

CAREER ASPIRATIONS VERSUS CAREER ACTUALIZATIONS OF AFRICAN  
AMERICAN EXECUTIVE LEVEL ADMINISTRATORS IN HIGHER EDUCATION  
AT HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES IN A STATE IN  
THE SOUTHEAST: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

by

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## ABSTRACT

KRISTEN LETORIA MCMANUS. Career aspirations versus career actualizations of African American executive level administrators in higher education at historically black colleges and universities in a state in the Southeast: An exploratory study. (Under the direction of DR. COREY R. LOCK)

Despite affirmative action, gender inequities persist at institutions of higher learning in the United States. The purpose of this qualitative research study was to explore the perceptions of African American women serving in executive-level leadership positions at historically black colleges and universities in a state the Southeast. Participants completed an online survey to provide baseline information on perceived barriers, which were derived from the literature review. Additionally, participants submitted curriculum vitae for document analysis and participated in open interviews conducted via SKYPE or telephone. Using constructivist grounded theory to analyze the data collected allowed the researcher to work with a less restrictive methodology thereby providing more latitude in data analysis. Data were analyzed to identify common themes. The results of this study revealed that few women hold executive-level leadership positions at HBCUs in the Southeast. Results suggest that personal and institutional barriers still persist, yet research participants have found techniques to successfully navigate the barriers. Detailed results, conclusions, and analyses of the research are discussed. Additionally, a discussion is provided for future researchers which includes tips on how to investigate this topic in the future for optimal results.

## DEDICATION

To my loving husband, Robert Muhammad, who has given my life new purpose and continued to encourage throughout this process. I told you this was my dream and you let me sleepwalk until it was reality. Without you this would not have been possible.

Additionally, to my late father, Lester Q. McManus and my mother, Virginia Ware McManus, who have always encouraged me in my educational endeavors and been a source of inspiration and strength. Please know this is just my entry into academic writing, providing me with the credential I promised both of you I would gain. My next forays will be better and more enthralling.

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Dr. Jim Bird, you are and have been an inspiration to me. After I took your class, I knew that I wanted you on my committee. You have a strong yet solemn spirit. I respect your opinion greatly. You always returned drafts to me quickly and had very insightful thoughts that caused me to really go and think about the direction I would take next. I also appreciate the idea you gave me when this process first began about looking at it holistically and more specifically, even though it was a qualitative study, still determining a dependent and independent variable. That concept helped me a great deal.

To Dr. Arthur Jackson, my friend and mentor; you are constantly providing me with constructive feedback. Some may not appreciate this, but I do. It is easy to find someone to tell you when you are right, but it is more important to find someone to tell

you when you are wrong and that what you have is well, rubbish. Thank you for being that person and not allowing me to be substandard or produce anything substandard.

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## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Administrative positions within institutions of higher learning have historically retained a well-defined patriarchal hierarchy throughout the progressive ranks that are fairly uniform nationwide, from division director to department chair, dean, and university leadership positions (Dominici, Fried & Zeger, 2009). Indeed, when colleges and universities were first inaugurated into American society, these positions were occupied by noblemen who typically did not possess strong academic backgrounds. The chief executive officer (e.g., president) and most other leadership and faculty positions were also held by white males who doubled as ordained ministers (Thelin, 2004). Over time, women gained equal access to constitutional rights, such as voting and receiving an education. Subsequently, the feminist movement began and further empowered women to seek out educational opportunities and job security with a more aggressive mindset.

Over time, women who work in higher education have demonstrated substantial progress by attaining positions of influential leadership. More specifically, since the 1990's, women have attained prominence in highly visible positions, such as vice chancellors/vice presidents, provosts and presidents. Caucasian women have gone on to attain senior level administrative positions at impressive rates. A report produced by the American Council on Education (ACE) in 2007, stated that white women comprised 38% of senior administrators and 35% of chief academic officers. In comparison, only 10% of

women of color held the same posts (King & Gomez, 2008).

### Purpose of Study

The purpose of this research study was to examine the career aspirations versus career actualizations of four African American women higher education administrators at the executive level at historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) in the Southeast. More specifically, this qualitative research study examined how personal and institutional barriers affected the career progression of these women. This investigation was conducted to add current the literature on African American executive level women administrators' experiences in higher education, particularly since much of the established research has centered on African American women faculty and students. This study was motivated by the research presented by Lloyd-Jones (2009) in "Implications of Race and Gender in Higher Education Administration: An African American Woman's Perspective."

### Background of the Research Inquiry

Due to their gender and racial identification, African American women often face unique challenges as they pursue careers in higher education institutions. Intra-cultural complications, coupled with the historical, social, and political context associated with being Black, have resulted in significant challenges for African American women to advance in senior administrative roles within colleges and universities (Bates, 2007).

Lloyd-Jones (2009) conducted a single case study investigating repression related to social class, ethnicity, and gender, then subsequently, probed the consequences experienced. Conclusions from the study emphasized that participants exhibited friction between other African Americans (male and female) and Caucasian women, when they

were promoted because of their social inequity experiences. The overall goal of the research study was to describe the lived experiences of an African American woman senior-level administrator.

There are many factors that influence the lived experiences of African American women executive-level administrators. In 2005, Crawford and Smith studied how issues related to socio-cultural and gender affect career decisions. Their research illustrated that a positive mentoring relationship had a pronounced effect on career decisions.

Contrariwise, the lack of a mentor had the same, impactful negative effect upon career decisions and progression. Consequently, the study confirmed that having a mentor, (often a white male), substantially expanded job opportunities and career mobility. In Burke et.al, (2002), the findings contend that having no mentor results in career stagnation and failure of the hosting university to capitalize on the participants' talents regardless of gender and race (Burke, Cropper, Harrison, 2002).

During the 1980s, the number of African American women acquiring doctoral degrees and the number of administrators was minimal (Hill, Scott & Smith, 1993). "Because they (e.g. African American women) have been so few in number, there is little research about African American women in education administration, their professional aspirations, the obstacles they confront as they pursue their goals, and the roles of mentors and sponsors in advancing their careers" (Dey & Hill, 2007). Recent data indicate that more African American females are earning academic degrees, yet the statistics fail to demonstrate gains in their career advancement within institutions of higher education, particularly with regard to finding and attaining senior administrative positions (online-Chronicle of Higher Education, 2009).

The reports issues by major professional associations such as the American Council on Education and the National Association for Student Personnel Administrators during the last couple of decades do not show significant progress: more to the point, African American female administrators in higher education have yet to reach parity with their Caucasian female counterparts, or African American or Caucasian males. According to Wolfman (1997), African American women in American higher education administration constitute less than 5% of overall managerial staffing despite their integral part of American society. Similarly, in her landmark report on African American women administrators, Yolanda Moses (1997) concluded that the majority of African American female administrators are most likely to be employed at historically black colleges and universities, (HBCUs). These women hold positions that are typically below the dean level, in student affairs or other specialized areas, are employed at two year institutions instead of four-year institutions, and generally they earn 15% less than their male counterparts (Blackmore, 2002).

This investigation was an attempt to assemble new data and add to the limited literature on African American executive level women administrators' experiences at HBCUs in the Southeast, particularly since much of the current research is centered on African American women faculty and students.

### Significance of Study

The phenomenological purpose of this study was the most compelling reason for its completion. Current data on African American women females reaching executive administrative roles are disparate. A research study to investigate what leads to this perpetual state would insert more depth to the literature. For example, the literature

indicates that career advancement within higher educational institutions is a complex phenomenon, in part due to the prevalence of its traditional White male-dominated and highly structured culture (Burke, Cropper, & Harrison, 2002; Stewart, 2008).

Categories of 'women' and 'educational leader' have become fixed and the possibility for substantive diversity among and between women is becoming increasingly difficult (Irby & Brown, 2009). Less recognized is the manner in which whiteness is a seemingly privileged construct played out differently across gendered lines (Holmes, Land, & Hinton-Hudson, 2007). Accordingly, the multiple and complex silences that surround the discourses of privilege, identity and opportunity are deafening (Fitzgerald, 2003). In combination with the idiom of equity in opportunity, the disproportionate hiring of White women at prestigious institutions can be characterized as critical despite the significant absence of people of color, more specifically, African Americans (Hall, 2006). Tyson (2002) argues that African American women only retain executive administrative positions in higher education within the context of a culture that is often unwelcoming, (regardless of locale and distinction), unless they have the privilege of the perceived requisite combination of credentials, competence, networks, and mentoring relationships.

The American Council of Education (ACE) has addressed the fact that women and minorities are often coupled together for affirmative action purposes. Among the limitations of this approach (e.g. coupling) is that it "hides" and thereby disservices minority women. Also, the supply problems often differ greatly, particularly in higher education employment, where an ample supply of Caucasian women hold executive level positions but women of color continue to be absent from this echelon for most academic

administrative leadership positions. Due to this imbalance, ACE has been particularly vocal in calling attention to the enormity of the pipeline problem for underrepresented minorities, (American Council on Education, 2002).

### Research Questions

This study examined perceptions of institutional and personal barriers encountered by four African American executive level women administrators at HBCUs in the Southeast. These areas include sexism, racism and self-efficacy or lack thereof.

Institutional barriers include the context of America's establishment as a patriarchal society. Remnants of the patriarchal stance remain today facilitating some to adhere to subtle (whether purposely or unintentionally) sexist and racist mentalities in many industries. Due to this, institutions may have discriminatory policies or practices that prevent the promotion of African American women (Iseke-Barnes, 2006).

Additionally, institutional barriers comprise the benefits and drawbacks of mentoring as well as the effects of professional development. Most professionals benefit from having a mentor to assist in career development, personal coaching and relationships developed through mutual professional association. African American women administrators at institutions of higher learning often have difficulty finding and retaining mentors due to the scarcity of actual African American women executive level administrators (Iverson, 2007).

Personal barriers are experienced when African American women administrators find themselves working in an environment they perceive as supercilious. This opinion of a "chilly climate" refers to a lack of acceptance or sense of isolation which can result in a lack of respect and challenges to the African American woman's administrative power.

African American women administrators must deal with the unique challenges of singular discrimination in terms of race and gender and then the issue of “dual discrimination” (e.g. racism and sexism) since they are both African American and a woman. This can result in feelings of isolation, perceived lack of trust and support, feeling like a “token” and struggles over power and influence in their positions. In contrast, a person who doubts their capabilities shy away from difficult tasks; viewing them as personal threats. They have low aspirations and weak commitment to the goals they choose to pursue. When faced with difficult tasks, they dwell on their personal deficiencies, on the obstacles that could possibly be encountered, and various kinds of adverse outcomes rather than concentrate on how to perform successfully (Bandura, 1997).

The research questions that were investigated in this study were:

1. What personal barriers (if any), have four African American executive level women administrators faced in their career progression?
2. What institutional barriers (if any), have four African American executive level women administrators faced in their career progression?

#### Research Design

This was a qualitative research study that explored African American higher education administrators' career aspirations as it related to specific issues. Although the literature has addressed African American women with institutions of higher education from the faculty perspective, there remains a gap in substantive work on the contributions of African American women administrators. More specifically, many articles quote the disparity in black women executive level administrators and other populations but fail to

determine the underlying cause of the phenomenon. Therefore, it is relevant to use a qualitative research design to develop a set of authentic themes from this specific population whose voices have not been heard or shared in the existing literature.

As a genre, qualitative research methodology is characterized by inductive, intensive, and process-oriented data collection. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) noted, “[Qualitative] researchers emphasize the value-laden narrative of inquiry. They seek answers to questions that stress how social experience is created and given meaning” (p.4). In short, through qualitative methodology the researcher sought to thoroughly explain and describe the phenomenon under study; specifically, what impediments or perceptions affected the aspirations or career cessation of African American women in executive level administrative positions at historically black college or universities.

Data collected were analyzed using constructivist grounded theory with an emphasis on highlighting social justice. Grounded theory is a research methodology that is appealing to many academic disciplines due to its explanatory nature. The power of utilizing this technique was that it provided an avenue to clarify common issues. More specifically, the constructivist grounded theory approach offers a systematic method to social justice inquiry that fosters integrating subjective experience with social conditions in the researchers’ analyses. This required taking critical stances toward actions, organizations, and social institutions and looking at both realities and ideals, (Charmaz, 2005).

#### Research Foundation

A pilot study was conducted one semester prior to commencing work on the dissertation. Participants were interviewed using a structured interview protocol.

Answers given coupled with the literature helped to create the survey for participants in this research study. By conducting a pilot study or “pre-study” of the planned complete study, the researcher was able to determine the weaknesses in research design and the researcher’s abilities/limitations. Knowledge of these limitations provided an opportunity to correct or alter research procedures important to the main study.

### Overview of Subsequent Chapters

Chapter 2 serves as a literature review. In this review, black feminist thought is defined, as it relates to the conceptual context of this research study and the professional evolution of African American female executive higher education administrators at HBCUs in the Southeast. An overview of the inclusion of all women into higher education was presented followed by a discussion of the specific issues African American women in higher education faced upon this inclusion.

A brief discussion reviews the impact that HBCUs have had on the careers of African American women administrators. The discussion concludes with an examination of how self-efficacy affects career determinations and an analysis of the perceived personal and institutional barriers African American women in higher education administration experience.

Chapter 3 is a discussion of the procedures used to conduct the research study. Additionally, an overview of constructivist grounded theory and how it was strategically applied to this particular study is provided as a foundation for the following chapter on data analysis.

Chapter 4 outlines how the researcher analyzed the data that were collected during the duration of the study. This will include a brief recapitulation of data collection as

well as how Charmaz's constructivist grounded theory was used to analyze the data.

Additionally, the researcher discussed issues of trustworthiness, and research limitations.

Chapter 5 concludes this dissertation with a summary of the previous chapters, conclusions, recommendations, reflexivity of the research process to provide a methodological discussion for future researchers on how to conduct a more effective and robust investigation on similar or duplicate subjects.

#### Definitions

1. Personal barriers refer to issues of external and internal gender discrimination, and lack of self-efficacy.
2. An institutional barrier refers to tangible and intangible methods employed, whether intended or not, that hinder the career development and subsequent progression of African American women senior level administrators. More specifically, organizational barriers to diversity and inclusion in the higher education workplace can include lack of support, failure to empower and include in decision-making processes, differing expectations, stereotyping, lack of mentoring and access to formal and informal networks, isolation, and tokenism, (Evans & Chun 2007).
3. By contrast, institutional support, such as succession planning and in-house career development programs have proven to equip employees with the requisite skills for senior level positions. The lack of such support would include lack of resources (both financial and human), deficiency in professional development, and stoppage related to job promotions.

4. Internal gender discrimination is exhibited by women, other African American women typically due to issues related to cultural insecurities which have led to low self-efficacy and a need to protect their “turf.”
5. External gender discrimination is traditional practices precipitated by men because they assume women do not possess the ability to handle positions of power.
6. Internal racism is racism exhibited by African American women willfully and purposefully.
7. External racism is discriminatory actions demonstrated by any other racial group or gender towards African American women.
8. A mentor serves as a career advisor and confidante to help aspiring professions navigate the terrain in the organization. Mentoring relationships have been identified a significant determinants in career success and advancement. Without mentors who serve as a conduit for the Black female to progress through senior administration, it is likely that she will remain stagnant despite earning the required academic credentials.
9. Discourse analysis is a general term for a number of approaches to analyzing written, vocal, or sign language use or any significant semiotic event. The objects of discourse analysis—discourse, writing, conversation, and communicative event—are variously defined in terms of coherent sequences of sentences, propositions, speech acts, or turns-at-talk. Contrary to much of traditional linguistics, discourse analysts not only study language use 'beyond the sentence

boundary', but also prefer to analyze 'naturally occurring' language use, and not invented examples (Dijk, 1985).

10. McManus career model is a visual representation of results yielded from the data analysis process.
11. Agent of knowledge is an African American women educator who serves as an information bank for the community she serves due to her academic background.
12. SSAO is a senior student affairs officer.
13. HBCU is a historically black college or university.
14. PWI is a predominantly white institution.
15. African American and black are used interchangeably throughout this dissertation but in both instances refer to the ethnicity of the women in this study.

#### Delimitations and Limitations

This study used African American higher education executive level women administrators who work at HBCUs in the Southeast. Rather than sample African American executive level administrators at predominantly white institutions, the researcher thought it more beneficial to study this population within similar cultural bounds. Most historically black colleges and universities were established to advance the lives of African Americans as a whole; ironically, the patriarchal system still seems to hold fast within institutional bounds and restrains African American women from significant advancement.

Participants had advanced degrees (e.g. Masters, Ph.D., Ed.D., or J.D.) and held their current positions or positions of equal or greater prominence for 3 years or more. This was important as most executive level administrative positions require advanced

degrees. Anyone who has achieved a position of that magnitude without such a credential is typically considered an anomaly. Additionally, the participants maintained residency in their current positions for at least 3 years in order to provide sound context for their answers.

Full participation in the study required no more than 1.5 hours, which included completion of the survey, submission of a curriculum vitae and an interview. The survey was administered online and took no more than 20 minutes to complete. Upon completion of the survey, participants uploaded a curriculum vita. Depending upon the level of organization of the participant, this process may have taken more time as the document had to be located, reviewed and then subsequently uploaded. Interviews were set up via email and telephone appointments. Each interview took an average of 20 minutes. Participants were interviewed at a time convenient to them. In order to adhere to the discourse analysis methodological approach (e.g. looking for the master themes) participants were asked the same set of questions using open ended approach.

Executive women at HBCUs in the Southeast are not in large supply, which created a small population for the researcher to draw from initially. However, the researcher was not concerned with quantity but quality. The women who did participate provided some insights not only into their struggle regarding the perceived barriers but the culture of HBCUs in the Southeast. Keeping the attention of the four research participants was difficult throughout this process. It became clear immediately, that the women had many demands on their schedules and despite their intentions regarding participation in the project, it had to be on their terms and within their time constraints.

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this research was to examine the professional aspirations of African American female executive higher education administrators at HBCUs in the Southeast. This qualitative study investigated individual perceptions of any impediments experienced during their career progression and how personal and institutional barriers affected their aspirations.

The literature review defines black feminist thought, which serves as the conceptual context of this research study as it relates to the professional evolution of African American female executive higher education administrators at HBCUs in the Southeast. An overview of the inclusion of all women into higher education was presented followed with a discussion of the specific issues African American women in higher education faced upon this inclusion.

A brief discourse reviews the impact that HBCUs have had on the careers of African American executive women administrators. The discussion concludes with an examination of how self-efficacy affects career determinations and an analysis of the perceived personal and institutional barriers African American women in higher education administration experience.

### The “Ceiling” Effect

Most women who work in corporate America or in a non-profit organization (including institutions of higher learning), contend with some form of a “ceiling” that

prevents upward mobility at some point during their professional careers. This does not necessarily imply an end towards their career progression; however, it does protract their promotion temporarily. In these situations, a ceiling is an intangible discriminatory barrier that keeps a certain class of people out of an upper level (e.g. management or executive) positions in organizations. More specifically, the term “glass ceiling” refers to "the unseen, yet unreachable barrier that keeps minorities and women from rising to the upper rungs of the corporate ladder, regardless of their qualifications or achievements, (Federal Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995, 4)." Initially, the metaphor applied to barriers in the careers of women was quickly extended to refer to obstacles hindering the advancement of minority men, as well as women.

David Cotter et al. (2001) defined four distinctive characteristics that must be met to conclude that a glass ceiling exists. A glass ceiling inequality represents:

1. "A gender or racial difference that is not explained by other job-relevant characteristics of the employee."
2. "A gender or racial difference that is greater at higher levels of an outcome than at lower levels of an outcome."
3. "A gender or racial inequality in the chances of advancement into higher levels, not merely the proportions of each gender or race currently at those higher levels."
4. "A gender or racial inequality that increases over the course of a career," (657-659,661).

By contrast, minority women, typically encounter a more terminal phenomenon coined the concrete ceiling. "Concrete ceiling not only restricts access to top-level

positions but middle management positions. It is denser and not as easily shattered,” (Moore & Jones, 2001). While white women must contend with the glass ceiling in the workforce, they have increasingly gained the ability to rupture it; however, the minority women’s glass ceiling is solid and unyielding. This ‘concrete ceiling’ is due to minority women facing both issues of sexism and racism which intensifies their obstructions in advancing within the labor market.

### Women Administrators in Higher Education

Within higher education, women have greatly advanced their educational pursuits in order to sufficiently be prepared to step into executive level positions upon graduation. Recent data from the U.S. Department of Education (2009) indicates that among 2007 graduates, women earned 57.4% of the bachelor’s degrees, 60.6% of the master’s degrees, and 50.1% of the doctoral degrees granted that year. Women are less restricted than in the past, in their ability to obtain an education. They have increased their educational attainment which allows opportunities to attain the preparation typically required for professional advancement. Despite earning terminal degrees, a small number of women, and especially women of color, have yet to hold executive level positions in institutions of higher education.

Once women were legally included into the workforce, encounters of gender discrimination were expected and in many cases tolerated. Women were hired less frequently, paid substantially less, and promoted at a lower rate than their male counterparts (Aguirre, 2000; Green & Ferber, 2005). Some women experience sexual harassment and other forms of negative behavior by their male counterparts (Maher, 2005) and in some cases, their female counterparts as well.

A myriad of studies have addressed the organizational structures, processes, and cultures in higher education which are embedded with practices that foster inequality and inhibit change (Blackmore, 1999; Kezar, 2005; Calo, 2005). Institutions of higher education are complex organizations that reside within a culture that has historically promoted the marginalization of women (Turner, 2002). For women in higher education the structural bias towards gender in higher education continues to work as a barrier to success (Gerdes, 2006; Patton, 2004; Townsend, 2009). Despite legal provisions thirty-five years after the ratification of Title IX, substantial sex-based disparities in educational employment remain.

“Women are 49% of all part-time academic employees at the college level, hold only 39% of full-time academic jobs; in institutions of higher education, overall wages for women faculty have remained at approximately 81% of men’s earnings since the late 1970s, when salary data was first collected, only one in four college presidents are female. When looking at four-year institutions, excluding two-year community and junior colleges, women make up only one in five heads of institutions,” (NCWGE, 2008).

Women are well represented in general administrative positions on most campuses, but are often fastened to mid-level management positions or feel like a perceived token in an executive level position, (Jones, 2005). Thus, in higher education administration, as in society, women perceivably have been, and remain, the “wrong” gender. Women continue to struggle against gender inequity in ways that mirror the wider societal movements (Hamrick, 2001). From the separatist strategies of early women’s colleges, the development of co-education, and the continued struggle to implement Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, women and some men within

institutions of higher education have challenged the resistant discourse of gender difference (Ray, 2006).

Prior to the 1970's, women rarely held formal positions of influence in the administration of higher education, except at women's colleges. Chamberlain (1991) notes, "in 1970, three quarters of the women administrators at Ivy League universities worked in students services" (p.11). These jobs were at the lower levels within educational administration and generally did not lead to upper strata leadership. More than three decades later, African American women, in particular continue to occupy a disproportionately low number of administrative level positions in higher education, compared to their white female counterparts (Accapadi, 2007).

Women continue to be under-represented in higher education executive administrative positions. According to data from the American Council on Education, the percentage of women serving as university presidents more than doubled from 9.5% in 1986 to 23% in 2006 (King & Gomez, 2008).

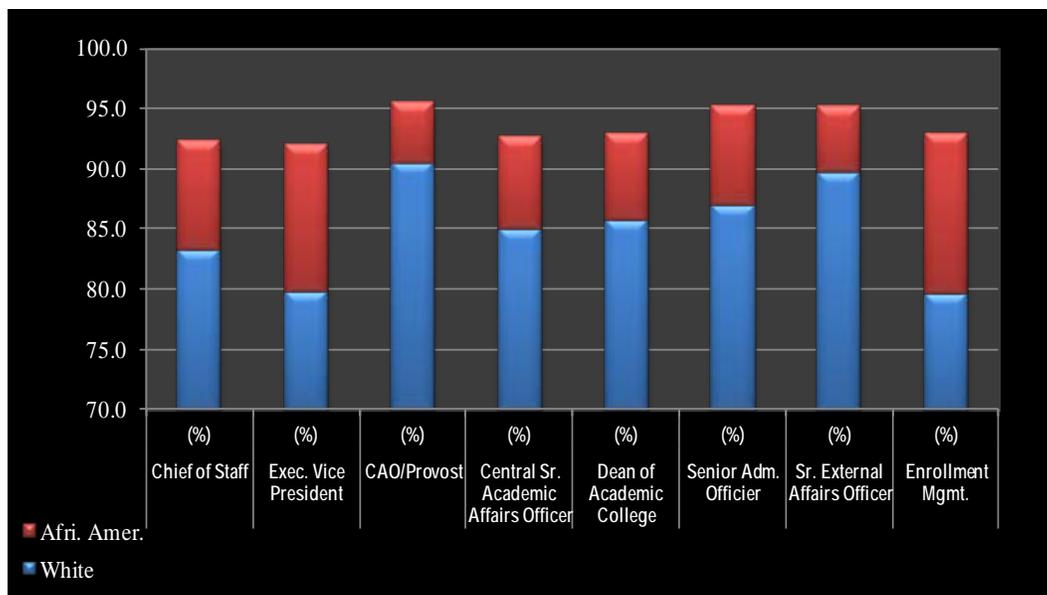


Figure 1: Comparison of African American Women versus White Women in Executive Level Positions (reported by the American Council on Education)

In recent years, women have been selected to lead prestigious universities such as Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Princeton University, Harvard University, the University of Michigan, and the University of Pennsylvania. The decision to name Dr. Drew Gilpin Faust as the first female president of Harvard University in 2007 represented an important symbolic step forward for women in higher education, as Susan Scrimshaw, president of Simmons College noted: “I think of it as the last really big glass ceiling in higher education. A woman becoming president of Harvard is breaking the last barrier” (Wilson, 2007, p.1).

These barriers are changing yet it is still difficult for women to succeed in higher education, (Haveman & Smeeding, 2006). Women have difficulty finding mentors and in being promoted to positions of power. Even in education, where women earn a significant number of Ph.D.'s, less than half of the faculty are women and relatively few are women of color (Keim & Murray, 2008).

Structural gender bias, that is organizational bias which exists within the policies and procedures of the university, continues to be one explanation given for the slow rise of women into positions of authority. Yet, “Gender Equity in the Academic Labor Market” (Umbach, 2007), reported that on average women faculty members earn approximately 21% or \$18,000 less than their white peers. Usage of a demographic model implies that after controlling for race/ethnicity and partitioning the effects of being in a particular discipline, women earn approximately 22% less than men. After controlling for race/ethnicity, human capital, and rank, women earn approximately 8% less than men. Similar pay inequity exists among the administrative ranks, (Figure 2).

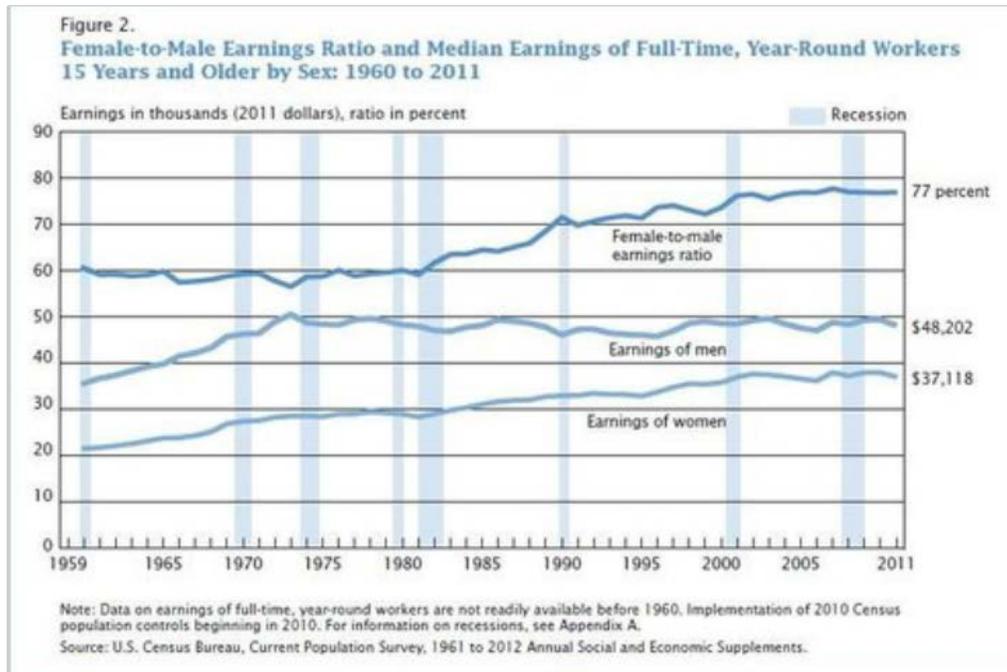


Figure 2: Female to Male Earnings Ratio (1960 to 2011)

The 2002 National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) Student Affairs Salary Survey reported that women senior student affairs officers (SSAO) earns approximately 93 cents for every dollar their male SSAO colleagues earn (Reason, Walker & Robinson, 2002).

The American Association of University Professors' (AAUP) issued a response to the inequity in higher education. In their statement, the AAUP suggested that “institutional policies may be easier to change than institutional cultures” (Curtis, 2011). The literature on this is scarce and little has been documented on the role individual men and women play in the maintenance of sexism in the academy. This absence of documentation may be because it is a subtle form of sex discrimination through implementation of “gender-neutral” departmental policies and procedures.

It is important to note that some women hold high-visibility presidencies. However, this fact should be viewed in lieu of the fact that only 14% of the public doctoral universities and 7% of the private doctoral universities nationwide are currently led by women (Hartley & Godin, 2009). Most of the women holding presidencies serve in institutions with less than 3,000 students or at community colleges. Although women have made strides in attaining the top post, research indicates that women in executive level positions are content to remain vertical in the career progression.

Indeed, a large number of women in upper administration (47% of chief academic officers, to be precise) are not planning to vie for higher education's top post (Eckel, Cook, & King, 2009). This lack of desire for the top post means that change at the top is likely to be slow as a result. Among chief academic officers, where women hold over 40 percent of all positions, gendered expectations continue to affect how women determine which leadership positions to pursue.

#### African American Women Administrators in Higher Education

African American women have been instrumental in the development of higher education institutions and educational opportunities geared towards African Americans and women; yet still remain underrepresented overall in higher education administration. This underrepresentation manifests at mid-level administrative positions in higher education such as, the Director of Multicultural Affairs or Chief Affirmative Action Office, (Gardner, 2004). Underrepresentation in executive level positions in higher education remains a constant challenge for African American women administrators. African American women serving in an administrative position must contend with the

issues related to racism and sexism in their respective institutions of higher education without outside independent and objective oversight (Iseke-Barnes, 2006).

African American women in higher education come from diverse backgrounds and serve in varied capacities at colleges and universities (Jackson, 2004). The late nineteenth to the early twentieth century saw increased access to higher education for African American women. Changes as a result of initiatives during the 1960s, federal legislation, and Supreme Court cases, permitted more African American women to enter into institutions of higher learning, serving as students, faculty, staff, and administrators (Barksdale, 2007). Entrance, however, does not equate to fairness and equity. Many African American women encounter challenges related to balancing career, family, and community commitment; hiring and promotion; feelings of isolation and tokenism; and the effects of sexism and racism (Bonner, 2001; Moses 1989).

African American women executive higher education administrators face a double obstacle to salary equity. Compared to African American men, African American women make significantly less money. Next, African American women tend to work at smaller, lower-paying colleges and universities than their male counterparts. These two occurrences seem to prevent African American women SSAOs from achieving salary equality with African American men, and SSAOs in general (Reason, Walker & Robinson, 2002).

### Impact of Black Feminist Thought

The history and ideology of Black feminist thought examined as a conceptualization of the social intersection of the African American woman's career advancement in relation to historical and personal barriers (hooks and Shapiro, 2000).

This concept provides a method to address the premises and perceptions of Black feminist philosophy that formulate the identity of African American women and assist in her resistance to oppression within the present academy.

African American women have a unique experience in American society due to their dual membership in at least two (and sometimes more) low status and low power groups: they are African American and they are women. A critical investigation of the psychology of women and the psychology of African Americans reveals that both theoretical analyses fail to emphasize the relevance of gender and racial experience of African American women. Feminist theories have been reticent to examine the differences between women (Fine and Gordon, 1989) since difference may be threatening to the myth of the singular nature of womanhood. Implicit within this discipline is that the chronicled experiences of the dominant subpopulation are assumed to be the profile of the entire population.

More specifically, when gender is examined, white women (e.g. dominant subpopulation) are the prototype and with race, African American males become the standard of measure. In effect, the African American woman has been marginalized, and tokenized unintentionally by feminist theory (Giddings, 1984). African American women must be understood within the context of their life experiences. It is essential to recognize the influences of race, gender, class, sexual orientation, culture, and biculturalism in the identity formation of African American women.

Black feminist thought demonstrates the African American women's emerging power as an agent of knowledge. Through portrayal of African-American women as self-defined, self-reliant individuals confronting race, gender, and class oppression, Black

feminist thought addresses the importance of oppression. Black feminist also acknowledges how important knowledge is to the empowerment of any oppressed groups.

Black feminist thought offers unique insights on the prevailing concepts, paradigms, and epistemologies on the traditional worldview. Viewing the world simultaneously through race, class, and gender oppression creates new possibilities for an empowering Black feminist knowledge. Many Black feminist intellectuals have always viewed the world in this way as it is the way African American women experience the world.

Although Black feminist ideologies typically focus on the consciousness of liberation, the outcomes for Black females result in the revelation of their persistent strength and resilience to become successful professionally and become a voice of authority and validity in the academy and society in general (hooks, 2009). A distinguishing aspect of Black feminist thought is its resolve that the changed consciousness of an individual as well as the social transformation of political and economic climate within institutions are tantamount to critical components requisite for social change. More importantly, innovative knowledge is imperative for both dimensions to revolutionize.

Indeed, knowledge is central to facilitating potency in social interactions related to oppression and domination. Through knowledge, black feminist academics possess the opportunity to recast the social experiences of African American women, more astutely within the academy to more effectively serve the interests of this community

without isolating themselves from the majority due to historical paradigms that have created discord.

African American women scholars essentially become agents of knowledge and a promise of change within their community. This role requires African American women scholars to be discriminatory in the criteria used when establishing the legitimacy of any knowledge claim. Any attempt to speak for an entire population or subculture will often draw criticism and cynicism, with black feminist thought not being an exception.

African American women scholars must concern themselves with two primary groups that may challenge their view. First, ordinary African American women will hold these women accountable for their work. “To be credible in the eyes of this group, scholars must be personal advocates for their material in some fashion,” (Collins, 2008) Next, any new ideology must be accepted by the community of African American scholars themselves. As with any discipline, each scholar will rearticulate the standpoint of the Black women’s experience with varying amounts of importance.

Collins (2008) insists that true freedom only occurs when individual rights of mobility exist in and out of groups. This assertion addresses the concern regarding a valid explanation of why a continued disparity persists for Black women administrators, who often do not experience the fluidity of movement within executive administrative positions in the academy.

Green and McDade (1994) argue that female administrators often reach a plateau caused by the structure of higher educational institutions rather than by limitations of their abilities. This is particularly relevant regarding the advancement of Black female administrators in predominantly White higher education institutions, who face additional

barriers due to their multiple identities of race and gender. Literature demonstrates that career advancement within higher educational institutions is a complex phenomenon, in part due to the prevalence of its traditional White male-dominated and highly structured culture (Burke, Cropper, & Harrison, 2002; Stewart, 2002).

Black feminist thought provides two noteworthy methods to assist in understanding the pertinent connections between knowledge, consciousness and the politics of empowerment. First, Black feminist thought offers a pragmatic shift to how African American women view oppression. By recognition that race, class, and gender are an interlaced system of oppression, African American women scholars can “re-think” the social implications associated with domination and resistance.

Next, black feminist thought does not neglect to study and engage in the ongoing debates related to different genres of feminist theory. By remaining engaged in such circles, black scholars acquire knowledge and new means to assess what is perceived as “truth.”

#### Problem Under Investigation

Considerable study has been given to women presidents in higher education as well as the inequity in pay between minorities and majority faculty and administrators. Additionally, data sets are repeatedly produced (e.g. yearly almanacs) in reputable publications such as the Chronicle of Higher Education and Inside Higher Ed.Com, each year documenting the disparities in distribution of executive level leadership positions for African American women and equity in pay.

Lloyd-Jones (2009) presented a compelling single case study regarding the issues discussed in the previous sections that African American senior level administrators at

predominantly white institutions must face. Major themes that arose from this investigation yielded outcomes of institutional barriers, lack of mentoring and intra-cultural burdens as stumbling blocks to the career aspirations for her participant.

The Lloyd-Jones study, "Cracking the marble ceiling: cultural barriers facing women leaders, *Minority Women in Academia, Access and Barriers to Professional Participation*," along with various other research studies have scrutinized issues presumed to impact the career outcome of African American women administrators; providing context for review and study. This study used the outcomes as determinants to check participant responses to assess if and to what extent these issues confront the same population at HBCUs in the Southeast.

"Racism" and "sexism" are arguably the most contested terms in the debate over affirmative action. Although they are descriptive terms, they convey strong evaluative inferences. Some contend that if policies are not intentionally designed to treat people differently due to race, (e.g. not consciously engage in racial classification), then the action is not racist. Another argument insists that policies which impact different people unequally because of race are objectionable, even if the unequal impact was not explicit or even intended (Park & Denson, 2009).

African American women experience sexism and racism in many facets of their lives; in their personal existence, as they work in institutions of higher education and in their personal existence. Harvey (1996) notes the, "ivory tower image of academia, so carefully cultivated by institutions of higher education, conveys the impression that these organizations are conveniently removed from the problematic day-to-day concerns most other individuals and institutions have to contend with" (p. 349). Institutions of higher

learning have historically enjoyed an “isolationism” from general society. However, this courtesy has become extinct as colleges and universities develop the need for financial assistance from state and federal sources, admit diverse student populations and utilize the strategic schooling model to run the institutions.

Boisnier conducted a study on feminism among Caucasian and African American women which concluded that African American women had high self-esteem but low personal self- efficacy (2003). Seemingly, the high self-esteem stems from strong ties to their culture through family and social organizations, however, low self-efficacy can date back to educational experiences as early as elementary school. Until the last decade, and still to some degree, African American women were marginalized in school, receiving limited encouragement and rarely participating in courses that would make them academically competitive for the future (hooks, 2003). These experiences tend to affect the professional decisions of African American women throughout their lifetime, from choice of college major to career selection, (Hughes & Hertel, 1990).

#### Gender Discrimination

Rhode (2007) defines covert sexism as “the visible unequal treatment of women which is frequently ignored as these behaviors have been internalized as normal or acceptable” (p. 2). Subtle sexism involves concealed, purposeful and unequal treatment of women. Unfortunately, by strict definition, this can be expelled by anyone, regardless of race or gender. However, for the purposes of this paper, sexist behavior is confined to those who represent and can enforce institutional barriers men and in some cases women.

Edwards (1997) notes, “institutionalized systems of sex bias often create impenetrable barriers that halt women’s progress and stifle their professional

development. Sexism can be categorized as overt/blatant, covert, or subtle. Covert discrimination continues to be problematic in institutions of higher learning despite federal initiatives to combat it.

Benokraitis & Feagin (1995) notes, “much of the openly blatant sexism in this country has decreased because of federal and state laws against overt discrimination”(p. 11), such as The Equal Pay Act of 1963, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972.

Sexism can manifest for African American women when they are intentionally granted a position as a perceived direct result of a requirement due to affirmative action (Brant, 1999). The passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and creation of Affirmative Action by executive orders, employment opportunities have increased in the educational milieu for minority and female employment (Aguirre, 2000). However, Edwards (1997) and Sandler (1991) found African American women continued to be placed in positions of tokenism and passed over for promotions indicating that though sexism severely affects the lives of women in higher education, racism was also having an impact.

Gender discrimination affects most women, yet it is apparent that racial discrimination is an added obstacle for African American women, affecting them on a personal and professional level. Collins (2008) refers to the identity of African American women as a “both/and” construct, (e.g. African American and women). More specifically race and gender are equally important and interrelated constructs within the self-concept of African American women; the two cannot be separated. If only race or gender is used to define an African American woman’s experiences, a true representation is not being depicted (Bensimon & Marshall, 2003). “Black Women’s Leadership Experiences:

Examining the Intersectionality of Race and Gender,” (Williams & Sherman, 2009) highlighted disruptions to gender inclusion that African American women experience due to racism and sexism. These dual discriminatory subjective forces African American women into a “double jeopardy” situation which requires their contention with both sexism and racism both independently and interrelated.

#### Institutional Racism

African American women administrators in higher education must deal with the challenge of racism as well as sexism. As stated earlier, many African American women are subject to discriminatory acts due to their dual identity as Black and as a woman. One participant in the landmark study by Yolanda Moses (1989) report recounts very resilient feelings about this phenomenon: “I don’t know about other women of color, but Black women are expected to work hard, be very quiet and very grateful that they have a job. White women are expected to be just as quiet but they do not have to work as hard or be grateful. White males can do whatever they want” (p. 14). Although sexism can severely affect the lives of all women on campuses of higher learning, racism and sexism further compound the impact for African American women” (Edwards, 1997, p. 33).

According to West (2001) institutional racism arises from the standard operating procedures (intended or unintended), sustained by institutions or organizations, including educational ones, that are disadvantageous to one or more races in relation to the dominant race. Institutional or organizational rules, habits, or symbols also emerge as demonstrating the same partiality. Fundamentally, institutions often facilitate an aversion to premeditated and negligent racial impairment. Additionally, the duty to care which

requires avoidance of reinforcement and magnification of harmful consequences of past racial discrimination is often subverted.

When African American women achieve jobs that are equally equitable both financially and socially, the expectations regarding the work produced is more demanding in comparison to the white counterparts resulting in civilizational racism. Civilizational racism occurs when the dominant group constructs the world in its own manner, in terms of its own social-historical experiences. Institutional and societal racism are all the results of civilizational racism.

Finally, reliable differences on the basis of race are also found in educational opportunities, receipt of adequate medical care, treatment within the judicial system, professional opportunities and salary. Research suggests that having an affirmative action policy in place is not always sufficient to assure organizations and universities will achieve their goals of diversity and merit. Poorly constructed affirmative action programs can cause more harm.

Paying attention to proper implementation to affirmative action is important for a number of reasons (Girves et. al, 2005). In a different equity study, (2007) descriptive statistics were used to illustrate that substantial race inequities for Blacks still exist among full-time faculty and administrators. Indeed, “the results suggest that, 50 years after the Brown v. Board of Education decision (1954), Blacks continue to experience substantial inequities among the leadership (i.e. faculty and executives, administrators, and managers) of many public 4 year colleges and universities...”(Perna, et.al 2007).

## Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy is a person's belief regarding his or her abilities/capabilities to be successful. It is not concerned with the strategies a person uses to accomplish goals, but with judgments the person employs in tandem with the abilities they possesses.

People's judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances demonstrates whether they possess either high or low self-efficacy.

Julianne Malveaux, President of Bennett College wrote in *Diverse Education* (online, 2008) about a study which indicated that African American women are at the bottom of the happiness hierarchy in this country, unhappier than whites, as well as African American men because of the way black women remain "un-affirmed" in our society.

According to Bandura, a person's attitudes, abilities, and cognitive skills comprise what is known as the self-system. This system plays a major role in how we perceive situations and how we behave in response to different situations. Self-efficacy has been defined as the belief that one is capable of performing in a certain manner to attain certain goals. Self-efficacy was initially a term used in psychology, but has been adapted in many other academic circles to address a person's belief in their own competence.

Black women in America expend substantial psychic energy on managing the threats of racial and gender bias. Research (Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2003) demonstrates that in response to oppression, many Black women in American find themselves spending significant time, thought, and emotional energy watching every step they take, managing an array of feelings, and altering their behavior in order to cope. Many Black

women are coping with feelings of low self-esteem, with the sense that they will never be as confident, successful, or as appreciated as they wish they could be.

#### Historical Policies and Procedures

When institutions of higher learning were founded, leaders of the local community were placed in charge. It is common knowledge that White men who had a background in politics, clergy or business were placed in leadership positions in the countries first colleges. Most colleges only hosted men as their students, therefore, more often than not, the title “Dean of Men” was utilized rather than president. “In lieu of the standards for training or any form of education, the early deans relied on skills they learned on the job, from each other, or discovered intuitively in themselves,” (Schwartz, 2002, p.224)

Upon admittance of women, it quickly became apparent that leaders in higher education that they were not adequately equipped to deal with the unique needs of the new populace. Women were hired to fill the void, but not at that time, to lead (Shaw, 2007). The same phenomenon applied to the hiring of African American women when the Supreme Court determined in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) that separate but equal should no longer be the status quo, therefore colleges and universities began enrolling African American students (Thelin, 2004).

Shortly after the *Plessy* ruling, many HBCUs began to spring up, often as off shoots of state universities as subtle attempts to maintain the status quo. For example, in North Carolina, the state determined that North Carolina State University would establish an auxiliary campus for newly admitted black students. This resulted in a land grant and the establishment of North Carolina Agriculture & Technology. Understandably the only organizational structural models that new administrators of HBCUs had been privy to

were that of predominantly white institutions which resembled the patriarchal construct of the historical institutions. Men became presidents and women were given significant but limited roles in school governance.

### Mentoring

Mentoring has proven to have a profound effect on the professional development of women in both the public and private sector. Organizations are competing to acquire and retain the most talented professionals, creating new recruitment challenges. Previous research consistently recognizes mentoring as vital in retaining and promoting minorities within the academe (Johnson, 1998). Mentoring, like all academic and professional activities, takes place in historical, social, and political contexts that influence our institutional culture. Effective mentoring affords growth and advancement for minorities professionally through the availability of interaction with individuals in senior level positions committed to ensuring their success (Jackson, 2002). Women report having difficulty finding mentors, however. According to a recent survey by executives by the nonprofit Catalyst (2003), more than two-thirds of women listed lack of mentoring activities and exclusion from informal networks of communication as barriers to advancements.

The absence of a mentor relationship is considered one of the most detrimental obstacles to the academic success of African American women (Gregory, 2001). In an older study, that has been replicated in various forms, (Noble, 1988) having a mentor increased the chances for promotion and tenure of African American faculty. Moreover, mentees received invaluable information and advice that encouraged and stimulated professional mobility. Darwin (2000) purported, "Traditionally, the mentoring

relationship has been framed in a language of paternalism and dependence and stems from a power-dependent hierarchical relationship, aimed at maintaining the status quo” (p. 197).

This begs the question, is it essential to simply have a mentor, or to have an African American woman mentor? Patton and Harper (2003) insist that Black women would be best served by same race female mentors due to their ability to relate and understand the “complex intersection of race and gender in the academy and society” more so than mentors from other racial backgrounds (p. 71). This pressing need for African American women in higher education to benefit from a vigorous and favorable mentoring relationship stands in direct conflict with the overall underrepresentation of this population within higher education.

Sponsorship is another form of mentoring that enhances the career advancement for the protégé. Kram (1988) outlines a developmental relationship that provides a series of functions, such as: championing promotions (sponsorship); elevating the protégé’s visibility; assisting the protégé in navigating the organization; shielding the protégé from adverse forces and intervening, when necessary; and providing challenging assignments.

According to Kram’s view, career functions are those aspects of a developmental relationship that enhance advancement in an organization. Kram (1988) claims that the role of a sponsor is to actively nominate their protégé for desirable lateral moves and promotions that will advance their career. Kram (1988) posits that upward movement within an organization strongly correlates with the amount of visibility concerning both the potential and competence of the individual and how aggressively it is communicated, and more importantly by whom.

## The Impact of HBCUs on the Careers of African American Women

Traditionally, HBCUs have offered programs structured to address the specific needs of black students and the black community. Usually working within modest facilities and having access to limited resources, numerous studies denote the exceptional job that HBCUs have done educating their clientele despite contending with strict fiscal allocations and dubious federal and state support, (Allen, 1987).

During an extensive period in American history, HBCUs had the obligatory responsibility to provide Black people with the requisite tools to work within and become functional citizens of American society. HBCUs are arguably the method that navigated black peoples' social and political strategies for freedom in the United States.

Essentially, HBCUs taught “newly freed” blacks how to live, primarily in the South. HBCUs accepted this task and educated many black Americans, who were previously illiterate, with very little in the way of financial resources, (Anderson, 1988). Indeed, in the early years of HBCUs, women were primarily responsible for teaching others basic skills, such as reading and writing, in order to function as newly freed peoples. Over time, as desegregation took root in American society, some women moved on to predominantly white institutions for employment opportunities. Although colleges and universities were not initially set up to provide African American women with career progression opportunities many minorities were hired when *Brown v. Board of Education* (e.g. separate does not equate to equal) was passed to overturn previous decision in *Plessy v Ferguson* (e.g. separate but equal). Predominantly white institutions felt that African Americans were better equipped to deal with the new incoming population without providing the readiness to contend with true assimilation. However, a number

stayed with HBCUs with the hope that their time, education and experience would award positions equitable to their counterparts.

According to the United Negro College Fund website, (2010), by 1950, HBCUs were responsible for serving 90 % of black students in higher education. Moreover, HBCUs had produced 75 % of all black Ph.D.'s, 75 % of all black army officers, 80 % of all black federal judges, and 85 % of all black physicians. In 2001, HBCUs served 14 % of all black students enrolled in college, but were annually responsible for 26 % of black baccalaureate degrees.

Debate abounds which insists that keeping these institutions is the perpetuation of the same racial inequality that they were created to overcome. America has evolved significantly since the era of slavery, but there is still much work to be completed. Like all institutions of higher learning, HBCUs are under a great microscope in terms of demands from the public—and from legislators—to demonstrate things like educational quality and successful student outcomes.

Historically and predominately black colleges and universities continue to diversify themselves in terms of their students, faculties and administration. Higher education is a challenging business. As with other enterprises, if higher education institutions, including HBCUs, do not transform in today's highly competitive market, they become obsolete. It will require measured, disciplined steps to attain a competitive share of the educational benefits in a world driven by new social, economic, technological and demographic realities, (Williamson, 2008).

Following the lead of traditional patriarchal society, HBCUs are also replete with sexist practices due to both intercultural and intra-cultural practices. Studies indicate that

black women have achieved some higher visibility in terms of careers at these institutions but still endure the same quandaries presented by society as a whole. Moreover, women at these institutions were hesitant to discuss this problem for fear of direct and swift retribution (Bonner, 2001). These discriminatory tactics beg the question: how can a culture demand inclusionary practices from society as a whole, when this value is not being upheld within cultural constraints? African American women have looked to these institutions to provide opportunities for advanced career opportunities but face the same barriers (e.g. institutional and professional), that stunt their aspirations from conception.

### Summary

Two core themes emerged during this literature review regarding barriers African American executive level administrators encounter: professional and institutional barriers. Barriers are often invisible forces that are felt rather than seen. These are intangible obstacles that create problems for African American women as they attempt to progress professionally and often leave little room for solutions.

Personal barriers are self-controlled factors that prevent people from accomplishing their goals or cause them to behave in a self-sabotaging way. Personal barriers are difficult to remove because most result from long-standing habits and thought patterns. Personal barriers can be internal or external. Institutional barriers or deterrents refer to established processes and practices that can inhibit African American women administrators from seeking advancement in their careers.

In this study personal barriers refer to professional issues that affect an individual's private life or concerns typically in a hostile manner. These issues, (e.g. lack of self-esteem due to racism and sexism) are externally experienced, but intrinsically felt.

Professional barriers can prove to be detrimental to the career aspirations and actualization of African American women. Aspirations refer to optimism about how high they can climb professionally.

## CHAPTER THREE: PROCEDURE

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceived impediments of four African American executive level administrators at historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs), both public and private, in the Southeast faced while procuring those positions. This study examined perceptions of the four research participants as they relate to personal and institutional barriers.

It has been argued in other studies (Bailey, 2010; Barksdale, 2007; Crawford & Smith, 2005) that there is a gap in the literature regarding African American women in higher education. While this may have been accurate a decade ago, recent reports (ACE, 2002; Catalyst, 2003; US Women in Business, 2009) issued by professional associations about African American women in higher education have announced their dedication to promoting issues that African American women face through research in academic literature, by producing and promoting public policy and providing professional development opportunities.

The conundrum is not the lack of literature, but rather the slow acting progress towards the pertinent issues that the literature highlights. Studies (Aguirre, 2000; Evans & Chun, 2007) have addressed the lack of African American women in executive level administrative positions. However, colleges and universities, both predominantly white institutions and historically black colleges and universities, have dawdled in addressing this deficiency.

More importantly, most studies fail to provide a comprehensive investigation of what could be causing this delay. Typically a research study will investigate historical barriers or personal barriers separately, but neglect to simultaneously probe both. The foundational work in previous studies cannot be understated; however, it would be advantageous to consider these issues as corroborative within the context of one study.

### Research Questions

The research questions were:

1. What personal barriers, if any, have four African American executive level women administrators faced in their career progression?
2. What institutional barriers, if any, have four African American executive level women administrators faced in their career progression?

This study examined the perceptions held by four research participants regarding personal barriers and institutional barriers that may have been encountered during their professional career. Personal barriers include sexism, racism and self-efficacy or lack thereof. America was established as a patriarchal society. Remnants of the patriarchal stance remain today facilitating some to adhere to subtle (e.g. whether purposely or unintentionally), sexist and racist mentalities in many industries. Due to this, institutions often have longstanding discriminatory policies or practices that prevent promotion of African American women.

Institutional barriers include the benefits and drawbacks of mentoring and effects of professional development. Most professionals benefit from having a mentor to assist in career development, personal coaching and relationships developed through mutual professional association. African American women administrators at institutions of

higher learning often have difficulty finding and retaining a mentor due to the scarcity of African American women executive level administrators.

High quality professional development is essential to increase the knowledge, skills, attitudes and beliefs of educational leaders so that they may enable all students to learn at high levels. Professional development that is most effective in improving educator practice is results-oriented, data driven, constructivist in nature and job embedded. Professional development is a process of continually progressing and refining your character; it is about life-long learning and growing as an individual (Jasper, 2006). The objective of this study was to seek answers to questions the researcher developed from the literature which contended that black women in executive level positions at HBCUs encounter some barriers at some point during their career progression.

Qualitative research was effective at acquiring information about individual behavior, value systems, perceptions, motivations, aspirations, and lifestyles. The principle aim of this qualitative research was to provide a descriptive analysis of the consequences resulting from the presumed circumstances (e.g. personal and institutional barriers), and produce a written research narrative which illustrated the corresponding occurrence. The strength of using qualitative methodology was the advantage of deep exploration to obtain detailed and representative information. A thorough discourse consisted of in-depth analysis and systematic descriptions of the trend in question and is holistic, contextual, and inductive, by design (Ezzy, 2007).

Given the educational psychology (e.g., the effects impediments have on participants' self-esteem and ultimate decision making) and sociological implications (e.g., the effects impediments have on social processes), a qualitative research study was

most prudent to acquire a comprehensive and descriptive answer to the research questions.

### Overview of Study Design

A number of studies have looked at African American women leaders on predominantly white campuses or African American female college presidents (Warring, 2003; Birchum & Umbach, 2001). There are a limited number of studies that forthrightly address issues pertaining specifically to African American women executive level administrators in higher education; more specifically, how issues such as racism and gender discrimination impact female executive level administrators at HBCUs. There is an assumed notion that this population only contends with negative societal issues in settings that are predominantly white. However, this study is unique in the intent to not look at general societal norms, but rather focus on how these issues affect women in an environment assumed to be inclusive, (e.g. HBCUs).

### Conceptual Framework

Data collected were analyzed using constructivist grounded theory with an emphasis on highlighting social justice. “To develop a grounded theory for the 21st century that advances social justice inquiry,...(the researcher) must build upon constructionist elements...,” (Charmaz, 2005, p.508). The researcher became immersed in the data, to embed the pure narrative of the participants in the final research outcome. This immersion was played out through the use of coding processes that were active in intent and “helped to keep the life of (the research participants) in the foreground” (Charmaz, 2005, p. 526). The constructivist grounded theory approach offers a methodical technique to social justice inquiry that promotes integration of subjective

interpretation and experience with social conditions in the researchers' analysis (Charmaz, 2006).

The analytic process consisted of recording the number of times respondents answered when replying to survey questions to determine (if any) overarching themes, content analysis of the curriculum vitas and coding for the text of the participant interviews. Initially, frequencies of answers were recorded from the survey to determine a baseline for any overarching themes. The major issues (e.g. themes) that were addressed in the survey were associated with racism and gender discrimination. The survey served as a primary tool to initiate conversation and provide rudimentary information before moving into the primary data mining portion of the research initiative.

Coding involved four distinct stages: initial (in vivo) coding, determination of conceptual categories, thematic analysis which requires searching through data to identify any recurrent patterns, and finally, situational analysis, a visual illustration of the researcher's construct regarding the study questions.

Codes refer to descriptive terminology. For example a personal barrier may refer to things such as: negative comments about the environment, advice, inside information, hesitation in answering information and 'frienamies.' For institutional barriers, lack of networking with similar colleagues, jealousy among colleagues, the "good old boy" system and small number of women with this echelon were used. Subsequent coding leads to the creation of conceptual categories. The categories that emerged consisted of racism (external and internal), gender discrimination (external and internal), behaviors observed (hesitation, anger and frustration), lack of mentoring, historical policies and

procedures and remnants of a patriarchal structure in higher education. The essential idea is to develop a single storyline around which everything else is draped.

Next, themes were gleaned from the curriculum vitas using content analysis. Content analysis is a research tool used to determine the presence of certain words or concepts within texts or sets of texts. “By means of content analysis a large body of qualitative information may be reduced to smaller and more manageable form of representation. In addition, qualitative information may be transformed into quantitative information, such as category frequencies or ratings,” (Smith, 2000, p. 314).

The researcher looked for meaning, relationships of words and concepts using coding and categorization. From there inferences about the messages were made within the texts. Using content analysis at this point in data collection allowed the researcher to determine points of emphasis within the data. More specifically, the researcher was able to determine the similarities among research participants, such as educational attainment, professional achievement and professional associations. Additionally, this allowed the researcher an objective glimpse into the background of the research participants before interviewing them.

All interviews were recorded and then transcribed. Each interviewee was given a pseudonym. The researcher then followed Charmaz’s methodology of initial coding and then generating conceptual categories from the data. Emphasis was placed in preexisting theory (Lloyd-Jones, 2009) to orient the researcher to which questions should be examined; however it did not restrict the examination of data for emerging theory.

Through usage of rigorous research procedures conceptual categories emerged. The concepts/categories were interrelated. These categories were used to illustrate a

concept. By allowing substantive conceptual origination to guide data construction, the researcher focused on emergence of subsequent categories to enrich data collection and increase credibility for outcomes.

Thematic analysis was used to identify overarching themes within the data. At this stage, the researcher was more concerned with an inductive approach to the data, permitting saturation into the data and themes to be independently generated. Thematic analysis is a reductionist approach to dealing with data. Thematic analysis is flexible and permitted the researcher to determine what to do with the themes uncovered based on the intentions of the research and the process of analysis. Many researchers use thematic analysis as a way of getting close to their data and developing a deeper appreciation for the content (Boyatzis, 1998).

Thematic analysis included the following: calculating code frequencies and graphically displaying relationships between codes within the data set. Generally speaking, reliability is of greater concern with thematic analysis than with word-based analyses because more interpretation goes into defining the data items (i.e., codes) as well as applying the codes to chunks of text (Owen, 1984).

Subsequently, situational analysis was utilized by the researcher to present a visual interpretation of the research findings. The goal of situational analysis is to open up the analytic process to provide the researcher with an alternative way of grasping the materials for analysis. The researcher understood the situation as a whole as well as the basic social processes and particular parts of the situation that seem most important or interesting. It was the combination of the groundedness of interpretation with the methodical handling of data that made grounded theory and situational analyses a robust

approach for qualitative research. Situational analysis offered a new way of handling data visually so that the analysis could address all the data rather than segmented pieces that speak to particular themes, (Geertz 1973). Clark does not suggest that maps do not belong in final research products; indeed, maps can be used in presentations and publications to serve as the tool for very important framing work, especially project-specific maps. Most importantly, the situational map was the method that ultimately pushed the researcher analytically.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| 5. Interrelating Explanations<br>(Includes literature and data) | Combining of thematic data to explain the current study  |
| 4. Situational Analysis   | A process of gathering, reviewing and analyzing information and data from multiple sources. It should be one of the main references used for project design. |
| 3. Themes   | Refining categories into predominant core categories and themes  |
| 2. Categories   | Classify data into categories working towards core themes  |
| 1. Coding   | Analysis of interview data   |

Figure 3: Constructivist Grounded Theory Approach for this Study

### Population Sample

To secure participants who served the purposes of this study and provided sufficient data, criterion-based sampling was used. Criterion sampling involved selecting participants who met predetermined criteria of importance (Patton, 2001). By using criterion sampling the researcher was able to identify potential participants that provided pertinent data.

Criteria for this study, (to ensure capsulation of the target population), required that the participants be an African American woman currently serving in an executive level administrative position at an HBCU in the Southeast, have served in that position for at least three years, possess an advanced degree (e.g. Masters, Doctorate, Jurist Doctorate) and be willing to commit to 1.5 hours of research participation over the course of two months. It is important to note that this particular population was minimal, all the required variables taken into consideration.

### Sampling Frame

Patton (2001) suggested that sample size depends on the amount of time and resources available, including the question the researcher was seeking to answer. The target population for this study was three to five current Black women executives of HBCUs located in the Southeast. A concrete number of participants have not been indicated in previous works, but many refer to small numbers. Small can be one (biographical or autobiographical) or three to five participants (Chase, 2005; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Creswell, 2007).

### Data Collection Methods

To attain all essential data to complete this research study the following tasks were completed:

1. IRB approval was attained to begin research procedures (Appendix A).
2. The researcher designed a survey based on a pilot project conducted during the fall semester of 2010 in an Advanced Qualitative Methods Course. The pilot project consisted of interviewing two African American female mid-manager administrators at PWIs at length (in person) regarding whether or not they had

encountered racism or sexism, and if those encounters had impeded their career progression.

Results indicated that each woman had experienced significant racism and sexism from supervisors and co-workers throughout her career. Additionally, the researcher used existing literature (Henry, 2010; Belk, 2006; Bonner, 2001) in tandem with the results from the pilot project to develop baseline questions for the survey.

The survey was used to glean systematic data from participants regarding their perceptions on the research topic. The survey consisted of closed ended questions which were examined for bias, sequence, clarity and face-validity. Questions were baseline information to determine demographic information about potential participants (See Appendix B).

3. A cross sectional survey is one in which data are collected from selected individuals at a single point in time. It is a single, stand-alone survey. Cross-sectional designs are effective for providing a snapshot of the current behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs in a population. Using this design also had the advantage of providing data relatively quickly (Desimone & LeFloch, 2004).

Survey research was appropriate to make inferences about a larger populace based on data collected from a relatively small number of participants (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). To ensure the trustworthiness (e.g. dependability) of the survey, a pilot survey was sent out to 15 colleagues to complete and provide constructive criticism. Additionally, an abstract explanation of the researchers' dissertation project was sent for context.

After the pilot survey was tested on 15 colleagues and their comments had been reviewed, adjustments were made based upon their suggestions. Each of these colleagues was strategically chosen for their specific demographic characteristics. These demographic characteristics included training in survey research

methodology, twelve were female, three were male and all were African American. All survey testers worked in higher education administration in mid to high level positions and possessed a graduate degree.

The first time the pilot survey was distributed, it yielded consistent responses which indicated that the survey was too long and needed to omit open ended questions such as, “and if so, why.” Changes were made which included deletion of eight questions which were more pertinent to issues of leadership style and all open ended questions.

The survey was distributed a second time with the request for pilot survey takers to again provide feedback and included the amount of time it took to complete the survey. A deadline of two weeks was given to all participants in the pilot group. After two weeks, the survey pilot group indicated that the survey was succinct in functionality, asked precise questions regarding the research topic and took no more than fifteen minutes to complete.

An email invitation (Appendix C) was sent to 30 African American women serving in executive level administrative positions at various HBCUs in the Southeast (potential participants) to participate in the research study three weeks before the survey started. The invitation asked for the potential research participants’ assistance as this would help the researcher toward completion of the dissertation. Then the entire project was outlined, including the survey, submission of a curriculum vitae and an interview. Two weeks before the survey went live the potential participants were sent the same letter reminding them of the project and one week before the survey became available the participants were sent a simple reminder via email (Appendix D). Once the project began the potential participants were sent the letter again, along with an online informed consent (Appendix E). The letter contained a link directly to the survey (Appendix F).

Surveys were supplied electronically (Zoomerang.com) with informed consent presented on the introductory page. The four participants agreed to partake in the

study by simply selecting the yes button on the introductory screen.

Zoomerang.com allowed the researcher to quickly and easily access survey results. Moreover, it provided a gauge for the consistency in answers among participants. Another important feature was the automatic encryption that Zoomerang.com applied to all survey responses with the use of an SSL (Secure Socket Layer).

“Online surveys are subject to very substantial levels of non-response and bias/error associated with it. Online a fraction of those solicited to visit the website containing the survey questionnaire or who visit it voluntarily or by chance are likely to take the time and exert the effort to complete submit the questionnaire. ... These are likely to be those with the strongest positive or negative feelings and those with higher levels of involvement with the topic on the survey. Thus, this is likely to be substantial and perhaps prohibitive levels of self-selection and non-responsive bias,” (Alreck & Settle, 2004, p. 37)

As previously stated, surveys were used in this study to collect data conveniently and promptly. Responses were recorded in the form of numbers, rather than words, (see Appendix G). The objective of data processing was to convert the data into information quickly. Frequently, in qualitative research, it is proved prudent to obtain a participant's position on certain issues in order to move on to the next part of study.

Surveys were rated using the Likert scale. The Likert scale, named for its creator, states the issue/opinions and obtains the respondents' degree of agreement or disagreement. This scale provides answers in the form of coded data that are comparable and can readily be manipulated.

4. The researcher reviewed the survey responses and the data analysis provided by Zoomerang.com. A preliminary content analysis was produced based on themes produced from the survey.
5. Four participants submitted curriculum vitas for document analysis. Document analysis consisted of critical examination of the curriculum vitas for the purposes

of gaining more knowledge about the four women in the study. Additionally, it allowed the researcher to become more knowledgeable about the four participants in the study and therefore better prepared for the subsequent interviews. The content contained therein showed similarities or differences regarding participants' educational and professional backgrounds.

6. The researcher analyzed the curriculum vitas in tandem with the surveys. Four viable samples were eligible to complete the interview portion of the study (e.g. completed the survey and uploaded their curriculum vitae). These four participants were contacted and interview times were coordinated.
7. An explanation of the interview process was provided. Four women were receptive and willing to participate and three scheduled a time for a web conference or phone interview, while one requested that the researcher send the questions to her in advance.
8. The researcher conducted interviews with three of the participants, while one participant answered the questions upon receiving them electronically and returning them to the researcher via email.

#### Explanation of Interview Process

Three participants engaged in 15 to 20 minute phone interviews with the researcher via Skype, (for interview question, see Appendix H). The participants called the researcher via Skype, which allowed the researcher to tape the interview. Recoding the interviews was important to the research process as it allowed the researcher to revisit and review the conversations later for discourse analysis and construction purposes. The interview conversations permitted the participants to reflect on their experiences as it related to issues regarding the study. It also addressed the intellectual and emotional

connections between the participants' experiences as they pertained to the actual study (Seidman, 2006).

Finally, open ended interviews served as a good mechanism for data collection in this qualitative research inquiry. During the interviews, the researcher asked questions that probed into the data already previously collected (e.g. survey, curriculum vitae) to ask inquisitive questions in order to further enrich the data set. The researcher focused on concrete details within the data. Finally, phone conferencing helped the researcher resist the urge to share similar experiences which could have caused leading questions or take the interview off course. This decision was made based off experiences from in person interviews conducted by the researcher during the pilot study. Upon reflecting on the pilot interviews, the researcher determined that while a great deal of information was gleaned from the, "in person" approach, strong evidence of leading questions was present in the transcripts, (see Appendix I for an example).

Despite having procedures in place to prevent respondent behavior, the researcher noted that this indeed occurred. The survey results yielded one distinct set of responses, while interview data yielded responses that were entirely contradictory. Research suggests participants often purposely skew their responses due to the researcher's status as a student, woman, or because of ethnicity, (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008, p. 703 & 711). Despite knowledge of these variables, the researcher had no control over respondent behavior. Often in interviews:

"The respondent deliberately tries to please the interviewer or prevent the interviewer from learning something about him or her. To do this, the respondent will embellish a response, give what is describes as a 'socially desirable' response, or omit certain relevant information (Bradburn, 1983, p.291)."

One participant asked for the questions in advance indicating that she had a busy schedule and wanted to prepare. Within three days, she returned the questions with her responses and indicated that her participation in the research study had concluded.

#### General Data Analysis

The survey consisted of questions that asked basic demographic information and questions to gauge their perceptions regarding whether or not they had experienced discrimination based on gender or race.

The surveys neglected to reveal data that indicated the respondents were subjected to internal gender discrimination or internal racism. Therefore, the researcher felt it was counterproductive to pursue that issue further without substantive data from this study to answer the research questions.

The second process in data analysis was a document analysis of the curriculum vitas submitted by four participants. All participants were executives at HBCUs in the Southeast as required by the research design. Two had doctoral degrees, (one Ed.D. s, one Ph.D.), one Master in Business Administration and Master of Science in Chemistry. All attended predominantly white institutions at one point in their educational career, but started their professional career at an HBCU.

The next step in data analysis was to transcribe the interviews. All interviews were transcribed within 24 hours of the interviews. Before analyzing the interviews, the researcher reviewed them for clarity with an overall goal of understanding the content. Although the researcher conducted each interview, reading the interviews as constructed narratives seemed to provide a more thorough comprehension of what each participant

was conveying and provided heightened awareness in construction of the material for data extrapolation.

### Introduction of Participants

For the purposes of this study, the participants were given pseudonyms to protect their anonymity as promised to them in their informed consent (Nosek, Banaji & Greenwald, 2002).

### Research Participant # 1: “Piper”

The first participant, Piper, worked at a state supported HBCU, founded as a land-grant institution. This university has a mid to large student enrollment with a comparable faculty. It is a doctoral research institution that offers undergraduate degrees through eight colleges and schools. Additionally, 29 master’s degrees are offered and seven doctoral degree programs.

Piper has a doctorate of philosophy degree in educational administration and has worked in higher education for over 20 years, 15 of those in HBCUs. She worked her way up from mid-level manager to a senior student affairs officer. Currently she is a Vice Chancellor, and has held that post at her current university and her previous university for seven years. Piper had a strong mentor to rely upon and assist in her professional progression. Her mentor was an African American male, who is currently the Chancellor of the university where she is employed. Although in our initial conversations she noted some difficulty while climbing the ladder to her current station, she notably expressed that she was not aware of any discriminatory action she encountered during her career ascension.

### Research Participant # 2: “Katherine”

The second participant, Katherine worked at a private HBCU, started by a religious organization. Enrollment is small due to the nature of the university and the faculty and administration are minimal as well. Katherine has a doctorate of education in higher education administration and has worked in higher education for over 25 years. She currently serves as Dean of a College and has worked at an HBCU more than 15 years. Katherine did not have any noteworthy mentors during her career progression, and she felt that the absence of a mentor had made her stronger in her resolve to move upwards. Psychology describes this as “classic compensation,” which is when an individual overachieves in one area to compensate for failures in another. This is a defense mechanism, described by Sigmund Freud as a means to safeguard the mind against feelings and thoughts that are too difficult for the conscious mind to cope with (Rasmussen & Watkins, 2012).

Katherine described experiencing discrimination and racism throughout her career progression. These actions were externally generated and caused some frustration. Despite this, she continues to have some menial aspirations towards becoming a top executive (e.g. college president). She has managed to use her negative experiences as reinforcement to press forward.

### Research Participants 3 & 4: “Sienna & Paige”

The final participants work at the same institution. This university is a public, master's level coeducational institution. This institution has a sizable student enrollment which includes both undergraduate and graduate students. Currently there are ample faculty members with an effort to draw faculties who will bring research dollars with

them. Administrative and staff personnel are in shorter supply. Both women have advanced degrees, a Master of Business Administration and a Master of Science in Chemistry. Each had worked in higher education for more than 10 years, with more than five years at the current university, in their current respective positions.

Sienna was a mid-level executive administrator for the university, while Paige was a senior level executive administrator. Both women experienced external discrimination and external racism. Due to their commitment to the university, each woman had been socialized to accept their professional “station.” Although they both expressed some dissatisfaction with incidents that had occurred throughout their careers, they viewed achievement of an executive level position as a high level of accomplishment.

Paige had mentors to rely upon; however, they were not in positions that could assist in her career progression. Indeed, her mentors were other black women, often in lower administrative positions or equal administrative positions that offered advice regarding how to get ahead based upon not making their mistakes. She expressed gratitude for these relationships, but was equally frustrated that there was not someone to provide her with more substantial career assistance.

Sienna had mentors when she was in graduate school; however those relationships became difficult to maintain and nurture over time. Frustrated by the lack of mentors in her professional career, Sienna sought advice from colleagues, but ultimately relied upon her education, experience and own insight to advance her career.

## Ethical Considerations

In any research study, ethical issues related to protection of the participants are always of vital concern (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). An educational researcher is responsible for both informing and protecting participants. The research process involved enlisting voluntary cooperation, and it was a basic premise that participants were informed of the study's inherent purpose. The central issue with respect to protecting participants was the manner in which the information was treated. Although it was anticipated that no serious ethical threats were posed to any participants or their well-being, this study employed the following safeguards to ensure the protection and rights of participants.

First, informed consent remained a priority through the study. An electronic waiver of consent was sent to each participant along with an electronic informed consent to voluntarily proceed with the study. Both forms were submitted and approved by UNC Charlotte's Institutional Review Board (IRB) prior to the commencement of this study. Before proceeding with interviews, each participant was asked if she understood the documentation provided and their rights as participants in this study. Each participant indicated that she understood and agreed to proceed.

Second, participants' rights and interests were considered of primary importance when choices were made regarding the reporting and dissemination of data. The researcher was committed to keeping the names and/or other significant identity characteristics of the sample confidential. Cautionary measures were taken to secure the storage of research-related records and data, and no one other than the researcher had access to the materials (List, 2008).

### Issues of Trustworthiness

Triangulation refers to the use of more than one approach to enhance validation of the data. The benefit of combining primary research with secondary research, particularly in a qualitative study is data triangulation. Data triangulation occurs when a piece of data, a finding, or a generalization is able to be verified through several different research methods. This helped add credibility and makes findings stronger.

To be considered a complete inquiry for study in this investigation, participants were asked to complete an online survey, submit their curriculum vitae and participate in some form of an interview. Each of the four participants who will be discussed in further detail in Chapter 4 submitted all requisite parts of the research process. The researcher was able to triangulate the data by checking the validity of the participants' interview responses against the survey, literature and reflexivity activities. This substituted for incident reports from the participants and served as a suitable method for data triangulation.

### Limitations of the Study

Due to the specificity of the requirements for the research question, the sample population to pool from was miniscule, approximately 30 possible participants. As such, there was a lack of respondents to the invitations to participate in the study. Additionally, executive level administrators have extremely busy schedules and often are wary of participating in research, particularly a study that deals with sensitive issues. Couple the small population along with busy schedules and ultimately the study yielded a small number of participants.

During triangulation the researcher discovered that the survey data did not match the interview data which could be attributed to respondent behavior. Analysis ultimately rests with the choices of the researcher. The qualitative portion of this study, in general, was limited by researcher subjectivity. Therefore, an overriding concern was that of researcher bias, framing as it does assumptions, interests, perceptions, and needs. One of the key limitations of this study is the issue of subjectivity and potential bias regarding the researcher's own participation as a former higher education administrator who had experienced racism and sexism during her career.

#### Subjectivity Statement

Pillow (2003) explains that without a critical reflection and examination of who we are and who we become in relation to our research process and product, we cannot provide accurate analysis or representation of our research. I entered the doctoral program at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte because I wanted to understand why systems of higher education seemingly are unable to promote the success of African American women into executive level positions. The emphasis on self-knowing and reflection, coupled with challenging assumptions and orthodoxy, led me to reflect on my own role as a mid-level administrator in an institution of higher education.

Inextricably linked to that role is my experience as an African American. I dedicated my life's work to issues of access and equity, (Appendix J). I challenged the status quo and conventional wisdom. I took on major forces to effect policies and conditions that would make better the lives of many who were consistently disenfranchised. But in doing all of this work, I was embattled and exhausted. My

exhaustion was a result of my work, but to a greater extent it was a result of doing that work while representing and uplifting the entire African American race.

I was cognizant of the fact that my concern about validating negative stereotypes informed my research stance. Additionally, I noticed the subtle tension that existed among women leaders of different ethnicities. I read countless studies on gender issues and on women educators in leadership positions and eventually came to understand that I needed to consider African American women's leadership in a broader scope – in a framework that included lenses through which they must filter their leadership responsibilities – racial and gender lenses in historical, political context – as is done with Black feminist thought.

It was important to develop insight into the complexities of the milieus, tensions, and contradictions African American women leaders navigate as they use their talents to address fundamental inequities in society and to further the interests and life chances of African American people. In order to illuminate the journeys of African American women in institutions of higher learning, it was pertinent to envision their individuality in a way that does not overgeneralizations or obscure the visibility of the authentic and individual self. The label, “African American women leaders” should conjure collective individuals who differ in their presence, strength, talents, perspectives, traits, and adaptations. However, their difference and individuality was inseparable from their collective and complex experience of being African American women.

As an African American woman engaging in a qualitative data about the perceptions of African American women who work in higher education, I was passionate about the advancement of this population into positions which permit more authority.

Additionally, my experiences shaped a viewpoint about the issues under scrutiny in this study. It is valid to conclude that my passion and ambition outweighed my research outcomes. Initially, I assumed that securing data for this study would not only be a straightforward process but a most enjoyable one. Nothing could have been further from reality. Although the women I encountered at various stages seemed eager to be involved, securing their participation quickly became a difficult and concerning task.

The data that were collected provided a snapshot of a population that can be considered small and intimate. African American executive women at HBCUs constitute a handful of administrators and are often easily identifiable to each other, either by position, an incident that has “made the rounds” or because of an informal network. It is impossible to assume the data collected in this study alone answers the research questions. However, taken in tandem with the literature, I was able to use the research methodology to construct a coding trail that drew out some significant data related to the investigation. What resulted was a more informed understanding of the hesitations and motivations that beleaguer this population as it pertains to this population participating in qualitative studies. The concluding chapters provide an explanation of how the data the researcher was able to attain was analyzed for maximum usage in this study and recommendations for future researchers to avoid the speed bumps I encountered on this journey.

## CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS

This study examined the perceptions held by research participants regarding personal barriers and institutional barriers that may have been encountered during their professional career. Personal barriers include sexism, racism and self-efficacy or lack thereof. America was established as a patriarchal society. Remnants of the patriarchal stance remain today facilitating some to adhere to subtle (e.g. whether purposely or unintentionally, sexist and racist mentalities in many industries). Due to this, institutions often have longstanding discriminatory policies or practices that prevent promotion of African American women.

Institutional barriers include the benefits and drawbacks of mentoring and effects of professional development. Most professionals benefit from having a mentor to assist in career development, personal coaching and relationships developed through mutual professional association. African American women administrators at institutions of higher learning often have difficulty finding and retaining a mentor due to the scarcity of African American women executive level administrators.

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceived impediments of four African American executive level administrators at historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs), both public and private, in the Southeast faced while procuring those positions.

The research questions were:

1. What personal barriers, if any, have four African American executive level women administrators faced in their career progression?
2. What institutional barriers, if any, have four African American executive level women administrators faced in their career progression?

#### Data Analysis Framework

Constructivist grounded theory emphasizes that data construction begins with interaction between the researcher and the participant. Action and meaning are assumed to shape actions and conversely action affects meaning. The researcher studied how and why, participants construct meanings and actions in their specific situations, (e.g. perceptions regarding personal and institutional barriers at HBCUs), (Charmaz, 2006). The constructivist approach allowed the researcher to gain proficient knowledge regarding what the participants perceived affected them en route to their current position as it relates to the research questions. It facilitated a distinct infiltration regarding ‘how’ and ‘why’ the participants continued their professional pursuits despite any barriers (personal or institutional) encountered.

Constructionist grounded theory entailed comparisons from data to construct concepts for the purposes of tying these concepts to data. This comparison required the researcher to become intimately acquainted with the data, both specific and general, to discover anything new and subsequently explore links to larger issues or create larger unrecognized issues entirely.

Constructed grounded theory permitted the researcher to delve into issues that affected the population under study and specifically search for instances of attempts to

attain or seek social impartiality in various dealings in addressing social justice. Indeed, “interests in social justice...would lead a researcher to note points of struggle and conflict and to look for how participants defined and acted in such moments,” (Charmaz, 2006, p.517).

Constructivist grounded theory coupled with social justice implies that there are multiple social realities open for interpretation. Through this lens the researcher could acknowledge the participants’ meanings and use that meaning to aid during interpretation. Charmaz (2000) contends that constructionist grounded theory permits the researcher to gain a much wider interpretation by inferring that people create and maintain meaningful worlds though conferring meaning on the participants’ reality.

Social justice refers to the idea of creating a society or institution based on the principles of equality and solidarity, that understands and values human rights, and that recognizes the dignity of every human being. Essentially, social justice is concerned with equal justice, all aspects of society. This concept demands that people have equal rights and opportunities; everyone, deserves an even playing field.

Adams, Bell and Griffin (2007) define social justice as both a process and a goal. "The goal of social justice education is full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs. Social justice includes a vision of society that is equitable and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure." (p. 162).

Bogotch asserts that social justice is a social construction and that “there are no fixed or predictable meanings of social justice prior to actually engaging in educational

leadership practices” (p. 153). Indeed, Bogotch (2002) asserts that social justice cannot be separated from the practices of educational leadership.

Investigation of personal and institutional barriers that affected African American executive level administrators at HBCUs presents an ideal opportunity to narrate their experiences, emotions and concerns. Additionally, by constructing these issues collectively the HBCU educational community has the opportunity to understand the depth of this problem and possibly begin to address it.

#### Measurement

Maxwell (2005) posited that the researcher is the instrument in a qualitative study. Further, Marshall and Rossman (2006) noted the researcher's interpersonal skills often determine the success of a qualitative study. Therefore, my role as researcher was especially important as a link between data collection and data analysis in the interviewing process (Sprenkle & Piercy, 2005).

Grounded theory methodology is not intended to test presuppositions, but rather to generate theory; it is based on data, not guesswork. Unlike research designed for hypothesis testing that typically involves structuring data collection and analysis before beginning data collection, grounded theory research is necessarily flexible requiring data collection and processing to be continuously adjusted to accommodate theme and theory development.

Treatment of the data and their analytical outcomes is the main theme of Charmaz's (2000) explanation of how researchers undertake studies using constructivist grounded theory. There is a sense that the researchers immerse themselves in the data in a way that embeds the narrative of the participants in the final research outcome. This

immersion is played out through the use of coding language that is active in its intent and that “helps to keep that life in the foreground” (p. 526). Charmaz advocates that the researchers as authors include raw data processed to keep the participant’s voice and meaning present in the outcome (Charmaz 1995b, 2001).

The researcher maintained greater concern for eliciting data to enrich the developing themes than adhering to rigid interview guides and questioning protocols. Consistent with a constructivist grounded theory, coding decisions were based on a combination of narrative fit with research goals, methods, and personal interpretation (Saldaña, 2009). Interestingly, some methodologists like Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) believed coding was an “abhorrent act incompatible with newer interpretive qualitative research methodologies”(Saldaña, 2009, p. 47). Glaser (1967, 1978), arguably one of the founders of grounded theory, advised against taping and transcribing data, and stressed reliance on thorough field notes solely. This view was based on the belief that wading through transcription and coding, important thematic developments could be lost.

However, Charmaz (2006), considered the founder of the “constructivist” approach to grounded theory, advocated a more flexible and reflective posture. Charmaz (2006) defined the research process as multi-faceted, consisting of comparing different data (people, incidents, documents, field notes, memos, etc.); comparing the same data over time; comparing data with category; and ultimately comparing category with category. Utilization of this process helped the researcher determine which data were most useful in revealing themes. To accommodate flexibility and ensure timely generation of themes, the researcher used open/initial coding, creation of conceptual categories, determination of themes and situational analysis.

### Description of the Data Analysis Process

In constructivist grounded theory the researcher looked beyond the surface meaning to illuminate values and beliefs. Coding and categorizing were used to further refine the dataset by asking specific questions and permitted the researcher the view the data in a fresh light and develop new ideas.

The first step in data analysis was to organize the data (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Participants were asked to respond to an online survey. Overall responses were low (4), however, given that the pool of potential respondents was only 30 women; this is a fairly representative sample of the population.

The survey consisted of questions that asked basic demographic information and baseline questions to gauge their perceptions regarding whether or not they had experienced discrimination based on gender or race. The surveys neglected to reveal data that indicated the respondents were subjected to gender discrimination or racism. The findings indicated that the participants did not have any significant experiences related to the research questions. Therefore, the researcher felt it was counterproductive to pursue that issue further without substantive data from this study to substantiate these assumptions.

| <b>Question</b>   | <b>No</b> | <b>Yes</b> |
|---|-----------|------------|
| <b>Do you feel that intra-racial racism has affected your professional ascension?</b>                 | 3         | 1          |
| <b>Do you feel that traditional racism has affected your professional ascension?</b>                  | 3         | 1          |
| <b>Do you feel that traditional gender discrimination has affected your professional ascension?</b>   | 4         |            |
| <b>Do you feel that intra-gender, gender discrimination has affected your professional ascension?</b> | 4         |            |
| <b>Do you think your juxtaposition of race and gender has affected your career?</b>                   | 3         | 1          |
| <b>Have you had a mentor at any point in your career?</b>   | 4         |            |
| <b>Did that mentor influence your career choice?</b>  | 2         | 2          |
| <b>Do you hold an Advanced Degree?</b>  | 4         |            |

Table 1: Sampling of Survey Responses

The second process in data analysis was conducting document analysis on the curriculum vitas submitted by the four participants. The final step in data analysis was transcription of the interviews. All interviews were transcribed within 24 hours after they took place. Before analyzing the interviews, the researcher reviewed them for clarity and to gain an overall understanding of the structure of content.

#### Initial Coding

At the initial stage, line-by-line initial coding was conducted. This involved becoming intimate with the data through marked close reading. Coding then names a pertinent segment or line of data, using, words reflecting action (Glaser, 1978). Initial

coding (e.g. line by line) emphasizes processes inherent in the data in an effort to prevent the researcher from early “conceptual leaps” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 48).

In the initial coding, the researcher reviewed the data transcribed from the recordings by studying each word, line, and incident for important meanings. In vivo coding was used extensively during this portion of coding to ensure the participant’s voices and experiences did not get lost in the process. In vivo coding is a method to preserve terminology used by participants that directly relate to the topic under investigation. Symbolic or “slangy” terminology invoked by participants demonstrated the significance of a specific point of view and allowed the researcher to maintain the disposition of participants throughout the coding process. It was important to the researcher to respect these subtle nuances during the initial stages of coding, as it provided more loyalty to the data rather than to preconceived notions.

As illustrated by the example in Table 2, the line-by-line method was used. Codes made meaning and action clear (Charmaz, 2006). They maintained focus on what the data suggested and from which perspective it was offered. The researcher generated a coding process that was provisional, practical, and grounded in the data.

| Participant 1   | Participant 2   | Participant 3   |
|---|---|---|
| I find myself in more “pissin” matches with people than is truly necessary.                                     | but blacks still have that mindset that a man and to some extent a white man knows better.                              | sometimes this perceived you know well she is a woman or your point of view...over looked your opinions, I don't know if it always taken seriously. |
| I have to show that I can take anything that is thrown at me.   | Also, if you have any mentors or colleagues that can keep you in the loop that is even better, that who you know thing. | sometimes you know the upper administration * don't take women seriously.   |
| It is very hierarchical, with the good old boy system in place. No one says it but it is very well established. | when a new client was black, I was always paraded out. It was so obvious  | Just this very morning and I said sir you are implying what and he said well I just didn't know they had that program and you know they have a MFA; |

Table 2: Sampling of Researcher's Open/ Initial Coding

In the initial coding, the researcher made every effort to remain flexible, stay immersed in the data, keep the coding process simple, capture actions as well as narrative pertinent to the study, and move efficiently through the transcripts (Charmaz, 2006, p. 49). Careful initial coding produced relevant, as codes matched the empirical data (e.g. literature) and were germane to what was actively happening (Charmaz, 2006, p. 49). To make the coding practical and immediately useful, the researcher used a color coding system during initial coding.

Issues outlined in the literature served as an informal guide. During the first read through, the researcher simply underlined statements that seemed pertinent (Appendix

K). On the second pass, the underlined statements were color coded according to the issues germane to the study (Appendix K). Color coding helped pinpoint topics relevant to be converted to conceptual categories. Categories are the next step in identifying relationships between the open code identifiers created using open coding (Gasson, 2004, p. 83; Urquhart, 2001, p.115).

### Creation of Categories

Conceptual categories were generated based of empirical evidence confirmed by the researcher's data. These categories were used to illustrate a concept. From these codes the researcher created categories from the codes. The categories were racism, gender discrimination, mentoring, remnants of a patriarchal society, historical processes and procedures, and behaviors, such as anger, hesitation and frustration. The researcher felt it was beneficial to reexamine the transcripts to review the coding to determine the validity of the category by determining the consistency in which the interviewees dealt with the conceptual categories.

| Respondent | Racism<br>(red) | Sexism<br>(blue) | Self-<br>Efficacy<br>(green) | Mentoring<br>(yellow) | Remnants of<br>Patriarchal<br>Society<br>(pink) | Historical<br>Processes<br>and<br>Procedures<br>(purple) | (Gray)<br>Anger/<br>Frustration | Total |
|------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|---|--|---------------------------------|-------|
| Paige      | 3               | 8                | 3                            | 2                     | 1   | 1  | 4                               | 18    |
| Sienna     | 3               | 6                | 3                            | 1                     |   |  | 3                               | 13    |
| Katherine  | 2               |                  | 1                            | 2                     |   |  | 1                               | 5     |
| Piper      |                 |                  |                              |                       |   |  |                                 | 0     |
| Total      |                 |                  |                              |                       |   |  |                                 | 36    |

Table 3: Matrix for Categories: Coding Context (e.g. data) in Corresponding Colors

The categories were determined from the evidence presented in coding process. During the interviews, research participants described incidents, feelings, actions or practices consistent with themes raised in the literature review. Consequently, the researcher made the conceptual leap to categories based on previous research coupled with the data presented in the interviews.

Racism was created due to incidents described by research participants. For example, Sienna discussed that “when a new client was black, (she) was always paraded out. It was so obvious. Even in graduate school, there were some professors who were harder on me because they thought I didn’t deserve to be there.” This event indicated that Sienna felt used as a prop to make a favorable impression upon new black clients. Moreover, she suspected that her graduate school professors gave her more difficulty while attaining her degree initially because the perception was that she had not earned the right to be there. A working definition for racism in this context could be consciously knowing, and professing that all people are equal, yet subconsciously treating and judging some groups (races, ethnicities) differently.

Sexism was derived from various comments that indicate that modern sexism is more subtle and is characterized by a denial that women are still targets of discrimination, and by a lack of support for policies designed to improve women’s status. For example, men who hold these modern sexist attitudes are more likely to think men are more capable than women when evaluating them, and are less likely to support women in general. Paige stated that, “this man decided to call me unprofessional, incompetent and unqualified for my position and even went so far as to say he doesn’t know how someone like me even got the job.”

Mentoring, or rather the lack of mentoring emerged as a distinct conceptual category, as each participant indicated that while they had some form of mentor, it was not the traditional mentoring relationship discussed in related literature. These relationships are lateral professionally and do not hold any authoritative “clout” to influence the career progression of the research participants. For example, Paige stated, “Over the years, as far as black mentors most of them were like assistant directors, there wasn’t a director. The older staff people that you could talk to, they would give you encouragement but they were basically in the same situation you were in.”

Remnants of a patriarchal society and historical processes and procedures are listed as two categories yet are closely linked. These two categories refer to the initial design of institutions of higher learning and its overreliance on men to hold administrative positions and design policy and procedure. “In education and especially, black education, parents and students, are always expecting to see men in positions of power. To some degree so are administrators and staff.” In another instance, “the new chancellor is great, but he is standoffish. If you are not in his circle then you don’t get to talk to him. In fact, there are people on senior staff who have never spoken to him. And he gives orders very unevenly.”

Actions and emotions were measured by the participants’ hesitancy to answer questions, paranoia about answers, and anger and frustration when faced with opposition due to perceived gender discrimination or racism. For example, one participant stated, “I had to be granted the floor. It is this type of disrespect that women and African Americans have to continuously contend with.” While another showed small paranoia regarding her participation in the study and once again asked for assurances by insisting,

“Given the players in this scenario, I am assuming you will not comment to anyone about what we just discussed.” Given that African American executive level administrators at HBCUs in the Southeast are a small population, the concern was more centrally situated around being identified and her comments being used against her rather than outright resistance to participation in the study. Finally, another participant was discussing a coworker and demonstrated her disgust by stating, “At that time he didn’t really know he was pissing me off probably.”

### Thematic Analysis of Data

Thematic analysis is an approach to dealing with data that involves the creation and application of ‘codes’ to data. ‘Coding’ refers to the creation of categories in relation to data; the grouping together of different instances of datum under an umbrella term that can enable them to be regarded as ‘of the same type’. This is where the relationships between categories begin to emerge into themes (Urquhart, 2001, p.115). By allowing substantive conceptual origination to guide construction of themes, the researcher could focus on emergence of subsequent categories to enrich data collection and increase credibility for outcomes.

After the researcher had determined the categories and was satisfied with the saturation of data regarding those respective categories, a thematic analysis was used to determine if the data could be tied back to the initial research questions. Using the major themes introduced in the research questions, personal barriers and institutional barriers, the researcher determined which categories (if any) were relevant to these themes. The two themes that emerged were institutional and personal barriers germane from the literature.

### Situational Analysis

Most directly, constructivist data analysis strategies also promote visual mapping of key elements, connections among them, and the overall synthesis between them. This type of visualization can be used in generative ways throughout a study. Through generation, the researcher included the processes of generating data, generating analytic coding schemes or categories, and generating links between each level, from coding to categories, from categories to themes and from themes to conclusions about the overall study. While the focus may be primarily directed toward the data, it is equally beneficial to use this process to map one's own conceptual and epistemological standpoints.

Clarke (2003) provides a compelling way to map situations visually, an analytical practice that combines elements of grounded theory, and traditional sociological mapping techniques. The key to this type of "situational analysis" was to use the researcher's data to generate a visual "data map" for analysis. Situational maps consider the major human, non-human, discursive, and other elements influencing a situation, as framed by those in the situation as well as the analyst. These maps are intended to provoke analyses of relations among them ( p. 559).

The researcher drew a map to lay out elements in relation, to find or create a pattern that was sensible for this study. The researcher enjoyed the more creative aspects of mapping as a process of visually depicting the comprehensive analysis of the data to address the research questions. Visual mapping highlights a crucial element of qualitative inquiry: seeking depth and complexity in order to provide descriptive narrative.

Visually depicting the research inquiry helped to identify certain patterns and curiosities that might not have been otherwise noticed. This acknowledges the

challenge that despite the researcher's intent of identifying a discrete object for inquiry, the object will always be entangled in larger patterns and flows of meaning that operate both at the surface, observable levels and also at less visible, deep structure levels. When adding the premise of swiftly shifting or ad hoc structures, the utility of situational mapping becomes more meaningful.

It would be impossible to identify simple cause/effect sequences or to explain the research inquiry as a whole. Quelling the urge to describe or explain the entire situation, the researcher began with the baseline question of "did barriers affect the career progression of African American executive administrators at HBCUs in the Southeast?" The researcher started to generate a visual map by following interesting trajectories through the data paths and mapping various elements, beginning at the basic level, next at the personal level, and finally issues related to the institutional level.

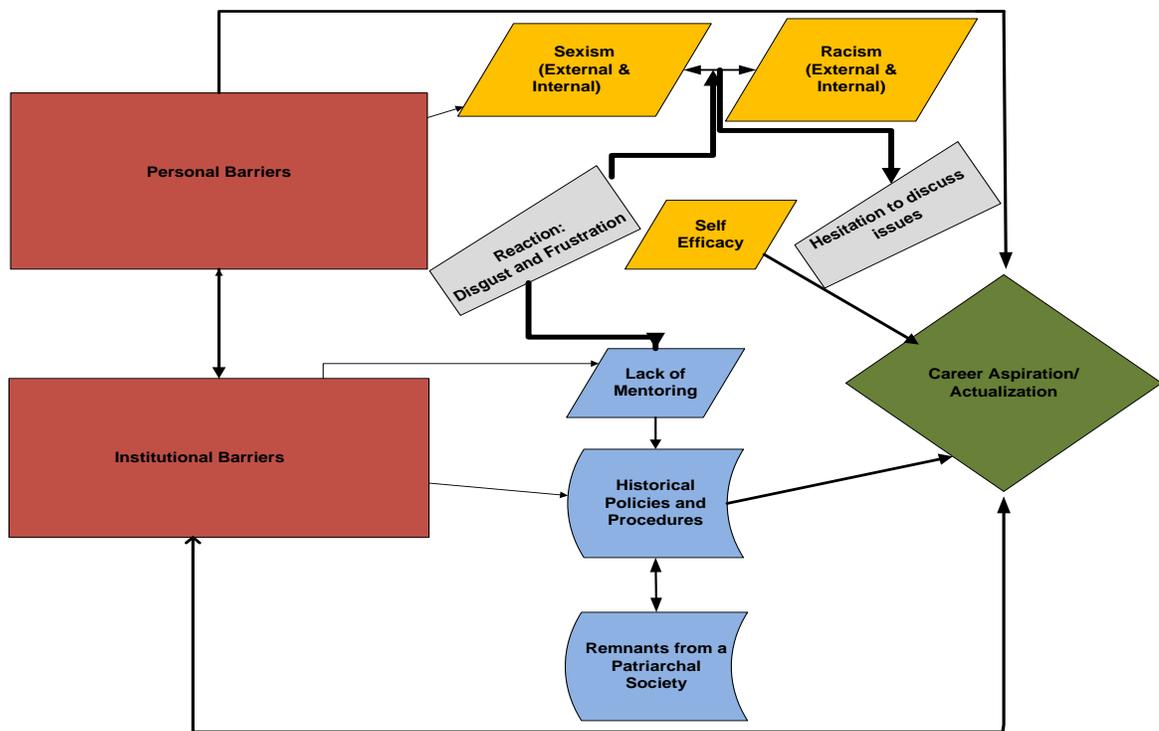


Figure 4: McManus Model: Obstructions to Career Progression

## Findings

Through coding, creation of categories, thematic analysis, visualization of the research through situational analysis, the researcher determined that the participants did experience racism and gender discrimination, however, these experiences did not hinder their career progression; indeed these experiences appeared to make the women more determined.

General findings include both personal and institutional concerns. In relation to the personal concerns, despite the problems brought up when discussing institutional concerns, most executive women were unwilling to help other women and were often unqualified for the position they currently held. For example, one senior level executive administrator (participant # 2) mentioned a colleague who had been promoted due to a favorable relationship with the chancellor, despite having limited experience in higher education administration. Indeed, her advanced degree (Masters) was in a science field. She was pursuing a doctorate. Since she was acutely aware that others questioned her ability, her accessibility to others was highly and intentionally guarded.

Researching further, this is not an uncommon phenomenon for HBCUs. Most executive women were promoted by men for reasons unrelated to their actual work (e.g. nepotism, personal relationships, to gain favor with someone, etc.). Due to cultural constraints, the mindset is to watch out for self because no one else will help you and there is a strong tendency to overcompensate rather than to simply do work competently to do an efficient and functional job.

At the institutional level participants indicated that each day held new challenges to be tackled for the executives so institutional support was difficult to gauge. There was

great demand to keep both internal and external constituents content. Most women executives felt they were constantly being questioned about their “executive decisions” and disliked simply because they were the boss and in some cases because they are a woman (e.g. the “Hillary Clinton effect”).

The statistical findings indicated that the participants did not have any significant experiences related to the research questions. Taken at face value, the researcher would be inclined to pursue other research options. However, the researcher was confident that the qualitative portion of this study would indicate otherwise.

During interviews, participants disclosed being subjected to external gender discrimination, which reflects finding number three. One participant described an incident in which she attended a meeting with a male colleague to discuss important budgetary matters regarding her area. When she began to speak, others in attendance ignored her or continued on with the conversation. She continued to jockey for attention but was getting nowhere. Finally, she noticed her male colleague gained the attention of the person chairing the meeting and indicated that his colleague was attempting to make a point. Finally due to the assistance of a white male colleague she was “granted” the floor to provide her input. “It is this type of disrespect that women and African Americans have to continuously contend with. Either it’s a meeting or even a parent who assumes that a man has to be in charge of my area. Sometimes, I just let them think that my counterpart is in charge, it is just easier than constantly doing fisticuffs over power,” (Sienna).

The second interviewee shared the same exasperated perspective. “Sometimes upper administration does not take women seriously. I don’t know if they think we

should just be teachers or secretaries but...there is this perceived you know well she is a women or you know let me get your point of view you could be over looked sometimes, your opinions, you know information you may give in a meeting I don't know if it always taken seriously," (Piper).

The next finding deals with the issue of racism. As illustrated in Chapter 2, the juxtaposition between race and gender for African American women is often perceived as a position of "double jeopardy." In this situation, "double jeopardy" refers to the fact that African American women are automatically placed in two traditionally second class citizenships; they are both women and minorities. While women in general have made some strides within the field of higher education, there is still room for improvement, (Haveman & Smeeding, 2006). Minorities still struggle to find equal footing. The researcher attempted to design a unique study by utilizing women who worked in a perceived "controlled variable."

A controlled variable has many different meanings, depending on the context and nature for its use in research. It is normally used in mathematical research, but can be adapted for educational research given the right circumstances. For this qualitative research study, the control variable was simply the HBCUs that the women under study worked for throughout the duration of the study, which remained constant and unchanged, (Andrei, 2005).

When Piper was asked if she had encountered racism, I sensed that her response was hesitant in nature, but obvious in tone.

"There is a guy who completed the same doctoral program as me. He received a higher administrative job than me, even that we were in the same department at the same level, yet he finished his degree a year later than me and I attended an HBCU for my undergraduate degree which is widely known. The president came

directly to him when he [the president] created this new position, which is for a national initiative for community colleges and indicated that he would be in charge of it.”

In another instance she discussed that a colleague stated, “I just didn’t know that they [HBCU] had that program and you know they have a MFA. Do you have your MFA? Now, considering I am his supervisor and he was asking me that showed his disrespect for me and my degree, even though it was from a state supported school.”

Paige approached the conversation from a professional standpoint and put the situation in to a hypothetical.

“A good manager is to help their employees to aspire to where ever they would like to be in their career. It’s like a teacher. If I fail every one because they did not do well on the test the class then I failed as a teacher and the key is that this as a manager you want to aspire to achieve whatever their goals are. And that doesn’t always occur, when you are in a supportive role they feel like okay if I move you from here or you are not there because you have this wealth of knowledge what is going to happen, not that you can’t do even a better job given not only the responsibility but the authority. That is the difference. People don’t mind giving responsibility to run office to do work, but they never give it to you authority...that is the difference.”

Upon approaching the issue of institutional constraints, participants reflected on the hierarchical system that has historically been problematic for career progression of all women. More specifically, there was discussion about an informal, yet subtly recognized club that worked against African American women who seek advancement into executive level positions in any occupation, but particularly higher education administration.

Sienna discussed the “good old boy” system. The “good old boy” system refers to social networking/cronyism that is perceived to exist among white men in certain communities and social strata. This network is perceived to exist as a mechanism to keep white men in power and others disenfranchised.

The study revealed that the participants' mentors were significant to them personally but not necessarily professionally. As most mentors were simply older African American women with more time invested at the university, not necessarily with any position of stature, most participants benefitted from the relationship personally and appreciated the "words of wisdom," but did not receive any professional favors (e.g. career advancement) due to their mentorship. The importance of a mentor cannot be understated in this research study. Previous research studies have indicated that the guidance of a mentor can significantly influence a mentee's career choice, career trajectory, and even ambition. A mentor can offer encouragement, reduce mistakes, help to eliminate weaknesses as well as enhance strengths. Above all, mentors can offer honest opinions about experiences without judgment or ulterior motivation.

Katherine did not directly address the issue of mentors, however, she indicated that she has worked for the same chancellor for over 10 years, yet she has changed universities three times. It can be deduced that the chancellor was serving as her mentor and when he moved to a new university, he asked her to join him.

Paige expressed her disgust that there were not any true mentors to assist as she moved through the ranks.

"Over the years, as far as black mentors most of them were like assistant directors, there wasn't a director. The older staff people that you could talk to, they would give you encouragement but they were basically in the same situation you were in, fighting a battle to prove you were just as competent to be in a role and also that you had the ability to do more so as far as someone to aspire too, no."

With the exception of Katherine who moved with her chancellor from university to university, most participants worked to gain favor from male executives from within

their respective universities which ultimately resulted in career advancement opportunities, along with their record of success in previous positions.

### Trustworthiness

Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested a series of techniques to achieve trustworthiness of the data, and in this study the researcher applied three of those techniques: negative case analysis, triangulation and reflexivity. Other ways the researcher strengthened potential weaknesses of this approach included; searching for negative instances in the data which did not conform to theory; making the procedures and analysis explicit so the reader can judge their appropriateness to the questions; outlining the researchers' biases in the area so the reader can judge if the biases affected the development of the theory; and making the parameters of the participants or context explicit so the reader can judge if the study is applicable to any other context ( Marshall & Rossman, 2006 & Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

In qualitative analysis, data are usually grouped to form patterns (identified as constructs) with the expectation that there will be some degree of variation within those patterns. Through the process of purposeful searching, it may be possible to discover a case that is outside the scope of the pattern, however broadly the construct is defined. This case is usually referred to as a “negative case” because it seems contrary to the general pattern (Bowen, 2005). In qualitative research, negative case analysis enhances rigor and is used in the quest for verification (Padgett, 2004; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). In this study, negative case analysis involved a reexamination of the data pertaining to every research participant, after the initial analysis was completed. This reexamination was

necessary to determine whether the properties of the emergent themes were applicable to all participants.

During this study, two such cases did emerge. In the initial analysis of the survey, it appeared that all participants showed there were no incidents of racism or discrimination which was contradictory to the literature (Shenton, 2004). The only consistency was the presence of a mentor. Using these answers as one case, this presents a negative case for the study as it runs paradoxically to previous findings.

The second negative case was an actual participant. Piper was an excellent candidate for the study and appeared to be supportive of the researcher both in terms of her research and her professional goals. Moreover, she was an executive with years of experience in higher education at more than one HBCU in the Southeast. Her initial conversations with the researcher were both motivating and full of promise. However, her case results were contradictory to the literature as well as the other cases analyzed during this study.

Triangulation is a powerful technique that facilitates validation of data through cross verification from more than two sources. In particular, it refers to the application and combination of several research methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon. Denzin (2006) identified four basic types of triangulation. Data triangulation involves time, space, and persons, while investigator triangulation involves multiple researchers in an investigation. Theory triangulation uses more than one theoretical scheme in the interpretation of the phenomenon, while methodological triangulation engages more than one method to gather data, such as interviews, observations, surveys, and documents.



Figure 5: Diagram of Triangulation Methodology

In this study method triangulation was utilized involving triangulation of literature, interviews and documents (e.g. curriculum vitas) provided by research participants.

Undoubtedly, these data must be cross-validated, continually tested and then modified in future studies African-American women report that racism, rather than sexism, is the greater barrier to opportunity in dominant culture organizations (Parker, 2001; Talley-Ross, 1995). African American women are often excluded from important organizational networks, forcing them to create other strategies for gaining access to information. Thomas (1990) found that Black protégés relationships with Black mentors were significantly more often skip-level relationships, with peers, or localized outside of the departmental context, than were their cross-race relationships. This may be due to the distribution of positions held by Black managers; they would probably be more dispersed across departments and across levels, so that the likelihood of finding a concentration of Black managers above one in one's department would be low. The Crawford & Smith (2005) study found, that in general, based on the traditional definition of mentoring, these respondents have no mentors and have never had one. None have had a relationship where a senior member of an organization took an active role in their career development. They never experienced a process by which an individual of superior rank, special achievement, and prestige instructed, counseled, guided, and facilitated their

intellectual or career development. Further none were socialized by a senior member to the rules of the academy. In addition, these women have not had the experience of someone seeing their career through an entire journey.

Johnson-Bailey, Tisdell, and Cervero (1994) state, “we must remember that what happens in a higher education setting to a great extent mirrors what is happening in the culture at large” (p.66). Therefore, it is paramount that institutions of higher education continue to implement appropriate strategies that adequately address these same diversity challenges. Fernandez (1999) also states that if organizations are to break the cement ceiling, ensure that career planning, counseling, and development are not exercises in futility for women and people of color. He further asserts, “no one gets to the top, or in key positions, without the help of mentors” (p. 245). However, in the organizational mentoring literature, there continues to be a paucity of research on African American women (Blake, 1999).

According to Myers (2002), “African American women in the academy often experience isolation because of the lack of critical mass,” (p. 17). She further contends that they need other African American women within and outside the department to share common ideas and concerns and need to affirm each other’s presence when the institution fails to do so. Consequently, the sheer paucity of Black women among faculty and administration tends to force Black women into a small, isolated community. Myers (2002) also asserts that feelings of isolation are greater when African American women are not able to access much needed networking opportunities. Hughes (1988) asserts “isolation and self-identity must be addressed by institutions through effective networking for minority professionals” (p. 72).

## Summary

The sample of executive level women administrators at HBCUs in the Southeast overall do well professionally; but do eventually experience a career barrier (either personally or institutionally imposed) due to discriminatory practices and racism. It is important to note, that while these women have met some difficult situations and obstacles, their current positions still provide them with significant advantages such as influence on internal stakeholders, access to Board of Trustee members, the ability to influence and implement policy and earn a significant salary for their efforts and accomplishments as African American women executives (\$100,000 per year minimum).

## CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

This study was conducted to examine the perceptions regarding the personal and institutional barriers as they relate to the career aspirations versus actualizations of African American women executive administrators at HBCUs in the Southeast. This was achieved by examining the lived experiences of the four research participants. The researcher based her study on the work published by Lloyd-Jones in 2009 which was a single case study that examined the repression as it related to social class, ethnicity, and gender, and then subsequently, probed the consequences the participant experienced. Conclusions from that study emphasized that the participant exhibited friction between other African Americans (male and female) and Caucasian women, when she was promoted because of social inequity experiences. The overall goal of the research study was to describe the lived experience of an African American woman executive-level administrator.

The research questions investigated during this study were:

1. What, if any, personal barriers have four African American executive level women administrators faced in their career progression?
2. What, if any, institutional barriers have four African American executive level women administrators faced in their career progression?

A qualitative study can provide data that adds to the current literature. Using the McManus Model as a guide, the following discussion will include a brief review of the literature, data collected and subsequent conclusions drawn from data analysis. To that

end, the data from the study will add to the literature through reflexivity of the study by discussing the research process, outcomes achieved and providing future researchers with recommendations and options that should yield more promising data. Reflexivity includes both a subjective process of self-consciousness inquiry and the study of social behavior with reference to theories about social relationships.

... “The process of reflexivity is an attempt to identify, do something about, and acknowledge the limitations of the research: its location, its subjects, its process, its theoretical context, its data, its analysis, and how accounts recognize that the construction of knowledge takes place in the world and not apart from it. ... For us, being reflexive in doing research is part of being honest and ethically mature in research practice that requires researchers to `stop being "shamans" of objectivity' (Ruby, 1980: 154). To not acknowledge the interests implicit in a critical agenda for the research, or to assume value-free positions of neutrality, is to assume `an obscene and dishonest position' (ibid),” (Shacklock and Smyth, 1998: 6, 7).

Reflexive thinking played a key part in the research process to develop the researcher’s skills and closing the loop between the approach taken to carry out the research, the research findings, the overall contribution to literature and how the research ultimately informed the researchers’ conclusions and recommendations.

#### Current Status of African American Women at HBCUs

HBCUs in the Southeast were founded to give students an opportunity to attend institution of higher learning but in an alternative setting other than predominantly white institutions. Once these institutions began to have an influx of students, qualified administrators were recruited to address the needs of the students that existed outside the classroom. However, given that most of these schools were predicated on the state school model, most of the patriarchal philosophy carried over to HBCUs as well as historical practices and policies that could be detrimental to African American women.

African American women sought to gain positions of power within this culture as it appeared to be a locale they could maximize their career ambitions. The McManus Model was designed as a visual illustration to demonstrate those impediments between career aspiration and actualization, regardless of ambition. This study looked at the perceived personal and institutional barriers outlined in this model as they pertain to the research participants.

### Findings

1. The statistical findings indicate that the participants did not experience gender discrimination or racism which is distinctly different from the qualitative findings (e.g. interviews).
2. In the qualitative findings, participants reported being subjected to external gender discrimination.
3. In the qualitative findings, participants reported being subjected to external racism.
4. In the qualitative findings, participants reported having a mentor from varying backgrounds.
5. Participant had a sufficient self-efficacy due to the tangible benefits that holding an executive level position provided.

The double bind of living in a racist and sexist society has placed Black women in an extremely difficult position. More importantly, due to economic necessity, Black women have always worked to support themselves and if necessary, their families.

“We have been forced by society, oppression, our position, and our tradition to be responsible for the economic, social and physical survival of our families and communities, regardless of socioeconomic status, age, geographic location or educational attainment. Our adaptability to varied roles, while transcending societal barriers, illustrates significant coping abilities,” (Robinson, 1983, p. 136).

Given the economic climate of 2012, each participant may not have completely actualized their career goals, but were content enough to remain in their position to ensure financial stability for themselves and family that they may be supporting. African American women can never afford unfair pay, but in tough economic times, the consequences of the wage gap are particularly dire for them and the families who depend on their wages.

Becoming an executive administrator at an HBCU may appear as a small accomplishment when compared to predominantly white institutions. However, these women worked exceedingly hard to bring respect to the positions they hold and maintain the standards of their divisions. Moreover, although no one in the study disclosed their salary during data collection, this information (e.g. salaries of state employees) is readily available. Previously this dissertation used schools within the North Carolina system to illustrate a point that highlights the bigger issue within the region; therefore the database maintained by *The Charlotte Observer* (online) was used to research executive employee salaries. As of February 24, 2011, the highest salary of those in the survey was \$183k, and the lowest netting \$95k.

“Since the end of the recession, the overall unemployment rate has fallen from 9.4 to 9.1 percent, while the black unemployment rate has risen from 14.7 to 16.2 percent, according to the Department of Labor. College-educated blacks fared worse than their white counterparts in the recession. In 2007, unemployment for college-educated whites was 1.8 percent; for college-educated blacks it was 2.7 percent. Now, the college-educated unemployment rate is 3.9 percent for whites and 7 percent for blacks,” (Washington, 2011).

With unemployment at levels unseen since the great depression (Gingrey, 2012), a college education seemed to be the determining factor between becoming gainfully employed or continuing to face the unemployment line. More specifically, given that African Americans always face higher unemployment regardless of the economy, those with a college degree fared better during this time than those who lacked this educational credential.

Less than 0.1 percent of the North Carolina population currently earns such an accomplished salary according to the U.S. Census Bureau: American FactFinder. More specific to the overall population at hand, (e.g. African American women) these salary gaps translate into a loss of \$19,575 for African-American women every year. Enforcement of the Equal Pay Act and other civil rights laws has helped to narrow the wage gap over time, but financial stability remains a critical stealth mission for African American women and their families (National Women's Law Center, 2012). Given this critical mission, it is understandable that a steady income, particularly one that is substantial is a crucial factor for the participants of this study in terms of career practicality as well as career actualization.

In each instance (sans Katherine), the participants disclosed experiencing racism and discrimination during their career progression. Despite this, working at an HBCU provides African American women with a better opportunity for career mobility towards executive status than PWIs. More importantly, holding an executive level administrative position grants these women a feeling of personal power in a society that can often make them feel overwhelmed due to familial demands, societal views (e.g. stereotypes) (Robinson, 1983) and issues related to self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997).

Salary combined with professional power provides a sense of high professional self-efficacy and creates a sense of career fulfillment not typically realized by most African American women regardless of industry. Each participant in this qualitative study progressed in her career significantly. From attaining a college degree to securing executive level positions at an institution of higher education, these women were career actualized regardless of their initial career aspiration. Fulfillment of the power process (Landy, 1978), brings the participant's career objectives full circle: setting goals, working to achieve those goals in some capacity, achievement of those goals at a measure of success acceptable to the individual and autonomy over goal fulfillment.

Finally, mentoring was not a top down process, but rather resulted from collegial relationships. Moreover, networking seems to be more preferential and beneficial than mentoring. "The 'Sista' Network," which was not discussed formally by any participants, is an informal social network between and among professional African-American women. This network enables willing participants to learn the unwritten rules and protocols of the profession off the record from each other, (Cooper, 2006). Mentoring was seen as an important career supplement for the research participants; however, only one participant was fortunate enough to have someone who served as a mentor that both provided advice and career assistance through upward mobility. Each participant expressed the desire for a mentor but did not know if that was possible given where they currently were professionally.

### Implications

This study's identification with the major themes of personal and institutional barriers provides practical implications for educational leadership. These practical

implications suggest that HBCUs comprehensively address how issues brought to the forefront such as racism and sexism are reflected in educational programs, teaching practices, and services as well as strategies to eradicate these practices and attitudes.

The literature on higher education administrators indicates that female student affairs administrators are often employed at smaller, private institutions and HBCUs and often experience advancement to executive-level positions at such institutions (Evans & Kuh, 1983; Herbrand, 2001; Randall et al, 1995; Rickard, 1985). Yet, women at small institutions and HBCUs were more likely than men at these institutions to perceive being subjected to negative societal perceptions about Black women.

The concept of career self-management as an important competency for minorities is rooted in research (Palmer, 2001). Women and people of color must accept and bear most of the responsibility for their career successes (Bierema, 1998; Fernandez, 1999; Inman, 1998; Palmer, 2001). Rather than rely solely on the organization's human career development resource processes, these women opted for individual self-development learning early on the importance and prudence of managing their careers. African American women have embraced the perception that since the system does not have a sound process in place to support their professional ascendance, career development and progression is reliant largely on themselves primarily through the opportunities they take advantage of.

The findings from this study suggest that a myriad of factors, such as strategies and mentoring are vital to the career development of African American women. HBCUs need to implement formal human resource practices such as training and mentoring

programs to increase the numbers of African American women who hold senior level positions.

### Recommendations

Due to the growing number of presidents and vice-presidents at HBCUs approaching retirement, this study proffers that it would be practical for state legislatures to establish formal career succession programs which include mentoring and career succession planning to address the impending leadership crisis at HBCUs, (Stuart, 2012). Moreover, the inclusion of succession planning increases the probability of identifying the best possible candidates for upcoming leadership vacancies. The practical benefits of establishing career succession planning and mentoring results in enhanced career decrease programs for organizations committed to promoting women and minorities to executive-level leadership positions.

The American Council on Education (ACE, 2012), has a program which provides professional development and support to assist women in higher education who seek to advance their careers. The ACE Fellows Program (2012) offers the opportunity for attendees to engage in a Mentor/Fellow relationship with a college or university president and/or other senior administrators; participate in senior level decision-making meetings at the host institution; and to immerse themselves in the culture, policies, and decision-making processes of another institution. The unique program condenses years of on-the-job experience and skills development into a single year and provides a comprehensive leadership development program for those in higher education.

## Lessons Learned

During survey development and deployment, the researcher began to marry the concepts from learning to practice. The researcher was eager to dissect the survey data and learn more about this population for both academic and professional reasons. As the researcher, conducting a web-based survey was the most feasible option. Additionally, the greatest strengths of Internet survey data collection is the potential to collect a large amount of data in a relatively short amount of time, and the elimination of the necessity for the researcher to enter or process the data. After creating the survey, placing it online, and recruiting subjects, the researcher's primary data collection efforts are complete. Hundreds of respondents could have potentially filled out the survey within a matter of days, and these responses would have been automatically inserted into a database such as Microsoft Excel. Data from web-based questionnaires would be automatically validated; for example, if a data value were entered incorrectly, or outside a defined range, Zoomerang.com would return an error message requiring the respondent to enter the data correctly and resubmit the survey. Such validation capabilities were used so that the researcher did not have to worry about issues of missing responses, and could proceed directly to preliminary analysis of the data. It should be noted, however, that automatic data validation cannot guarantee the veracity of respondents' answers. (Schmidt, 1997).

As time passed, however it became apparent that the response was lackluster; it quickly became discouraging for the researcher. The survey was designed specifically with this population in mind, requiring no more than 15 minutes to complete, multiple choice questions (with no more than four choices) and no requests for additional information (e.g. fill in the blanks or please provide additional information). Despite

repeated appeals from the researcher to potential participants to engage in the survey, only four viable candidates emerged from the process. Admittedly the life of an executive administrator is encumbered with busy schedules, unpredictability on a day-to-day basis and high demands, however, the researcher naively assumed (from literature) that there would be some effort exerted to assist in this project due to the inherent nature related directly to the close-knit group that was being addressed.

Upon progressing to the interview stage of the study, the researcher had heightened awareness regarding the academic integrity of the study. Over the course of 3 months, only four interviews were secured. During this time, electronic mail was utilized along with personal telephone calls. Additional personal contacts at various HBCUs were called upon to encourage potential participants to become involved in the study. While many women stated they would contribute (approximately 13) only four completed the entire process.

“Exploring diversity at historically black institutions may seem to be an oxymoron, but only because of the way in which curriculum transformation projects have traditionally been conceptualized. These projects frequently assume an institution whose students and faculty of color constitute a minority on campus. A fundamental premise of these efforts to bring about a more inclusive curriculum is that white students and faculty have not been prepared to deal adequately with an increasingly multicultural world,” (Guy-Sheftall, 1983).

Each interview had to be carefully negotiated around each executive’s schedule and was ultimately rescheduled due to the everyday demands placed upon them. The researcher had to be both flexible and patient at this point in the research process. Rather than simply wait for the interviews, the researcher evaluated her literature review and interview protocol. It was essential to have all interview measures in place, (Skype recorder), working Skype number, easy interview style and ability to maintain control of

the interview prior to speaking with each woman. In the three interviews that the researcher conducted, there was a genuine exchange of information regarding the research subject matter and the culture of HBCUs. The participants were forthcoming with details about their experiences and their opinions. Indeed, their acute assessments made the researcher re-think her career priorities post-graduation.

One incident emerged from two interviews that was not expected or predetermined by the researcher. The researcher was able to informally observe a situation that was occurring between two participants. The participants were having a skirmish regarding their respective organizational charts and how they (e.g. the organizational charts) effected each other's areas. In this sense the researcher became a reluctant participant observer. Participant observation is a structured type of research strategy (DeWalt, et. al, 1998). In anthropology, participant-observation is organized so as to produce a kind of writing called ethnography. It can be practical or academic in nature. A key principle of the method is that the researcher may not merely observe, but must find a role within the group observed from which to participate in some manner, even if only as "outside observer." Such research involves a range of well-defined, though variable methods: interviews, observation, collective discussions, analyses of personal documents produced within the group, self-analysis, results from activities undertaken off or online, and life-histories. The strength of this observation and interaction is that the researcher was able to discover discrepancies between what participants said—and often believe—should happen (the formal system) and what actually did happen, between different aspects of the formal system, (Geertz, 1984). This reflexivity proved invaluable to the researcher as it allowed for “real time” social

validation of events that were discussed during the interview. The researcher could view the circumstance from the participants' point of view (e.g. discrimination and racism) regarding the situation as it pertained to the research questions.

Finally, upon final completion of analysis the researcher was able to determine that despite the obstacles experienced by the research participants, the participants did reach their career actualization which seemed to provide a greater sense of self efficacy. After reviewing the interviews, researcher notes and overall situational analysis the conclusion can reasonably be drawn that the four participants are working in highly competitive fields within education, are allowed to exert measured power to be efficient in their roles, enjoy the competitiveness with other women despite expressing otherwise and experience career stability which is vital to anyone given today's economy. In spite of perceptions that left personal grievances linger, it was these experiences that gave these women a sense of purpose and personal power. These "personal rivalries" actually made the research participants work harder and strengthened their personal resolve to be successful in professional endeavors.

#### Suggestions to Future Researchers

The four women from my study only scratch the surface to the greater issue. Women are becoming leaders in all areas of work. During the 2012 presidential election, the issue of women's equity in employment was at the forefront. It is apparent that this is an issue that is not going to go away. Unfortunately, at some point there needs to be less discussion and more action. The only way for that to occur is through continued research and putting faces to the narrative. The four women in my study were fastidious to provide that service but more work must be done.

There are still many areas to research to provide more insight into why there is a lack of African American women administrators in executive level positions at HBCUs. Moreover, future researchers may seek to research this deficiency in a comparative study and determine if and why African American women administrators prefer to work at HBCUs over PWIs or to simply look at the deficiency of African American women administrators in executive level positions at PWIs. Some reference points to begin with from literature are:

1. If the roadblocks preventing Black women from full participation in all areas of the academy have been removed, why is there still such a disproportionate gap between Black women and other members of the academy?
2. Why does the percentage of White female administrators still outnumber the percentage of Black women (Moses, 1997; Wolfman, 1997)?
3. Why do many Black women have tales of frustration (Johnson, 1997; McKay, 1997)?
4. Why do they often experience alienation, isolation and despair in our academic communities (Davis, 1994; McKay, 1997; Thompson, & Dey, 1998; Turner, & Myers, 2000)?
5. Finally, why are more and more Black women deciding to leave the higher education altogether (Gregory, 1995)?

HBCUs have typically lagged behind their White counterpart institutions as it relates to resource allocation. Nonetheless, HBCUs have been quite successful with training some of the best leaders in the African American community (Freedman, 1995). These institutions have surmounted the financial challenges to operate alongside their

White counterpart institutions. As such, arguments have been made to suggest that HBCUs are able to do a lot with less. Recently, due to limited budgets and scrutiny over how monies are allocated, HBCUs have come under attack in the popular press (i.e., *Black Issues in Higher Education* and *The Chronicle of Higher Education*) for improper spending habits.

Generating original data on this topic will prove challenging at the very least. However, it is incumbent upon future academicians to pursue this topic, as African American women are steadily moving into executive level positions at HBCUs and PWIs. Due to these gains, the professional needs of this population will have to be addressed by their institutions and ultimately professional associations. This provides researchers with a choice opportunity to provide practical and timely research about a previously understudied population. Future research into this area could possibly yield much more rich data if the researcher is clever in his or her approach to data collection and research design.

Black women do not share a homogeneous existence, they do share a common struggle that is not shared by White women and Black men, which is to rise above the ideological hegemony that has silenced their voices and prevented their full participation in all facets of society and education in the United States. Theoretical frameworks used in the past to examine and provide evidence of their experiences have not allowed them to "speak out" directly regarding their status in higher education. However, more recent scholars have begun to empower Black women by allowing their voices through narrative to dismantle inappropriate frameworks that have long-attempted to explain their social, emotional, political, and intellectual viewpoints.

Use Black feminist thought as a conceptual framework which will allow the researcher to resist the urge to ground the experiences of Black women into any single theoretical tradition. During this study, black feminist thought was a helpful conceptual tool to reinforce the importance of addressing the issue of both race and gender. By addressing both of these issues, the researcher did not negate the lived experiences of African American women who deal with both issues in their professional and personal life. Additionally, at times the juxtaposition of these issues further compounds the experiences of African American women.

Black feminist thought provides a thorough schema to address the issues that this particular research population must contend with and analyze any additional matters of contention that arise during original data collection. Using this conceptual framework forces the researcher to recognize the totality of research populations' experience and provides a relevant method to examine individual experiences from a multitude of perspectives. Black feminist thought considers that experience, behavior, actions and events do not occur in a vacuum, but are influenced as African American women interact with their respective social environment.

Next, solicit assistance from national organizations such as the American Council on Education, led by Molly Broad and NASPA (Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education). These organizations may have datasets that researchers can manipulate to assist their research goals. Researchers often analyze data that they did not collect. Existing data may be data sets, but may also be interview notes or audio- or video-tapes. Existing data may have been collected for research purposes or non-research purposes,

(Duke ORS, 2009). If the information needed, or something very close to it, already exists, there are several good reasons to find and use it.

1. It is less time-consuming (e.g. more efficient) than collecting all the data yourself. This would seemingly be the most obvious common reason for taking advantage of archival data, particularly, if seeking longitudinal or substantial information about a particular population.
2. Archival data held by professional organizations are typically processed by researchers with considerable statistical expertise. Additionally, if the dataset is on a specific subpopulation, the organization may have taken the extra precaution to retain a researcher that has expertise working with special populations.
  - Even with raw data, the basic organization and preparation (transcription of interviews, entry of numbers into a spreadsheet or specific software, etc.) may have already been done, again saving time and resources.
  - It is quite possible to find more information than you would be able to gather if you did it yourself. The archival data attained from a professional organization, such as ACE or NASPA may be more sweeping or more specific than what any researcher would be able to gather. It may involve more people than any one researcher would be able to cover, a larger geographic area, or provide more detail.
  - Archival data could touch on important areas a beginning researcher would not have considered, or identify patterns or relationships you wouldn't have looked for. In cases like these, the use of pre-existing data might change the

entire view of the work, and help bring a level of effectiveness that would not have been reached otherwise.

3. It could eliminate the need to correct for such problems as improper sampling, lack of inter-rater reliability, or observer bias.
4. Archival data allows the possibility of looking at the effects of work over time. Is the change in this population part of a trend that seems to be reflected in data? If the capacity to collect data over a long period is not available to answer such questions, but if the data already exist, it makes longer-term analysis possible, (Rabinowitz, 2012).

There are three programs that could be a potential treasure trove of information for future researcher. ACE currently has a program (ACE Fellows) that works to place African American women into executive level positions therefore they may be inclined to assist as it meets a needs for the organization (e.g. institutional research) and the researcher.

NASPA has two programs designed to help identify and foster executive level administrators. The institute for aspiring senior student affairs officers is a three day professional development experience that focuses on three areas of achievement necessary for senior-level leadership in higher education today and in the future: managing for heightened organizational performance, entrepreneurial leadership, and achieving systemic, transformational change.

Additionally, The Alice Manicur Symposium, was established and coordinated by NASPA's Center for Women and is designed for women in mid-level managerial positions who are contemplating a move to a senior student affairs officer (SSAO)

position in the near future. Participants join other experienced student affairs professionals, from community colleges, two-year and four-year public and private colleges and universities to engage in workshops led by innovative and knowledgeable faculty members with diverse backgrounds, (NASPA, 2012).

#### Other Suggestions

1. The sample size should not be limited by school designation; rather, to measure the ideas of a population from a particular type of school type (e.g. HBCUs) sample all executives in a comparison study. Sample sizes are typically smaller in qualitative research because, as the study goes on, acquiring more data does not necessarily lead to more information. This is because one occurrence of a piece of data, or a code, is all that is necessary to ensure that it becomes part of the analysis framework. However, it remains true that sample sizes that are too small cannot adequately support claims of having achieved valid conclusions and sample sizes that are too large do not permit the deep, naturalistic, and inductive analysis that defines qualitative inquiry.
2. Do not place further restrictions on your sample criterion such as regions, as it further minimizes your sample populations. First, from a data analysis perspective, several of the HBCU institutional type categories are very small. That simply reflects reality. Nevertheless, this phenomenon limited the kinds of analysis that could be conducted (Schuh, 2003).
3. African American male executives should be interviewed to get their perspective on the topic as a type of critical incident report. Detailed analysis of critical

incidents enables researchers to identify similarities, differences and patterns and to seek insight into how and why people engage in the activity.

“People assign meanings to their experiences, and when we group together collections of such meanings in order to make sense of the world, we engage in a kind of research, a seeking of understanding. The critical incident technique provides a systematic means for gathering the significances others attach to events, analyzing the emerging patterns, and laying out tentative conclusions for the reader’s consideration’ (Kain, 2004, p.85).”

By talking to other individuals that work with the target population the researcher can gain the parallel perspective. It is important for the researcher to keep these analyses separate from the comments made by the actual participants, however, during data analysis, it can provide meaningful comparison of data on the issues pertinent to the investigation and either give the participants concerns more validity or show a disconnect and attempt to illustrate what has precipitated it.

4. Build a social network online with African American women executives. Baltar and Brunet (2012) conducted an investigation using the social networking site Facebook to determine if snowball sampling would be effective. The study concluded that using this medium was very effective at identifying participants, maintaining contact with participants and finally getting real time results from the survey. In the last few years, professional networking site, such as LinkedIn, have provided people with an alternative avenue to connect with other working professionals within their field and to reach out to professionals in other fields of expertise as needed. “In fact, according to a study released by Perfomics, nearly 60 percent of people said LinkedIn is the most important social network,” (Tabaka, 2011). The researcher had a profile on this site since 2008, however over the last year of this project, intentional worked to cultivate relationships with

women who fit the target population. To date, there are 23 in the researcher's network.

“LinkedIn is about creating and nurturing relationships so make sure you put out the welcome mat. ‘It's important to be known for being approachable, visible, and helpful in groups by sharing information, leading discussions, and contributing to the conversation,’ Rozgonyi says. To achieve this, make a list of people you want to stay in touch with and follow their updates, leaving comments, and engaging in conversation. When you send your invitations, let people know why you want to connect and thank them for their consideration. And when you accept an invitation, offer to answer questions or exchange ideas about your area of expertise. Ask them a question to get a conversation going, just as you would at a networking event, (Tabaka, 2011).”

Communication with these particular women had been ongoing and beneficial, but outside of the scope for this dissertation. However, after realizing that the initial method of recruiting potential participants was not the best, the researcher began experimenting with this medium as a means of connecting with potential participants. This proved to be a great medium to connect with a vast number of women in the field in a timely fashion and maintain a relationship with them via email and updates to the researcher's profile and theirs. Many inquire as to the current status of the dissertation and offer suggestions.

5. Researchers for this type of project must be to some extent participatory methodologists. The idea of using participatory methodologies is to guarantee that the participant's voices are heard, within a structured research process and an organized technique to analyze power dynamics. Participatory methodologists urge researchers to consider the interview process as an exchange, rather than a formal dialogue and being prepared to reciprocate with the interview participant

(Morgan, 2005). This means establishing a strong rapport with your core data group.

“The relationship between social researchers and the people they study has been unequal at best and exploitative at worst: researchers take information and eventually receive professional advancement, but the minority people receive nothing for the time and information they provide (Baca-Zinn 1979, 209). Key features of participatory interviewing are: disclosure of personal experiences by the interviewer, drawing on interpersonal skills of being approachable, sympathetic, and responsive; not trying to control the interview process; and promoting equality by presenting oneself as one is with study participants,” (Neuman 2003, 252).

This entails face to face meetings, so plan on spending at least 3 days with these individuals. The first will be a meeting to discuss your research. Take the potential participant to lunch which you can deduct from your taxes, (online at IRS, 2011). The next meeting will be strictly observation of their day to day activities; the final will be to interview them. In your formal interview, include information regarding leadership style, career trajectory, issues related to personal and institutional barriers that may have informed their leadership style and specific recommendations they may have for other women. This will provide more context within the interview and take the focus off those issues that may cause participants to hesitate or freeze up when answering.

#### A Final Note

HBCUs are responsible for producing the majority of the nation’s Black leaders, (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 2010), despite having access to fewer resources than majority institutions, and these institutions must have the ability to produce leaders with this exposure in order to remain competitive (Hawkins, 2004). A study of 45 public HBCUs found that although females were the majority (63%) of the student population,

“females [held] a minority of faculty positions (43%) at these institutions” (Geiger, 2006, p. 10). Leaders of these organizations must understand and recognize (through action) the sensitivity in treatment and experiences of Black women to adequately address the presence of gender issues in Black higher education (Geiger, 2006).

Little research exists that exclusively examines the leadership of HBCUs, and even fewer studies focus on the unique experiences of African American female leaders. Waring (2003) emphasized the importance of looking “at the experiences of women of color on their own terms, not simply as part of a larger group of people of color as women” (p. 31). Exclusively studying Black women may lead to a better understanding of how race and gender interact in the area of leadership (Waring, 2003).

Studies that have a primary focus on Black women can also provide insight into the unique challenges that these women face as they attain executive level administrative positions (Waring, 2003). As many women climb the managerial ranks, they encounter various forms of workplace discrimination, such as “a lack of job advancement opportunities, a lack of mentors, or being presented with only stereotypical female worker challenges” (Kephart & Schumacher, 2005, p. 4).

As a culture, these HBCUs do not represent the Black community because the number of female leaders is disproportionate when compared to the number of female students (Geiger, 2005). By analyzing the existing culture at HBCUs, leaders may gain a better understanding of potential gender issues within the organization. Institutional leaders must be willing to hold discussions about gender issues because “gender notions are culturally based and are transmitted in the same ways that other cultural values are taught through the process of socialization” (Geiger, 2005, p. 11). An examination of the

organization's culture is essential for identifying potential barriers to the advancement of women into positions of executive management. The results of such an analysis may provide leaders with the information to remove such barriers and improve the number of female leaders at these institutions.

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## APPENDIX A: IRB APPROVAL

## Office of Research Compliance

9201 University City Boulevard, Charlotte, NC 28223-0001  
 t/704.687.3311 f/704.687.2292 <http://research.uncc.edu/compliance-ethics>

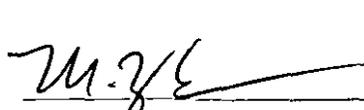
## Institutional Review Board (IRB) for Research with Human Subjects

*Certificate of Approval*

|                     |  |                        |  |
|---------------------|--|------------------------|--|
| Protocol#           | 11-05-09   |                        |  |
| Protocol Type:      | Expedited  | 7                      |  |
| Title:              | Achieved Career Aspirations by Impediments of African American Women Senior Level Higher Education Administrators at Historically Black Colleges and Universities in North Carolina [includes alteration of consent procedure under 45 CFR 46.1161 |                        |  |
| Initial Approval:   | 6/22/2011  |                        |  |
| Responsible Faculty | Dr. Corey Lock   | Educational Leadership |  |
| Investigator        | Ms. Kristen McManus  | Educational Leadership |  |

After careful review, the protocol listed above was approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for Research with Human Subjects. This approval will expire one year from the date of this letter. In order to continue conducting research under this protocol after one year, the "Annual Protocol Renewal Form" must be submitted to the IRB. This form can be obtained from the Office of Research Compliance web page <http://research.uncc.edu/compliance-ethics/human-subjects>.

Please note that it is the investigator's responsibility to promptly inform the committee of any changes in the proposed research prior to implementing the changes, and of any adverse events or unanticipated risks to subjects or others. Amendment and Event Reporting forms are available on our web page at <http://www.research.uncc.edu/Comp/human.cfm>.

  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Dr. M. Lyn Exum, IRB Chair

6/30/11  
 Date

## APPENDIX B: SURVEY QUESTIONS

## Career Aspirations versus Actualization of African American Executives at HBCUs

1. How long have you held your current position?
2. Were you recruited or selected for your current position?
3. Do you feel that intra-racial racism has affected your professional ascension (at any point in your career) as an administrator in higher education?
4. Do you feel that traditional racism has affected your professional ascension (at any point in your career) as an administrator in higher education?
5. Do you feel that traditional gender discrimination has affected your professional ascension (at any point in your career) as an administrator in higher education?
6. Do you feel that that intra-gender discrimination has affected your professional ascension (at any point in your career) as an administrator in higher education?
7. Do you feel the juxtaposition of race and gender has affected your career?
8. Have you had a mentor at any point in your career?
9. Did that mentor influence your career choice?
10. How would you describe the career mobility of African American women in higher education administration?
11. Does your organization have initiatives in place to enhance the career development of African American women administrators?
12. Is your institution more or less receptive to the presence of African American women in leadership positions?

13. Is the institutional culture similar to your personal values, goals, style and personality?
14. Are resources, (e.g. human and fiscal) provided to African American women in leadership positions (aside from current deficient situations) within your institution?
15. Is a commitment (e.g. African American women) to diversity reflected in the hiring practices or policies and procedures?
16. Do you hold an advanced degree?
17. Please indicate which degree you hold.

## APPENDIX C: INITIAL RESEARCH INVITATION LETTER



Department of Educational Leadership  
9201 University City Blvd., Charlotte, NC 28223-0001  
(704) 687-8730, [www.uncc.edu](http://www.uncc.edu)

July 12, 2011

I am a doctoral student at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte working under the direction of Dr. Corey Lock, who is serving as the Faculty Advisor on this project, in the Educational Leadership Department in the College of Education.

I am conducting a research study to examine the professional aspirations of those African American senior level higher education administrators at HBCUs in the Southeast who have procured senior level administrative and academic positions. More specifically, this study will examine perceptions about institutional and personal barriers encountered by African American senior level women administrators at HBCUs in North Carolina. These barriers include internal and external gender discrimination, internal and external racism and levels of self-efficacy.

Participation in this research study requires fully completing of an online survey. The survey should take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Questions will focus on mentoring, gender issues, race issues and institutional concerns. The survey is administered through Zoomerang.com. This site is a "secure" https server of the kind typically used to handle credit card transactions, so the possibility that responses could be viewed by unauthorized third parties (e.g., computer hackers) is slim.

Additionally, as part of this investigation, a copy of your Curriculum Vita is needed for document analysis. Please email this to Kristen McManus at [klmcmantu@uncc.edu](mailto:klmcmantu@uncc.edu).

Finally, some respondents will be asked to participate in a 15 to 30 minute phone or video conference interview to further probe the topic under study, discuss your research experience, and give you the opportunity to ask any questions that you may have. Participants chosen for this phase of research will be contacted via email or by telephone.

Participation in this study is completely your choice. If you choose to participate, withdrawal can occur at any time during the study, if you need to leave the study or no longer wish to participate. The results of the research study may be published, but your name will not be used. Your name, school, school location and any other identifying descriptions will only be visible to the researcher and not disclosed during any phase of the research.

If you have further questions or concerns about your rights as a participant in this study, contact the Compliance Office at (123) 456-7890. If you have questions concerning the study, contact the principal investigator, Kristen McManus, Doctoral Candidate at (704) 904-3122 or by email at [klmcmantu@uncc.edu](mailto:klmcmantu@uncc.edu).

Sincerely,

Kristen McManus  
Doctoral Candidate  
Principal Investigator  
Email: [klmcmantu@uncc.edu](mailto:klmcmantu@uncc.edu)  
Phone: 704-398-7040

Corey Lock, Ph.D., Professor  
Department of Educational Leadership  
College of Education  
Email: [crlock@uncc.edu](mailto:crlock@uncc.edu)  
Phone: 704-687-8868

## APPENDIX D: SECOND RESEARCH INVITATION LETTER

My name is Kristen McManus and I am a doctoral candidate at UNC Charlotte currently working on my dissertation. My area of focus is African American women in senior level administrative positions at historically black colleges and Universities in the Southeast.

I would like to invite you to participate in a study that examines the personal and institutional barriers that African American women in senior level administrative positions may or may not encounter. This study examines the uniqueness and similarities of African American senior level administrators through a standardized survey. By sharing your insights and experiences in higher educational leadership, women who aspire to senior level administrative positions women may have a “blueprint” to aid them in attaining such positions.

Your name, school, school location and any other identifying descriptions will only be visible to the researcher and not disclosed during any phase of the research. Full participation in this study entails completion of the survey, and submission of a copy of your curriculum vitae for document analysis. Some respondents will be contacted for a phone or video-conference interview (e.g. 15 to 30 minutes) to further probe the research topic.

I would value your participation in this study and thank you in advance for the commitment of time, energy and effort this will require. If you have any questions about the study or your participation please feel free to contact me at [klmcmantu@uncc.edu](mailto:klmcmantu@uncc.edu) or 704.904.3122 above. You may also contact my dissertation chair and mentor, Dr. Corey Lock at, [crlock@uncc.edu](mailto:crlock@uncc.edu) or 704-687-8868.

Thank you for your assistance.

Kristen McManus  
Doctoral Candidate

## APPENDIX E: ONLINE CONSENT FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS REVIEW

### ONLINE CONSENT

#### Achieved Career Aspirations or Impediments by Senior Level Higher Education Administrators at Historically Black Colleges and Universities in North Carolina

This is an online study to examine the career aspirations and any impediments experienced by African American women senior level higher education administrators at historically black colleges and universities.

The study is being conducted by Kristen McManus, a Doctoral Candidate at the UNC Charlotte in Educational Leadership, and it has been approved by the University Institutional Review Board. No deception is involved, and the study involves no more than minimal risk to participants (i.e., the level of risk encountered in daily life).

All responses will be treated with strict confidentiality, and in no case will responses from individual participants be published using any identifiable information. Participants should be aware, however, that the experiment is being run from a "secure" https server of the kind typically used to handle credit card transactions, so the possibility that responses could be viewed by unauthorized third parties (e.g., computer hackers) is slim. The questionnaire is administered through Zoomerang.com.

Rather, all data will be pooled and published in aggregate form only. Individuals in the pilot portion of this study found participation enjoyable, and no adverse reactions have been reported thus far.

#### **Participation**

Completion of this research study requires full completion of the online survey. The survey should take approximately 15 minutes. Questions will focus on issues of mentoring, gender issues and institutional concerns.

As part of this investigation, a copy of your Curriculum Vita is needed for document analysis. There is a space provided at the end of the survey to upload it.

Finally, some respondents will be asked to participate in a 15 to 30 minute phone or video conference interview to further probe the topic under study, discuss your research experience, and give you the opportunity to ask any questions that you may have. Participants chosen for this phase of research will be contacted via email or by telephone.

Participation in this study is completely your choice. If you choose to participate, withdrawal can occur at any time during the study, if you need to leave the study or no longer wish to participate.

If you have further questions or concerns about your rights as a participant in this study, contact the Compliance Office at (704) 687-3309. If you have questions concerning the study, contact the principal investigator, Kristen McManus, Doctoral Candidate at (704) 904-3122 or by email at [klmcmantu@uncc.edu](mailto:klmcmantu@uncc.edu).

APPENDIX F: ONLINE CONSENT FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS  
WITH LINK TO SURVEY

This is a online study to examine the career aspirations and any impediments experienced of African American women senior level higher education administrators at historically black colleges and universities.

The study is being conducted by Kristen McManus, a Doctoral Candidate at the UNC Charlotte in Educational Leadership, and it has been approved by the University Institutional Review Board. No deception is involved, and the study involves no more than minimal risk to participants (i.e., the level of risk encountered in daily life).

All responses will be treated with strict confidentiality, and in no case will responses from individual participants be published using any identifiable information. Participants should be aware, however, that the experiment is being run from a "secure" https server of the kind typically used to handle credit card transactions, so the possibility that responses could be viewed by unauthorized third parties (e.g., computer hackers) is slim. The questionnaire is administered through Zoomerang.com.

Rather, all data will be pooled and published in aggregate form only. Individuals in the pilot portion of this study found participation enjoyable, and no adverse reactions have been reported thus far.

**Participation**

Completion of this research study requires full completion of the online survey. The survey should take approximately 10 minutes. Questions will focus on issues of self- efficacy, mentoring, gender issues and institutional concerns.

As part of this investigation, a copy of your Curriculum Vita is needed for document analysis. There is a space provided at the end of the survey to upload it.

Finally, some respondents will be asked to participate in a 30 to 40 minute phone or video conference interview to further probe the topic under study, discuss your research experience, and give you the opportunity to ask any questions that may you may have. Participants chosen for this phase of research will be contacted via email or by telephone

Participation in this study is completely your choice. If you choose to participate, withdrawal can occur at any time during the study, if you need to leave the study or no longer wish to participate.

If you have further questions or concerns about your rights as a participant in this study, contact the Compliance Office at (123) 456-7890. If you have questions concerning the study, contact the principal investigator, Kristen McManus, Doctoral Candidate at (704) 904-3122 or by email at klmcmantu@uncc.edu.

If you are 18 years of age or older, understand the statements above, and freely consent to participate in the study, click on the "I Agree" button to begin the study.

A rectangular button with rounded corners, a grey gradient, and a white border. The text "I Agree" is centered in a white, serif font.

## APPENDIX G: SURVEY RESPONSES

| <b>Question</b>   | <b>No</b>       | <b>Yes</b>          |
|---|-----------------|---------------------|
| <b>How long have you held your current position?</b>  | <b>1-3 (3)</b>  | <b>5-7 (4) Yrs.</b> |
| <b>Were you recruited or selected for your current position?</b>  | Recruited(2)    | Selected (2)        |
| <b>Do you feel that intra-racial racism has affected your professional ascension?</b>   | 3               | 1                   |
| <b>Do you feel that traditional racism has affected your professional ascension?</b>  | 3               | 1                   |
| <b>Do you feel that traditional gender discrimination has affected your professional ascension?</b>   | 4               |                     |
| <b>Do you feel that intra-gender; gender discrimination has affected your professional ascension?</b>   | 4               |                     |
| <b>Do you think your juxtaposition of race and gender has affected your career?</b>   | 3               | 1                   |
| <b>Is your institution more or less receptive to the presence of African American women in leadership positions?</b>  | More (4)        |                     |
| <b>Is the institutional culture similar to your personal values, goals, style and personality?</b>  | 4               |                     |
| <b>Is a commitment (e.g. African American women) to diversity reflected in hiring practices or policies and procedures?</b>   | 4               |                     |
| <b>Are resources (e.g. human and fiscal) provided to African American women in leadership positions (aside from current deficit situation) within your institution?</b> | 4               |                     |
| <b>How would you describe the career mobility of African American women in higher education administration?</b>   | Significant (3) | Adequate (1)        |
| <b>Have you had a mentor at any point in your career?</b>   | 4               |                     |
| <b>Did that mentor influence your career choice?</b>  | 2               | 2                   |
| <b>Do you hold an Advanced Degree?</b>  | 4               |                     |

## APPENDIX H: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Achieved Career Aspirations or Impediments by African American Women Senior Level  
Higher Education Administrators at Historically Black Colleges and Universities

**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:** Kristen McManus

**FACULTY SUPERVISOR:** Corey Lock, Ph.D.- Educational Leadership

**SUBJECT:** Interview Protocol

- *Telephone or Video Conference*

### Groundwork

1. State recording devices

### Personal Barriers/Decision Making

1. Describe your current position, primary responsibilities and challenges.
2. Has racism effected your career progression?
3. What role has gender and/or sexism played in your career progression?
4. What has been the major challenge you have faced in your career as a higher education administrator?

### Institutional Barriers/Professional Decisions

1. How can aspiring women leaders better prepare themselves to obtain such skills, strategies or support?
2. Did you or do you have a mentor?
3. What strategies have you used to enhance your career progression?
4. Would you suggest a career as an executive as at an HBCU?

### Conclusion of Interview

1. Are there any other questions or comments you would like to add?

Thank you very much for your participation.

## APPENDIX I: PILOT SAMPLING (DEMONSTRATION OF LEADING QUESTIONS)

Researcher: Ya, I know, it's a good explanation. It sounds like the paternalistic role that white Americans have played a lot with, African Americans who are working for them in some capacity, when you go to them and ask for support or you know are you going to help me with this or help me with that, like you say you get a lot of questions and of course men supposedly come from a more logical place so you know it can be perceived that they are just trying to be logical and help you, where really it's just I don't think it's for you. But he already had the idea who he wanted to hire any way so.

Brenda: I don't think necessarily that it's like, they, when you are in a support role of a director or any role when you are second in command, they feel that if you move from this level to that level. People don't mind giving responsibility to run office to do work, but they never give it to you authority... that is the difference. And so important you have to have both to be a good manager and to run any operation when something is not working you have got to have the authority to fix it or just say no but as long as you are doing work that is okay its getting done, you know how to do that. But if I move you to that next level because you have the knowledge, you have the education and you know where all the skeletons are in the closet and all then that next level is a little more scary.

Researcher: Just one follow question to that what the position you have now, do you have more authority or do you feel like you have some more authority even than you have a director, with your responsibilities.

Brenda: When you have someone coming from outside typically that what happens if you are second in command, think about this, you are second in command and the director leaves, more than likely no one else in the office is going to get the position. So that means you are going to bring someone from the outside. That position does not know anything. So, who is going to train that person? The second person, so I have more responsibility and what I have learnt from this is I have more responsibility I don't have the pay.. but I have more responsibility because to bring this person up to speed that means time, training, imparting whatever knowledge you have to this person so that they can do their job.

Researcher: Yes, more responsibility. Have you experienced any rational stereotyping?

Brenda: Of course when you got to meetings whether for example to state association, national association and under the prior director years ago, this state had more money you could do more travelling and attend conferences, and the former director wasn't as selective, shall I say and who attended. He gave everyone an opportunity and me first and now it's not quite that way so I was attending conferences and when you go and

our former director, he loved to play golf or whatever so a lot of sessions or different things he didn't attend like it's old hat, you know he said I here but I am not here and well in you they do roll call and \*, and they look... "present." I was attending an athletic meeting with the athletic director undergoing an audit and there were a lot of attorneys there, and I was the only African American female there, we had attorneys that were representing universities that outside group, athletic people, people from GA, we were in the chancellor conference room, it was full so we had to address some of the issues regarding the athletics and they wanted responses and so when I began to talk well and you ask you know you are identifying yourself and basically they wanted to know on what authority do you speak. Because this was supposedly a serious issue. And you know I had been around a while and the athletic director, you know, she has been around for a while to and she knew who I was, and she had to say, this person is credible

Researcher: but had it come from someone else. Like outside person. White person.

Brenda: she is credible. She is okay. And so you smile and you make sure you know yourself.

Researcher: Let's see, have you perceived any factors that you think have hindered your advancement other than we have talked about already?

Brenda: Yes, and I am going to say they are all personal or internal hindrances. I forgot the one rule that I always tried to instill in my son and I was reared with and I tried to tell my sisters and other young people I deal with, is that your inspiration has to come from within; we cannot look to anyone else to give you that. I know when I was making the decision I looked for the director or former Director to say yay, nay whatever that he give you the support, and what I failed to do was really explore within. If this is really what I wanted I should have known that to look to this person. I tell students when I do workshops that are aspiring to go to different schools or what school to choose and they say well, for example some students might say, Oh I am not, I may not get the best courses or whatever as same education as HBCU or may not get this or that and I say if you are going to looking for them to motivate you for them to educate you, you are not going to succeed; if you don't go there with the attitude to achieve you are not going to find it, you have to find motivation, the desire, within otherwise you are not going to succeed where you are going. You have to find it within. You don't want it; no one is going to hand it to you.

Researcher: Do you have any particular strategies that you employ when dealing with difficult situations?

Brenda: It depends on whether it is a superior or a colleague, two different strategies. One is known who you are dealing with; you can't deal with all

people the same way. Some people you interact with, you have to use a certain tact, you have to compliment them, you have to move them along, and others you have to be direct and for example when I deal with my boss it has to be his idea

Researcher: Even if it is not his idea

Brenda: Yes, it has to be his idea.

Researcher: Okay

Brenda: You can't always, being second, you can't always be out there leading the charge because then you are usurping that authority especially in meetings, even if they don't know crap. You can't say, well Kristen that is wrong, such and such and so. You know, you have to choose your words carefully, because it may appear that you are over stepping your boundaries or making them look stupid, although they may be wrong. And so you say, well you know perhaps another way to think of it is xyz or maybe it is such and such other thing you are wrong. And I have learnt that over the years. And then you have to try clear up in a way that they don't look bad or stupid and also depending on the audience again you know if you are sitting there with a chancellor, he is going to look to the director for an answer and although that may be from the stumbling not having any answer and you know you want to say look you know let me piggy back on that perhaps such and such and so or over the years x and z may work instead of a,b and c that may be something to entertain.... like you are stupid. You know.

Researcher: Has that type of control come over time or have you always been that way?

Brenda: I have always been that way.

Researcher: Sounds like you

Brenda: You have to know what type of people you are dealing with and what works for one and does not works for the other. And sometimes people want to play a role that they are running things and others they may differ because this is not their area of expertise,

Researcher: Have to had difficulty getting resources or support that you needed so you do something effectively.

Brenda: Yes, a training for the staff and that has to probably more with resources, the state resources, also you know with different managers they allocate resources differently. As I said my other director he always gave his

senior staff or whatever sort of first choice or advice as far as conferences doing things other managers are a little different. They may have certain people they want to do certain things rather than allowing professionals to choose. You know and that has been a part of a professional having the intellect to choose not being told what to do.

Researcher: If you had to select one woman who has affected your career would that be?

Brenda: That is difficult. That is difficult

Researcher: May be you don't have one.

Brenda: I don't really have one

Researcher: Okay

## APPENDIX J: RESEARCHER'S CURRICULUM VITAE

**Kristen McManus****HIGHLIGHTED PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA, Charlotte, NC

Jan 2004 – Feb 2010

**Associate Director**

- Conducted program evaluation and annual assessment to make educated changes for program enhancement
- Worked with faculty and staff from various departments to ensure students were provided with effective academic support
- Directed summer bridge program which involved curriculum development and interpretation and articulation of academic policies and procedures for new students and parents
- Hired, trained and managed administrative and student mentor staff

**Highlighted Achievements**

- Contributed to a significant increase in student performance in college.
- Provide instructional and administration leadership for the learning community. The overarching goal of the program is to assist all college students to become mentors and effectively use resources for problem solving, critical thinking and research.
- Brokered and secured financial aid for students in the summer bridge program in excess of \$50,000.
- Developed and maintained departmental budget in excess of \$150,000
- Redesigned and maintained departmental website to utilize visual effects for maximum advertisement
- Mentored and coached students to help boost their confidence and competencies, as evidence by student retention and graduation data.

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA, Charlotte, NC

Aug 1999 – Dec 2003

**Academic Advisor**

- Served as primary academic advisor to the Freshmen Learning Community
- Functioned as an advisor to freshmen and undesignated Arts & Sciences students
- Taught a survey course designed to help freshmen students transition to college

QUEENS UNIVERSITY, Charlotte, NC  
1999

Jan 1999- May

**Student Activities Program Coordinator**

- Managed the Trexler College Center (e.g. Student Union)
- Responsible for planning campus events and maintenance of program budget
- Coordinated volunteer activities between area agencies and students,
- Directed program that connected university students to Charlotte area resources

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA, Columbia, SC  
1999

Jun 1998- Jan

**Residence Manager**

- Managed apartment building comprised of graduate and international students
- Produced and published monthly newsletter
- Presented monthly student development programs in residence halls
- Provided advisement and crisis resolution to students

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## PRACTICUM EXPERIENCE

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|   |                        |                    |
|---|------------------------|--------------------|
| University of North Carolina, Charlotte, NC | Student Affairs        | Summer 2008        |
| University Of South Carolina, Columbia, SC  | International Programs | Summer 1998        |
| Clemson University, Clemson, SC             | Residence Life         | Jan 1998- May 1998 |

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### Invited Conference Presentations and Awards

- 2010** Phillip Morris Educational Leadership Doctoral Fellowship
- 02/09** Civic Engagement Institute 2009, Elon University  
 "The Civic Engagement Connection: Retention and Success of 1st Generation and Minority Students,"  
**Topic:** Social Capital and Civic Engagement of Transition Programs
- 2008** Association for Institutional Research Fellow
- 06/08** 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Multicultural Conference  
 Carolina Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers  
**Topic:** Importance of Transition Programs for First Generation Students
- 10/08** Women's Leadership Conference: Greater Galilee Baptist Church  
**Topic:** Team Building, Leadership and Being Assertive
- 

### COMPUTER SKILLS

SPSS, SYSTAT, NVivo, Atlas.TI, Banner (INB) Finance and Student, Microsoft Office, Microsoft Web Expression 2.0, Publisher, Visio, Internet Explorer, Windows Movie Maker, and Adobe Software programs, Mac Based Systems

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### EDUCATION

- E. Dd., Educational Leadership**, University of North Carolina, Charlotte, NC –**05/13**  
**M.Ed., Student Personnel Services**, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC - 1999  
**B.A., History**, University of North Carolina, Charlotte, NC – 1996

#### Professional Associations

- Association for Institutional Research  
 American Educational Research Association  
 American Evaluation Association  
 Association of American Colleges and Universities  
 National Association of Student Personnel Administrators  
 National Society for the Study of Education  
 Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated

## APPENDIX K: RESEARCHER CODEBOOK

| Open/Initial (In Vivo) Coding   | Researcher Memo  | Categorization of Coding  | Categories | Theme |
|---|--|---|------------|-------|
| I am the current Associate Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management. To some degree yes, but it has not been without it's downside. A position can sound and look like a great thing on paper, but sometimes, all you really are inheriting is a nightmare.  | Demographic Information:<br>Position, etc.   | I find myself in more "pissin" matches with people than is truly necessary.   | Sexism     | PB    |
| Resources are scare, expectations of the students of extremely high and the blame game is passed around campus like the common cold. I find myself in more "pissin" matches with people than is truly necessary.  | (Anger, Feelings of Frustration)<br>Possible Sexism  | This man decided to call me unprofessional, incompetent and unqualified for my position and even went so far as to say he doesn't know how someone like me even got the job. I sat there and took it and when he was finished raging, I asked did he want me to explain my rationale, of course he didn't so that was it. I just left. But he never would have done that to another white man or a white woman for that matter. I am much higher than him administratively and could have gone to his VC and made this an issue, but what would be the point. | Sexism     | PB    |
| this man decided to call me unprofessional, incompetent and unqualified for my position and even went so far as to say he doesn't know how someone like me even got the job. I sat there and took it and when he was finished raging, I asked did he want me to explain my rationale, of course he didn't so that was it. I just left. But he never would have done that to another white man or a white woman for that matter. I am much higher than him administratively and could have gone to his VC and made this an issue, but what would be the point. I have to show that I can take anything that is thrown at me. | Demonstrated Sexism/<br>Possible Racism –<br>Remained in control of the situation rather than demonstrate a woman could not handle the situation | so it was an obvious jab at me and my way of handling student services within my division. It is more than frustrating to know that people would rather be contrite than simply do what is asked and what is best for the students.   | Sexism     | PB    |
| . It is more than frustrating to know that people would rather be contrite than simply do what is asked and what is best for the students. This director and I have had many issues before in the past so it was not so surprising that she did this.   | Demonstrated anger and frustration. / Sexism   | Black women on campus sometimes are offended when others tell them what to do.  | Sexism     | PB    |
| Black women on campus sometimes are   | Sexism   | Our big boss, a male, flatly said   | Sexism     | PB    |

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| <p>offended when others tell them what to do. But in the end, I mean overall, she came around and started to work well with me.</p>   |   | <p>no, that I was a good worker and I was paid to do what I was doing. If I had a problem I could go somewhere else. When she told me I was just floored. How do you respond to that. It's like slave labor or something. And he just said it without reservation. He was a real piece of work.</p>   |               |           |
| <p>Our big boss, a male, flatly said no, that I was a good worker and I was paid to do what I was doing. If I had a problem I could go somewhere else. When she told me I was just floored. How do you respond to that. It's like slave labor or something. And he just said it without reservation. He was a real piece of work.</p>                                 | <p>Racism/Sexism – Historical system of patriarchal society. Man in incident may not have even had idea that he had offended participant.</p> | <p>Another situation in athletics, a woman who was an associate athletics director had a fundraiser that was very well put together and she had done a good job. Unfortunately, the even was oversold and people were upset. Again, it made the news, * is a small town. So, he just fired her. That was unfair, she worked hard for that position and I know it.</p> | <p>Sexism</p> |           |
| <p>I got to know secretaries, managers, janitors, clerks, accountants, anyone I could because I had no clue where the next opportunity would come along.</p>  | <p>Networking/ Informal mentoring/ using the system to her advantage</p>  | <p>but he frequently stated that considering how few black women were in STEM careers he didn't understand why I wasn't pursuing that.</p>  | <p>Sexism</p> |           |
| <p>It is very hierarchical, with the good old boy system in place. No one says it but it is very well established. When the last chancellor left, there was already a replacement, what I mean is there was no application process, no opportunity for people to apply.</p>   | <p>Remnant of a patriarchal society. Replaced chancellor instantly without an open process. It is inherently biased.</p>                      | <p>I had to deal with an issue in *. The VC of that office does not like me. In fact, she hates me. I don't know why, don't really care. Anyway, I told her that while her director reports directly to her,</p>  | <p>Sexism</p> |           |
| <p>The new chancellor is great, but he is standoff-ish. If you are not in his circle then you don't get to talk to him. In fact, there are people on senior staff who have never spoken to him. And he gives orders very unevenly.</p>  | <p>Patriarchal Society. – Sexism . Does not give senior staff opportunity for equal access to chancellor</p>                                  | <p>and I cannot and will not rely on her data. It puts the entire school in jeopardy.</p>   | <p>Sexism</p> | <p>PB</p> |
| <p>Another situation in athletics, a woman who was an associate athletics director had a fundraiser that was very well put together and she had done a good job. Unfortunately, the even was oversold and people were upset. Again, it made the news, * is a small town. So, he just fired her. That was unfair, she worked hard for that position and I know it.</p> | <p>Incident of Sexism</p>   | <p>Given the players in this scenario, I am assuming you will not comment to anyone about what we just discussed.</p>   | <p>Sexism</p> | <p>PB</p> |

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| <Hesitates>....another situation   | Action/Demonstrated possible paranoia   | As a woman, it is very hard to become a senior level administrator. It can be done, but expect a lot of work and a lot of criticism. Make sure your organizations are working for you, keep those communication lines open                                      | Sexism        | PB |
| I had to be granted the floor. It is this type of disrespect that women and African Americans have to continuously contend with  | Frustration   | but blacks still have that mindset that a man and to some extent a white man knows better   | Sexism        | PB |
| You have no idea, especially when you work hard and have earned a seat at that table.  | Frustration   | But really stayed away from each other the entire conference.   | Sexism        | PB |
| Play nice. Show that I am a good sport, that I can play well with others and do a good job in spite of adversity and that these things do not affect me regardless of how I feel inside.   | Advise/How to operate in spite of racism or sexism  | I have to show that I can take anything that is thrown at me.   | Self-Efficacy | PB |
| Over the years, as far as black mentors most of them were like assistant directors, there wasn't a director.   | Lack of mentors due to lack of African American women in senior level positions.  | I got to know secretaries, managers, janitors, clerks, accountants, anyone I could because I had no clue where the next opportunity would come along.   | Self-Efficacy | PB |
| Not only did he tell me no, he didn't even congratulate me on being accepted into the program. It was like he couldn't believe I had been invited to participate.  | Frustration/Possible Anger. Sexism/Racism – The supervisor could have believe in her accomplishment because he felt she was not “accomplished” enough to do something he had. | Fortunately, I didn't let that deter me and I went to his boss and he paid the fee. It was uncomfortable initially, I had never really had any interaction with his boss, but nothing ventured is nothing gained. So it turned out well.                        | Self-Efficacy | PB |
| Fortunately, I didn't let that deter me and I went to his boss and he paid the fee. It was uncomfortable initially, I had never really had any interaction with his boss, but nothing ventured is nothing gained. So it turned out well. | Ambitious/Achievement – Determination   | I did not sign on to change people's minds about an entire race of people, that will take years to do. It hasn't happened yet. In fact, it seems to be getting worse not better. My way of getting back is to live well, live long and have fun in the process. | Self-Efficacy | PB |
| , but he frequently stated that considering how few black women were in STEM careers he didn't understand why I wasn't pursuing that.  | Racism/Sexism – but it also seems like a backhanded   | Also, if you have any mentors or colleagues that can keep you in the loop that is even better, that who you know  | Self-Efficacy | PB |

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|   | compliment   | thing.  |               |    |
| It's not only that, but you would be surprised how information leaks out and is used maliciously.   | Paranoia regarding interview data being revealed.                              | sometimes you know the upper administration * don't take women seriously. I don't know if they still think we should be just the teachers or secretaries but when you sort of get up into the deans positions and in high area sometimes this perceived you know well she is a woman or you know let me get your point of view you could be over looked sometimes, your opinions, you know information you may give in a meeting I don't know if it always taken seriously. | Self-Efficacy | PB |
| I am the chief financial officer, but lately I have been the auditor.   | Demographic Data- Current position   | People will dislike you regardless of race or gender. In fact, race and gender just give them more ammunition unfortunately.  | Self-Efficacy | PB |
| I am in a male, white male dominated field. When I worked in corporate America I was passed over for many promotions because the white boy was a better "fit" for the position. However, when a new client was black, I was always paraded out. It was so obvious. Even in graduate school, there were some professors who were harder on me because they thought I didn't deserve to be there. | Status of her current profession. Evidence of Racism and Sexism.               | Absolutely. In fact, the chancellor and I are really good friends. I think of him as an informal mentor.  | Mentoring     | IB |
| now he has gone to the Provost to request that anytime I need information from his division I formally request it from him.   | Sexism and Racism due to a colleague that may be intimidated                   | Over the years, as far as black mentors most of them were like assistant directors, there wasn't a director. The older staff people that you could talk to, they would give you encouragement but they were basically in the same situation you were in, fighting a battle to prove you were just as competent to be in a role and also that you had the ability to do more so as far as someone to aspire too, no.   | Mentoring     | IB |
| he probably will get his way and it does bother me, but I have to laugh at the ridiculousness of the entire situation.  | Response to a negative situation- able to continue to achieve despite barriers | Well this was way back to under grad. I was my undergrad, I was on HJA and there was a doctor Wilson, Wilson and he was our advisor to the HGA and when he would come into our meetings he would always address me as doctor white instead of like Ms.  | Mentoring     | IB |

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|   |   | White or my name and I would ask him why do you call me Dr. White, he told me I just see you as having your PHD one day and you know being a college professor and at that particular time my goal was to teach high school English and be a high school track coach that was like in * and lived happily ever after that was my goal for life and I think two years later he died suddenly and ever since then it was like my goal to fulfill that dream you know what he call me and become doctor white that was a good time |                                 |    |
| I did not sign on to change people's minds about an entire race of people, that will take years to do. It hasn't happened yet. In fact, it seems to be getting worse not better. My way of getting back is to live well, live long and have fun in the process.                                     | Reaction to incidences of Racism  | He actually helped me get my first job at Pepsi. It's how I ended up here in *. I keep in touch with him. After I arrived there, I began to meet people based upon my association with him and so on.   | Mentoring                       |    |
| They do things like wait until the last minute to turn it in, or turn it in to my assistant who is white, or complain to the chancellor that they should not have to answer to me. But never really outright racist behavior towards me directly, besides ultimately, they need me in their corner. | Racism. However, confidence in her position or more directly her knowledge and how it can assist others. Not arrogant but assertive in knowing her role is essential. | I hope so. Being in a class room you know teaching and especially this level in community college level my goal is to inspire students the excellence you know the lifelong learning so I try to mimic that through my life even if I am at one of my kids game you know people say you know I really want to go back to school, I will sit back there and talk to them about well here are your options and don't delay and I think you should do it. I hope I have. I think I have got some success stories with people       | Mentoring                       | IB |
| There will always come a point where you need to leverage your position against someone for something. It is tit for tat. It's childish, but that is the way things work.   | Negotiating positions/Sexism  | . I had to be granted the floor. It is this type of disrespect that women and African Americans have to continuously contend with.  | Remnants of Patriarchal Society | IB |
| I had to deal with an issue in *. The VC of that office does not like me. In fact, she hates me. I don't know why, don't really care. Anyway, I told her that while her director reports directly to her,   | Sexism. Women having to deal with other women in power. There is respect, but   | You have no idea, especially when you work hard and have earned a seat at that table.   | Remnants of Patriarchal Society | IB |

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|   | often not affection.                             |  |          |    |
| Given the players in this scenario, I am assuming you will not comment to anyone about what we just discussed.  | Paranoia regarding interview data being revealed | He said Winston State university that's a black school right? Just this very morning and I said sir you are implying what and he said well I just didn't know they had that program and you know they have a MFA; do you have your MFA? Now I am his supervisor and he was asking me that just this very morning eight fifteen this morning. So, ya I have | Racism   | PB |
| As a woman, it is very hard to become a senior level administrator. It can be done, but expect a lot of work and a lot of criticism. Make sure your organizations are working for you, keep those communication lines open.   | Advise/ Issues of Sexism                         | when a new client was black, I was always paraded out. It was so obvious. Even in graduate school, there were some professors who were harder on me because they thought I didn't deserve to be there.   | Racism   | PB |
| People will dislike you regardless of race or gender. In fact, race and gender just give them more ammunition unfortunately   | Reflection on Racism and Sexism                  | Not only did he tell me no, he didn't even congratulate me on being accepted into the program. It was like he couldn't believe I had been invited to participate.  | Racism   |    |
| but blacks still have that mindset that a man and to some extent a white man knows better   | Racism   | now he has gone to the Provost to request that anytime I need information from his division I formally request it from him   | Racism   |    |
| Do you know I went to a leadership conference specifically for women and when I arrived I saw another women who worked her and had no idea that she was going to be there. I went up to her and we talked and had dinner. But really stayed away from each other the entire conference. | Incident of Sexism /Conflict with other woman    | They do things like wait until the last minute to turn it in, or turn it in to my assistant who is white, or complain to the chancellor that they should not have to answer to me. But never really outright racist behavior towards me directly, besides ultimately, they need me in their corner.  | Racism   | PB |
|   |  | Tone and comments indicate Anger and Frustration   | Behavior | PB |
|   |  | Hesitancy to comment   | Behavior | PB |
| I am the dean of the * and a full professor.  | Demographic information                          | It is very hierarchical, with the good old boy system in place. No one says it but it is very well established. When the last chancellor left, there was already a replacement, what I mean is there was no application process, no opportunity for people to apply.   |          | IB |

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| <p>sometimes you know the upper administration * don't take women seriously</p>   | <p>Perceived Sexism</p>   | <p>The new chancellor is great, but he is standoff-ish. If you are not in his circle then you don't get to talk to him. In fact, there are people on senior staff who have never spoken to him. And he gives orders very unevenly.</p> |  | <p>IB</p> |
| <p>your point of view you could be overlooked sometimes, your opinions, you know information you may give in a meeting I don't know if it always taken seriously.</p>   | <p>Perceived Sexism</p>   |  |  |           |
| <p>He said Winston State university that's a black school right? Just this very morning and I said sir you are implying what and he said well I just didn't know they had that program and you know they have a MFA; do you have your MFA? Now I am his supervisor and he was asking me that just this very morning eight fifteen this morning. So, ya I have</p> | <p>Incident of Racism/ employee disrespected the participants educational background.</p> |  |  |           |