lindenwood.edu so that another organization can use the table. Should you simply not show, your tabling privileges may be suspended. Thanks and best of luck with your promotions!

Appendix F: Focus Group Room Reservation

Mon 10/23/2017, 4:11 PM
Hello!

I am approving your request in Astra and have an issue. The Room you selected is a computer lab that is more so an open space for students to use as computers are needed and not appropriate to be reserved all day. Instead, I reserved one of the group study rooms (LARC 244C) – let me know if this is an issue. Thanks!

Thanks!

Samantha Kennedy / **Associate Director, Student Involvement**
Lindenwood University / 209 South Kingshighway • St. Charles, MO 63301
636.949.4613 *(o)* / **LinkedIn** / **Facebook** / **Twitter** / **lindenwood.edu**

Appendix G: IRB Amendment Approval

Thu 4/12, 2:40 PM

Inbox
Please note that Lindenwood University Institutional Review Board has taken the following action on IRBNet:

Project Title: [1160764-2] A Mixed Method Study Investigating the Relationship Between Minority Student Perceptions of Higher Education and Minority Student Retention
Principal Investigator: Melodie Carr-Winston, B.A. & M.A.T.

Submission Type: Amendment/Modification
Date Submitted: April 11, 2018

Action: APPROVED
Effective Date: April 12, 2018
Review Type: Expedited Review

Should you have any questions you may contact Michael Leary at mleary@lindenwood.edu.

Thank you,
The IRBNet Support Team

Vitae

Melodie Carr-Winston is currently the Art Teacher at Northwest Academy of Law and Social Justice High School. She also serves as an Art and Social Studies Cohort Leader for the Fine Art Department. Her experience in education spans 16 years ranging with groups from early childhood education to a higher education. Melodie's educational experience began in Columbia, Missouri as an early childhood education teacher. After completing her Master's degree, she transitioned to elementary art education in the Normandy School District, after which, she began teaching secondary art for the St. Louis Public School District. While working toward her EdD in Higher Education Administration, Melodie completed an internship in the Campus Life department at St. Louis Community College Meramec. Her college experience includes: the University of Missouri- Columbia, Bachelor of Art in Art (2005); Lindenwood University, Master of Teaching (2011); and an EdD in Higher Education Administration (2018).