# ABSTRACT

Tamika Wordlow, SECOND IN COMMAND: EXAMINING THE FACTORS THAT IMPACT THE CAREER ADVANCEMENT OF BLACK WOMEN CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICERS (Under the direction of Dr. Crystal Chambers). Department of Educational Leadership, July 2018.

Within the field of higher education, Black women are underrepresented in executive and senior-level positions that lead to the presidency. In considering the traditional pathway to the presidency for women leaders, tenured full professor to senior administrator positions such as chief academic officer, factors that may impact advancement need to be reviewed. The purpose of this study was to examine the lived experiences of Black women chief academic officers and provosts at four-year, public, doctoral degree-granting institutions (but not historically Black colleges and universities) by exploring factors, personal or professional, that may hinder and/or support career advancement. Jerlando Jackson's (2004) Engagement, Retention, and Advancement model, which presents the necessary components to engage, retain, and ultimately advance Black professionals within higher education, was used as the theoretical framework. This qualitative study used the narrative research tradition. The three participants selected for this study shared information regarding their journey into and experience while serving in the position of chief academic officer/provost. Themes were presented and then examined in relation to the Engagement, Retention, and Advancement model.

SECOND IN COMMAND: EXAMINING THE FACTORS THAT IMPACT THE CAREER

ADVANCEMENT OF BLACK WOMEN CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICERS


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by

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SECOND IN COMMAND: EXAMINING THE FACTORS THAT IMPACT THE CAREER

ADVANCEMENT OF BLACK WOMEN CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICERS

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## DEDICATION

"When times get tough and fear sets in, think of those people who paved the way for you and those who are counting on you to pave the way for them." Michelle Obama

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

# LIST OF TABLES

## LIST OF FIGURES

**CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

Despite women's increased presence in the workforce, they remain disproportionately underrepresented in executive leadership positions (Diehl, 2014; Famiglietti, 2015; Hoyt & Murphy, 2016; Klotz, 2014; Searby, Ballenger, & Tripses, 2015; Tran, 2014). Within the United States, women comprise nearly half of the US population and occupy 52 percent of all professional-level jobs (Warner & Corley, 2017). Nevertheless, women lag substantially behind men in executive leadership positions. Roughly a quarter of women and only 3.9% Black women serve in executive leadership positions (Warner & Corley, 2017). Given that women have the educational credentials to advance to executive positions the question remains: Why don't they? Considering women's high level of educational attainment, it is surprising to find that their preparation does not translate into job advancement opportunities.

More specifically, research indicates that women are obtaining doctoral degrees in various fields at accelerated rates, but they are not advancing to senior-level positions at comparable rates. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) (2016) reports that the percentage of women completing a bachelor's degree or higher has increased rapidly from 1995 to 2015. Women now hold more than half of all undergraduate, master's, and doctoral degrees, and nearly half of all professional degrees (NCES, 2016; Northouse, 2013; Warner & Corley, 2017). These statistics support the thesis that obtaining advanced degrees has not resulted in equitable representation of women in executive leadership across the workforce.

**Background of Study**

Available demographic data on women's participation in senior leadership roles in higher education can obscure the full picture of women's status in the workforce because organizations often aggregate a range of occupations in broad categories, such as "administrator." As Davies-

Netzeley (1998) observed, all-encompassing categories can mask women's occupational breakdown and cover up important factors that may further highlight disparities, such as earnings, authority, and advancement.

Second in command focuses on how Black women's leadership advancement fares in higher education. Women hold the majority of faculty positions at colleges and universities in the United States. However, women advance more slowly to full professorship and, consequently, they are overrepresented in low- and middle-rank positions (Brown, 2005; Davis, 2009; Jung-Lee Huang, 2012; Longman & Lafrenier, 2012; Seo, Mehdiabadi, & Huang, 2016; Sherman, Beaty, Crum, & Peters, 2010; Terosky, O'Meara, & Campbell, 2014; Trower, 2012; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2013). Moreover, when considering race and gender together, the reality for Black men and women faculty members is even more startling (Sherman et al., 2010). According to NCES (2013), White males comprise 58% of full professors at postsecondary institutions, and White women represent roughly 26%. All other groups combined make up the remaining 16%, with Black women representing less than 2% of full professors. These data illustrates that although women hold the largest number of faculty positions, women, and particularly Black women, are not well represented within the rank of full professor.

**Problem Statement**

In higher education administration, the representation of women and Black professionals is not balanced (Allen, Jacobson, & Lomotey, 1995; Davis, 2009; Jackson, 2004; Nidiffer, 2001b; Patitu & Hinton, 2003). Specifically, women of color in senior administrative positions that lead to the presidency are notably lacking (Jones, Dawkins, McClinton, & Glover, 2012). Attempts to recruit and retain diverse faculty and staff to senior administration positions have yielded less than desirable results (Siegel, 2008). For example, a little over 30% of college

presidents are women, and only 16% are minority women (Seltzer, 2017). Eliminating institutions that serve minority students, the number of minority women presidents drops to 11% (Seltzer, 2017).

The limited visibility of women within the presidency suggests there is a need to review women's routes to this position. The "traditional pathway to the presidency is from tenured full professor positions to senior level administrative positions such as dean and chief academic officer" (Jung-Lee Huang, 2012, p. 24). Furthermore, Madsen and Johnson (2008, 2016) reported that most women serve as chief academic officers (CAO) or provosts before occupying the presidency. Walton and McDade (2001) articulated, "To fully understand the dynamics of women moving into presidencies, it is necessary to study women in the CAO position, because the ascent of women into top positions does not happen by accident" (p. 86). For example, a study conducted by the American Council on Education (2017) reported that Blacks represent only 4% of all CAO, women represent 38% of CAO, and more than half of them serve at two-year institutions.

While this is the typical trajectory to the presidency, Johnson (2016) also reported that the representation of women in positions such as chief academic officers decreased between 2008 and 2013 within public doctoral degree-granting institutions. Because of their dual identity, Black women are in a unique position in the traditional pipeline, from tenured full professor to CAO to president. Evidence at each level has shown that the combined odds of Black women rising to the presidency are slim. The National Center for Education Statistics (2016) data reported that Black women make up the smallest percentage of faculty with full professor status, and recent studies have documented the limited numbers of women serving as CAO (American

Council on Education, 2017) and racially minoritized women presidents (Seltzer, 2017). Consequently, hope for the future appears dim.

Essentially, the information previously cited supports the thesis that Black women are underrepresented in leadership roles, specifically within higher education (Harris, Wright, & Msengi, 2011). However, while the numbers give us a glimpse into the makeup of Black women in higher education, they do not account for the lived experiences of this population. Statistical data can point to areas of gender and racial imbalance, but they cannot account for the experiences that create barriers to career advancement for Black women. As stated by Cole (1993), "The fact that we are still celebrating firsts is evidence that true equality has not yet been achieved" (p. 53). The example of Carmen Twillie Ambar illustrates that this statement still holds true. Dr. Ambar currently serves as Oberlin College's 15th president and the institution's first African American leader in its 180-plus-years college history (Farkas, 2017). Such accomplishments make examining Black women's experiences, both positive and negative, even more important to understand. Consequently, gaining a deeper understanding of the various factors that support or hinder the advancement of Black women leaders is critical to providing opportunities for up-and-coming Black women to learn and benefit from the success of others (Seo et al., 2016).

## Significance of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the lived experiences of Black women CAO/provosts at four-year, public, doctoral degree-granting institutions that are not historically Black colleges and universities (HBCU). Lived experiences were generally defined as life stages that have contributed, positively or negatively, to career advancement. This study focused on Black women because many studies examine sexism as a barrier, but a limited number of studies

has explored the impact of sex and race (Graham, 2015). Black women are marginalized in the majority of leadership research and if included, are categorized as a subgroup in comparison to others. In this vein, the voices and experiences of Black women are subsumed as "other," as opposed to independent, unique, and self-authenticated (Cole & Guy-Sheftall, 2003; Jones, Dawkins, McClinton, & Glover, 2012; Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2003; Harris et al., 2011). Peters (2011) pointed out that there is "silence in research regarding the experiences of Black women faculty in the field of educational leadership and administration" (p. 147).

Additionally, limited scholarly research concerning CAO exists, and even fewer studies have been conducted on the makeup of women who serve as CAO (Walton & McDade, 2001). While studies have provided information regarding the makeup of women CAO, they have not focused on the unique experiences of Black women specifically. Thus, understanding the experiences of Black women CAO is of great importance as it may contribute to Black women's professional advancement or lack thereof. Examining the factors that hinder or support Black women leaders provides an opportunity for aspiring leaders to learn from the proven success of others (Seo et al., 2016). The engagement and advancement of Black women administrators is also beneficial for institutions. The representation of Black women leaders may assist groups such as policymakers, boards, and search firms in the recruitment and selection of a greater pool of diversified candidates (Jung-Lee Huang, 2012; Klotz, 2014) and work to debunk myths and eliminate the creation of policies that are made with bias, intentionally or unintentionally (Seo et al., 2016). Failure to address these factors may result in policies and procedures that are implemented through a limited lens that does not fully consider the perspective of this population and lends itself to unintentional bias and discriminatory practices (Diehl, 2014; Eagly, 2007).

The engagement and advancement of Black women administrators is also linked to student success for underrepresented groups. For example, the enrollment and persistence of Black students at predominantly White institutions is linked to Black females in administrative leadership positions (Jones et al., 2012; Patitu & Hinton, 2003). As stated by Cole (1993), the recruitment of Black women administrators supports positive role modeling by demonstrating "possibilities for achieving because someone like her, who has achieved is standing before her… this is what role modeling is in its ultimate and most penetrating expression" (p. 43). This supports the work of authors Seo et al. (2016), who suggested that encouragement comes as one observes a person occupying positions that were once considered unattainable. Thus, understanding what factors hinder and/or support the advancement of Black women may lead to stronger recruitment and retention strategies for minority students. Overall, such efforts illustrate an institution's commitment to diversity and equity issues (McCray, 2011). Jackson's (2004) Engagement, Retention, and Advancement (ERA) model, which is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2, illustrates the institutional components necessary to engage and retain Black women leaders.

## Theoretical Framework: The ERA Model

The theoretical framework used for this study is the ERA model, coined by scholar Jerlando Jackson (2004). The ERA stands for engagement, retention and advancement model and describes components that promote the recruitment and advancement of Black administrators at PWIs. There are two grounding principles within the model: institutions has established consistent relationships with the African American community and are committed to diversity and affirmative action principles (Jackson, 2004). There are four phases that comprise the ERA model: pre-engagement, engagement, advancement, and outcomes.

## Overview of Research Question and Methods

The research question guiding this study is what institutional and personal factors support or hinder the advancement of Black women Chief Academic Officers? The method used to carry out this study was narrative inquiry research design, which focuses on human experience, constructing and reconstructing meaning through personal stories (Webster & Mertova, 2007). It also extends beyond ordering of events and helps to analyze experiences to establish meaning (Squire et al., 2014; Webster & Mertova, 2007). Participants of this study were selected using a snowball method. Upon confirmation of participation, I hosted an in-depth interview with each participant that was audio-recorded. In lieu of participants that requested not to be audio-recorded detailed notes were collected. Following the interview, the recording was transcribed and a copy was provided to each participant for review to ensure that the information collected was accurate. Transcriptions were then coded using NVivo. I reviewed transcriptions to identify potential patterns. I focused initially on any items that could be associated with the ERA model. I then reviewed items that were not associated with the ERA model, which served as emergent themes. Together this information was used to identify factors that support or hinder career advancement for Black women. I found that participants shared experiences related to ERA model and also presented several themes that were not explicitly categorized within the model. These included self-reflection and internal motivations; faith, spirituality, and religion; family upbringing and support; and paying it forward.

## Organization of Study

This study consists of five chapters. Chapter 2 presents the theoretical framework guiding the study and introduces literature related to the concepts under review. Additionally, a brief overview of women's history and access to higher education is presented to better understand the

journey of women leaders. Chapter 2 also examines theories related to women in leadership and narrows in to focus more specifically on the barriers they face following entry into the workplace, as well as methods for responding to these challenges. Chapter 2 concludes with discussion on the role of the CAO. Chapter 3 transitions to introducing the research questions guiding this study, presenting information on the design of this study, and discussing how the information was analyzed. The results of the collected data are outlined in Chapter 4. Lastly, Chapter 5 presents further discussion related to research in addition to recommendations for future research.

## Definition of Terms

*Chief Academic Officer* (often referred to as Provost) - The CAO provides leadership to all operations that fall under the area of academics. In this regard, the CAO also serves as the second in command after the president of the institution (Walton & McDade, 2001).

*Public Degree-Granting Institution* - The National Center for Education Statistics (n.d.) defined a public degree-granting institution as a postsecondary institution that is financially supported in large part through Title IV federal financial aid programs and confers degrees that range from an associate's to master's degree or higher. Additionally, a public institution is typically controlled and operated by elected or appointed officials.

*Tenure* - The tenure tracking system has been utilized within higher education in the United States for more than 70 years (Carlucci, 2013; Seo et al., 2016; Thedwall, 2008). The primary objective of the tenure tracking system is to attract qualified individuals who are highly skilled to the professoriate (Seo et al., 2016). Tenure-track faculty are full-time faculty members who have the following appointed ranks: assistant, associate, and full professor or professor. The American Association of University Professors highlighted that tenure promotes academic

freedom of teaching, research, and extramural activities within its Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure (Seo et al., 2016). The following ranks are associated with the tenure tracking system within the United States:

*Assistant Professor* - serves as an entry-level position to the tenure track and generally requires a terminal degree (Seo et al., 2016). As an assistant professor, one shows commitment through teaching and research. In addition, an assistant professor must be engaged in university affairs. Thus, there is a probationary period of six to seven years before receiving consideration for tenure and promotion to associate professor (Seo et al., 2016).

*Associate Professor* - is a higher-ranking status. Professors with this rank have proven that they are sufficient in teaching, researching, and providing service in accordance to university standards (Seo et al., 2016). Additionally, more attention is centered on personal interests of research and/or teaching.

*Full Professor or Professor* - is the highest rank of professorship. To obtain this rank requires a review by colleagues to determine whether the individual is qualified for such rank (Seo et al., 2016). There are several factors that are evaluated, including but are not limited to a review of contributions made to the field, commitment to teach, institutional service, and recognition from the discipline of study (Seo et al., 2016).

*Full-Time Non-Tenured Track* - are faculty members who are not on the path to tenured status (Seo et al., 2016). They may include adjunct professors, lecturers, or visiting professors. This role is different in the United States than the United Kingdom, where lecturer is an entry-level position to the tenure track (Seo et al., 2016).

# CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Chapter 2 begins with an introduction to the theoretical framework guiding this study, the Engagement, Retention, Advancement (ERA) model developed by Jerlando F. L. Jackson (2004). It introduces various elements that are needed to recruit, retain, and ultimately assist in the advancement of Black administrators. Following discussion of the ERA model, this chapter shifts to the history of women in the United States and their progression into higher education from 1820 to 1960. This discussion is necessary because it provides historical context and assists in establishing meaning of current-day experiences for women and Black women leaders, which is discussed in greater detail in the last portion of this chapter. More specifically, the chapter transitions to present challenges to advancement in the form of barriers. These include bias and prejudicial practices specific to race and gender, work-life balance, family obligations, and the glass ceiling/glass cliff. Additionally, strategies used to navigate these challenges are presented. The chapter concludes with an overview on the role of Chief Academic Officer (CAO), which serves as the sample population for this study. A general outline is provided to detail the responsibilities associated with the CAO position as well as to better understand the makeup of individuals in this position.

## Theoretical Framework

The ERA model derives from the notion that institutions are committed to the diversity of their students, faculty, and staff. It argues that specific characteristics must exist within an institution to support the hiring and retention of Black leaders. According to Jackson (2004), these characteristics are divided into four phases: pre-engagement, engagement, advancement, and outcomes (see Figure 1).

**Establish Relationships with the Surrounding People of Color Community**

| Pre-engagement | Engagement | Advancement | Outcomes |
|---|---|---|---|
| Recruitment | Empower Administrator | Professional Release Time | |
| Orientation Program | Leadership Opportunities | Professional Development Funds | Retention |
| Incentives Packages | Mentoring | | Career Advancement |
| | In-Service Professional Development | Beyond Diversity Experience | |

**Commitment to the Principles of Diversity and Affirmative Action**

*Note.* This figure illustrates the various elements needed to recruit and retain Black administrators. Adapted from "An emerging engagement, retention, and advancement model for African American administrators at predominantly White institutions: The result of two Delphi studies," by J. F. L. Jackson, 2004, in D. Cleveland (Ed.), *A long way to go: Conversations about race by African American faculty and graduate students in higher education* (pp. 221-222). Copyright 2004 by Peter Lang.

*Figure 1.* Engagement, Retention, and Advancement (ERA) Model.

These characteristics illustrate methods to recruit and retain Black administrators at predominantly White institutions. The four phases are grounded by the following concepts: that the institution has established consistent relationships with the African American community and that the institution has a commitment to diversity and affirmative action principles (Jackson, 2004). Together these concepts indicate to a prospective Black administrator that the institution understands and appreciates the differences of its employees. The ERA model contributes to existing literature by moving the discussion beyond the obtainment of institutional diversity and focuses on retention and advancement, specifically for Black administrators. The four phases that make up the ERA model are outlined in the next sections.

The first phase of the ERA model is defined as the pre-engagement phase. Within this phase, the institution displays its values and commitment to Black administrators before an official offer is ever made. As shared by Jackson (2004), this is achieved through recruitment practices, the orientation of campus and community groups, and providing incentive packages that are comparable to other populations. Institutions are more likely to retain employees when recruitment practices are "positive, welcoming, and [consist of] supportive messages to potential colleagues" (Jackson, 2004, p. 216).

Orientation programs serve as a subcategory within this phase; they allow Black administrators to see and form relationships with the campus and the community. They may be separate from new employee orientation programs in that they require institutions to connect administrators to existing relationships within the local community. These communities may include but are not limited to local churches and professional or service groups that cater to underserved populations, such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Thus, institutions must show that there is a pre-existing relationship within the local

12

community because prospective Black administrators view these relationships as potential opportunities to strengthen and continue partnerships as well as form personal connections with groups with whom they identity. This may also work to reduce experiences of loneliness or isolation.

The final subcategory is that of competitive incentive packages. Many talented Black administrators leave institutions to work for a college or university that will provide sufficient and equitable financial packages (Jackson, 2004). For this reason, it is important to consider packages that are comparable. The areas presented above work to attract prospective Black administrators; while this is integral to the ERA model, there is also a need to shift attention towards the engagement of Black administrators once they are in the institutional environment.

Phase two of the ERA model consists of the engagement phase. Within this phase, the administrator must feel empowered to carry out their role and have the authority to lead, manage, and be successful (Jackson, 2004). An institution may affirm this authority by acknowledging and trusting the individual in their role. Thus, they may receive additional tasks that work towards enhancing their skill set as a leader.

This is important because institutional confidence in an administrator can lead to additional responsibilities and leadership opportunities, which is a subcategory within the engagement phase (Jackson, 2004). Leadership opportunities serve as grooming for job advancement within the institution. However, it is important that leadership opportunities are provided at a pace that matches the administrator's strengths to prevent them from being overwhelmed and/or underprepared for additional responsibilities (Jackson, 2004).

In addition to leadership opportunities, mentoring is another subcategory found within the engagement phase. Institutions that have mentoring programs provide opportunities for both

successful retention and professional development (Jackson, 2004). Mentorship can be effective using multiple methods. For example, formal and informal mentors can be beneficial in navigating the official procedures and "unwritten" rules of the organization successfully. However, Jackson (2004) recommended that mentors be seasoned administrators to offer both advice and guidance. Thus, mentors may have a different background than the administrator but have the organizational knowledge to guide and advise effectively. The final subcategory within this phase consists of in-service professional development that aligns with the administrator's position and supports cross-campus networking (Jackson, 2004). Thus, engagement becomes important because it impacts one's ability to advance, which is the third phase within the ERA model.

As shared by Jackson (2004), "Opportunities for and the possibility of advancement at one's institution minimize the need to move solely for professional advancement" (p. 218). Thus, institutions should allot time for research and professional development activities. In this component, when focusing on professional development, there is a need to ensure that Black administrators understand full campus operations. Therefore, professional development opportunities should extend beyond diversity and inclusion initiatives and focus on other skill sets that are essential for advancement, such as fundraising, budgeting, and policy development and implementation. Additionally, institutions should support healthy work/life balance by being mindful of the additional time devoted by Black administrators to "underrepresented student populations" (Jackson, 2004). While the extended hours can be taxing on Black administrators, it is viewed as an additional touch point of support for these students.

The final phase within this model, outcomes, focuses on retention and career advancement. As shared by Jackson (2004), retention of Black administrators must be

comparable to other administrators at the same institution, and career advancement should include promotions either within or outside the institution. Overall, the goal is to maintain Black administrators within the field of higher education by providing more positive experiences between and within each phase (Jackson, 2004).

In review, the ERA model is similar to the work of Patitu and Hinton (2003). Their study, which predates the ERA model, examined the experiences of Black women faculty and administrators. Their study included participants that ranged in years of experience and leadership status. Patitu and Hinton concluded that Black women experience overt and subtle forms of discrimination, including but not limited to sexism and racism. For example, a participant of their study shared, "there was a period when the vice-president that I reported to would only speak to me through my assistance because he is a man" (Patitu & Hinton, 2003, p. 81). Another reported that she was excluded from important meetings because her position had been reduced upon hire to a program coordinator, despite her male predecessors having the position of director (Patitu & Hinton, 2003). The title change limited access to networks that could have been utilized to enhance student support services. Furthermore, they shared that institutions must make intentional steps to attract, hire, develop, and retain Black women leaders. The steps recommended are parallel to Jackson's ERA model: attract versus pre-engagement, hire and develop versus engagement and advancement, and retain versus outcomes. Patitu and Hinton suggested that institutions should build climates that are supportive of diverse populations. This is also consistent with the two grounding principles outlined within the ERA. The intentional efforts illustrate an institutions commitment to diversity and affirmative action principles, thereby contributing to their work experiences.

While there exist similarities, there are differences between these approaches. The ERA model outlines steps for institutions as well as Black male and female leaders, whereas Patitu and Hinton's (2003) study focused only on female administrators or faculty. Additionally, the ERA model specifies action for the institution as well as employees; in contrast, Patitu and Hinton only outlined specific action to be carried out by the institution.

Based on what is known through the ERA model, it becomes apparent that the experiences of Black administrators play a large role in their recruitment, retention, and ultimately advancement within an organization. Of particular interest are the unique challenges faced by women and Black women leaders that have further impacted their progression in higher education leadership. These challenges correlate to the components outlined within the ERA model. For example, women and Black women have endured barriers gaining access into administrative careers ideally thought to be for men (Jones et al., 2012), resulting in federal mandates to prohibit discrimination based on race and gender within recruitment practices (Chambers, 2017; Jones et al., 2012). In addition, upon entry to leadership positions women and Black women have continued to struggle for opportunities that align with their counterparts in the areas of professional development, mentorship, and professional networks (Terosky et al., 2014). While there has been progress to the makeup of women and Black women in the workforce, they remain disproportionately underrepresented in executive leadership positions (Diehl, 2014; Famiglietti, 2015; Hoyt & Murphy, 2016; Klotz, 2014; Searby et al., 2015; Tran, 2014). Thus, it becomes necessary to examine factors that hinder and/or support the advancement of this population.

**Literature Review**

A review of the literature was examined to expound on the recruitment, engagement, retention, and advancement efforts that directly impact the work experiences of women. This chapter highlights past and current experiences of women in higher education. The first portion of this chapter serves as a brief overview of the history of women in the United States from 1820 to 1960. This historical context is necessary to fully understand current-day experiences of women and Black women leaders and connect them in many ways to women's history, specifically their access and involvement both within and outside of higher education.

The next section of this chapter discusses current barriers to advancement that women have experienced. Four major areas are introduced: bias and discriminatory practices, women in leadership, personal factors such as work-life balance, and professional factors with emphasis on the glass ceiling and glass cliff. The chapter transitions to discuss methods for responding to barriers. Specifically, attention is centered on identity development, and using critical race theory (CRT) and Black feminist thought (BFT), discussion is focused on the impact of spirituality and the significance of mentorships and sponsorship in Black women's advancement. These themes were considered given their frequency within the literature. The chapter ends with discussion on the role of the CAO and identifies commonalities amongst individuals in these roles. However, given that there is very little research with a specific focus on women CAO (Walton & McDade, 2001), this section discusses this role from a broader perspective.

**A History of Women's Leadership in Higher Education**

Despite having women in positions of leadership, access has and still is the key element for women to achieve high ranks in senior administration. The experiences of women in senior administration are associated with major historical elements that have impacted their access and

progression into higher education (Valverde, 2011). An examination of women's history is presented to expound on this perspective, as the "influence of patriarchy" and "racial and ethnic identities" are intertwined with women's access and later involvement in higher education (Eisenmann, 2001).

Women's participation in and/or absence from education can be dated back to the colonial era. During this time, women were not educated as they were viewed as property, under the authority of their father until it was transitioned to the husband after their wedding (Chambers, 2017). A wife's status as property meant a husband had financial, mental, and physical control over his wife and could limit her participation in social, economic, and political events. These acts reinforced the concept that women are subservient to men (Nidiffer, 2001a). Thus, it becomes evident that in portions of the United States women were also viewed as nonexistent within higher education as colonial colleges worked to prepare men for politics or ministry or life within the academy (Nidiffer, 2001a). Women did not receive formal education, nor were they looked upon to teach or serve as role models (Dubois, 2006). This is not to suggest that women were incapable of learning; however, women were, according to McCandless (1999), typically in a more submissive role, tending to household needs and caring for children. If education was present, it was incorporated within the home through biblical readings and other forms of religious instruction (Chambers, 2017; Nidiffer, 2001a). Although women were viewed as property, Black women were considered as actual property, which required a bill of sale for ownership (Chambers, 2017). Prior to the Civil War, it was illegal for enslaved persons to be educated or attend formal education institutions (Jones et al., 2012). For this reason, many Black women learned to read and write without it being publicly known.

**Women and college access.** While there was no access to education originally, several milestones in American history would later contribute to the progression of women and Black women in higher education. The Abolitionist movement of 1840 and the Women's Suffrage movement marked a shifting point in U.S. history. Efforts such as these served as a platform for women and played a role in the growing number of women pursuing higher education and provided support for the education of Blacks.

For example, it was not until the late 1830s that access to higher education was permitted for women (Chambers, 2017; Nidiffer, 2001a). However, despite the fact that women were more visible, their presence was restricted as they remained in single-sex facilities rather than co-educational settings. Although women were granted the opportunity to obtain higher education, the course curriculum was structured so that certain traditions were reinforced (McCandless, 1999). For example, class instructions centered on being the model wife, with lessons on cooking, house décor, and etiquette. As stated by Howe (1977), "The AB degree that prepared men for graduate and professional schools prepared women for homemaking" (p. 7). Even after college, women were not hired as professors in co-educational settings. As a result, women colleges employed many women with an interest in an academic career, as the other alternative for women were careers in nursing and/or secretarial-type positions, as they were viewed as more feminine (Moore, 1987; Nidiffer, 2001a).

Post-Civil War efforts, however, expanded employment and educational opportunities for many women. Specific to women in higher education, the educational agenda for women shifted from domestic affairs to scholarship (Chambers, 2017); courses on topics such as psychology and social work opened access to higher education under the public sector (Nidiffer, 2001a). It also gave greater justification for co-educational institutions; due to declining numbers of men,

the incorporation of women helped to maintain enrollment (Nidiffer, 2001a). While co-educational institutions became the practice many were still against the model because it served as a negative concept. For example, the presence of women served as a tangible sign that an institution lacked prestige and wealth (Nidiffer, 2001a). Some institutions even sought to limit or even eliminate coeducation, but found it to too political or financially damaging, so their efforts did not last long (Nidiffer, 2001a). Thus, opponents of coeducation viewed the intermix of genders as pure economics, as separate institutions for male and female students was too costly. By the 20th century, co-educational institutions were the growing norm.

Similar to the educational experiences of women, there are parallel viewpoints that exist regarding the education of Black students. As Black students worked to create change within the community, they also worked to challenge the field of higher education. They continued to excel at historically Black colleges and universities (HBCU) and worked to integrate predominantly White institutions. Although progress was made in terms of access to education for Black students, school structures and operations remained separate and unequal, and HBCU faced financial struggles, including student's inability to pay or state appropriations that were disproportionate to their counterparts (Jones et al., 2012). Specific to HBCU, the Morrill Act of 1862 allotted land for institutions of higher education for the purposes of agricultural, mechanical, and military training. And the implementation of the Morrill Act of 1890 mandated equal funding for predominantly White institutions and institutions that educated a majority of Black students.

In review of this era, while there were many challenges, the mid- to late-1800s reflect some growth as it pertains to the presence of women and Black students within higher education. For example, Oberlin College (Ohio) was the first college to serve as a co-educational institution

for both men and women, and in 1835, it began to admit students across racial lines. Between 1844 and 1845, other institutions, Hillsdale College (Michigan), Franklin College (Indiana), and Baylor University (Texas), followed suit by serving as co-educational institutions (Chambers, 2017; Nidiffer, 2001a). However, it was not until 1860 that institutions devoted to the education of women expanded the curriculum to include the sciences to further support women in their professional journeys (Chambers, 2017).

Even with access to predominantly White institutions and co-educational institutions, Black women still faced adversity in a way unique to other women. Black women had limited access to the campus library and other academic services and had to sit in the back of the classroom, resulting in limited ability to see and hear instructions (Jones et al., 2012). Regardless, Black women continued to excel, with Oberlin College serving as the first institution in the United States to award a Black woman a literary degree and a bachelor's degree (Jones et al., 2012), and the first group of Black women receiving a terminal degree graduated from the institution in 1921 (Chambers, 2017). These changes to the makeup of higher education institutions produced women and Black women who were the first of their kind. This served as a huge turning point as more Black women began to obtain degrees at predominantly White institutions. It also began a new movement: the entry of more women into professional roles within higher education. While these changes were not readily accepted, women and their advocates continued to push for gender equality in occupational fields. For this reason, the history of women professionals and their contributions to the field of higher education is presented in the next section.

**Women's leadership in co-education: Rise of the dean of women.** The progressive era highlights professional advances for women within higher education. As enrollment in co-

educational institutions continued to rise, it also ushered in a new wave of feminist activity that drew attention to women's professional potential (Nidiffer, 2001b; Schwartz, 1997b). Specifically, while college presidents could handle the more common responsibilities, i.e., managing funds and working with the board of trustees and faculty, authority was delegated to women faculty through the appointment of positions such as the dean of women to oversee matters involving female students (Schwartz, 2003). As enrollment numbers for women increased, they brought with them greater attention to the scenarios unique for women. In addition to personal experiences were encounters of discrimination, isolation, and lack of inclusion faced by women on campus. To address and deal with issues arising from co-educational institutions, the dean of women position was created and served as one of the first positions of leadership for women within higher education (Nidiffer, 2000; Rasheed, 2009). As noted by Klotz (2014), the deans of women served as the most signature role for women who sought entry into higher education leadership.

Alice Freeman Palmer, who later served as the President of Wellesley College, became the first dean of women in 1892 (Rasheed, 2009; Schwartz, 1997b). The dean of women role continued to expand as the enrollment of female students increased at co-educational institutions. In addition to Alice Freeman Palmer, Marion Talbot, Lucy Diggs Slowe, Lois Kimball Mathews, Katherine Bowersox, and Agnes Ellen Harris pioneered the nation's dean of women role (Rasheed, 2009; Schwartz, 2003). Serving many purposes, these positions advocated for gender equity and used their position to establish a pathway for other women aspiring such leadership roles (Chambers, 2017; Jones et al., 2012; Klotz, 2014; Nidiffer, 2000). These women worked to achieve two major goals during the progressive era: to enhance the experiences of women students and to assist in the development of a professional identity for the dean of women role

(Nidiffer, 2001b). However, due to the "high degree of negative feelings toward women on [co-educational] campuses [it] created an environment that ranged from inhospitable to openly hostile" (Nidiffer, 2001b, p. 138). Thus, the dean of women transitioned to also serve as an advocate for students and other professional staff. For example, the dean of women worked to ensure women had facilities equal to their male counterparts, were provided on-campus housing, and had equal opportunities for research as well as greater female representation within student affairs to address unequal promotion, pay inequity, and sexual harassment (Chambers, 2017; Nidiffer, 2000).

Together deans of women across college campuses worked to professionalize their status in the field, with the first meeting of deans of women held in 1903 (Schwartz, 1997b). While this meeting predated the implementation of Title IX, agenda topics centered on gender equity, leadership opportunities, and women's intercollegiate athletics (Rasheed, 2009; Schwartz, 1997b). In 1917, the National Association of Deans of Women was established, and it worked to transform the position into a profession (Nidiffer, 2001b; Schwartz, 1997b). As a profession, the dean of women maintained a platform centered on research, promoting graduate studies, and publications within journals and books (Rasheed, 2009; Schwartz, 2003). For example, to assist in establishing credibility and furthering their skill set as a dean, a graduate program was created for dean of women in 1916 at the Teachers College of Columbia University (Schwartz, 1997b).

It should be noted that just as there were deans of women to assist with the needs of women students, there were deans of men to offer support to male students. Thomas Arkle Clark from the University of Illinois was appointed as the first dean of men (Schwartz, 1997a). Similar to deans of women, deans of men sought to standardize their role, and they held a national meeting to discuss issues concerning men. They established the National Association of Dean of

Men in 1921. In these roles, both women and men eventually began to explore the concept of student personnel services, where emphasis was placed on working with students as individuals as opposed to focusing on physical attributes (Schwartz, 1997a, 2003). However, an unanticipated consequence for women was that it served as the beginning of the end of the dean of women role.

With the personnel movement came the orchestration of a single representative for student services (Schwartz, 1997a, 2003). This resulted in the role of dean of men and dean of women merging, and more often, men were promoted to dean of students, and women were demoted to associate or assistant dean of students (Chambers, 2017; Nidiffer, 2001b; Schwartz, 2003). While the intent of the merger was to be more efficient with resources and management, the change reduced opportunities for women who aspired to leadership positions. It was not the sole reason, as the Serviceman's Readjustment Act (GI Bill) contributed to the decline in women serving in this capacity as men were provided opportunities following their return from World War II, resulting in a setback for women to serve in leadership capacities on co-educational college campuses (Schwartz, 1997a).

Under the classification of dean of students, the name of the organization for dean of men changed to the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators in 1951 (Schwartz, 1997a). In the dean of students role, men adapted agendas previously held by the dean of women, as the representation of women in the role of dean of students was nearly nonexistent (Schwartz, 1997a). This does not discount the impact of women within higher education, as their presence worked to enhance curriculums, fields of study, and the experiences of both female students and administrators (Schwartz, 1997b).

**Black women's leadership.** While there have been advancements in the field of higher education for women, it is also worthy to note that Black women have made significant contributions in uplifting women and the Black community by teaching and leading schools (Jones et al., 2012). Of special interest is the role of dean of women for Black women, with a heavy emphasis to the contributions of Lucy Diggs Slowe, who served as the first Black dean of women at Howard University from 1922 - 1937 (Rasheed, 2009). Slowe was a graduate of Howard University, and prior to serving as the first Black dean of women, she worked as the Principal for Shaw Junior High School (Rasheed, 2009).

Howard University President Dr. Durkee intentionally sought out Slowe to serve as the dean of women. Within a follow-up letter dated May 31, 1922, Slowe wrote to President Durkee detailing the meeting and her expectations prior to accepting the offer to serve as dean of women (Rasheed, 2009). A current-day review may interpret this exchange as standard follow-up correspondence. However, in 1922 this letter speaks to the confidence, assertiveness, and intelligence of Slowe. More specifically, her letter clarifies that she would balance the administrative duty of dean of women with the appointment of Professor of English. For Slowe, the two were equally important, and she worked to convey a need for resources to effectively handle both responsibilities. Additionally, she negotiated her salary, requested staff support, and specified living arrangements; she also worked to confirm her authority with regard to policy and institutional decision-making (Rasheed, 2009). The level of forethought to the support and resources she needed speaks to her skill set, but it also shows how the position itself had become more professionalized for women at both a predominantly White institution and a historically Black college and university (Rasheed, 2009).

In carrying out her role, Slowe researched methods and practices carried out by other dean of women and found mentorship in Dr. Romiett Stevens of Columbia University, professor for the first course specializing in dean of women (Rasheed, 2009). Slowe was an active member in the National Association of Dean of Women, and she served as the founder and president of professional organizations such as the National Association of College Women and the Deans of and Advisors to Women in Colored Schools (Rasheed, 2009). She also served as a founding member of the first Black Greek letter organization for women, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated. In these roles, she advocated for women administrators and female students and worked to support their transition both into and out of college.

In building on Slowe's work, the dean of women role for Black women (later dean of students) proved to be impactful for several reasons. It provided Black women with an opportunity to continue to support female students while serving in an administrative role. It also provided them with an opportunity to move up the ladder to more senior-level positions (Jones et al., 2012). It served as an opportunity for Black women to create a more welcoming environment for students of color at a predominantly White institution (Jones et al., 2012). In addition, Black women could serve as role models for other Black women who were earning undergraduate and graduate degrees. Lastly and more importantly, through their presence students considered careers within student affairs (Jones et al., 2012).

**Contemporary women's leadership**. The history of women and Black women "form the backdrop against which women currently participate in higher education [and] shapes the struggles and the agendas of contemporary female administrators" (Nidiffer, 2001a, p. 28). To aid in the assistance of equality was the implementation of federal mandates that offered greater protections to minoritized groups. One such agenda that was used to assist in providing support

26

to women and minorities was the creation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. It was followed by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. § 1681), which serves as an all-encompassing federal law that prohibits discrimination based on the gender of any person participating in any educational program or service that receives federal financial assistance. Together these laws worked to offer support to women and Black women employees and students, as outlined in greater detail.

*Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.* Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was enacted and designed to improve hiring practices for racial and ethnic minorities as well as women (Jones et al., 2012). Since the 1980s, the federal government has acknowledged the barriers that have impeded the professional advancement of women and ethnic and racial minorities. A bipartisan committee, through Title II of the Civil Rights Act of 1991, was charged with the task of investigating and remedying inequities within the workplace setting (Jackson & O'Callaghan, 2009). The committee was referred to as the Federal Glass Ceiling Commission because of research that found "the glass ceiling [served as] an invisible barrier that confronted women and people of color as they approach the top of the corporate hierarchy" (Jones et al., 2012, p. 462). The commission found that three types of barriers exist for women and ethnic and racial minorities: societal barriers, internal structural barriers, and government barriers.

Societal barriers are connected to the available number of positions for women and minorities, while internal structural barriers discuss outreach efforts (i.e., organizational climate, training, and mentoring efforts) of the agency to underrepresented populations (Jackson & O'Callaghan, 2009). In the final type, government barriers highlight the government's role in monitoring and enforcement of standards that work to eliminate gender and racial discrimination

(Jackson & O'Callaghan, 2009). The benefit of this legislation is that it worked to promote a more diversified workforce.

*Title IX*. While Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 offered protections related to employment, it did not cover education. Additionally, sex discrimination was not a provision governed through Title VII of the Civil Rights Act (Chambers, 2017). In response, Title IX was implemented, and it worked to offer protections against sex discrimination. Enacted in 1972, the intent of Title IX was to eliminate discrimination based on sex within educational institutions receiving financial assistance (Chambers, 2017; Jones et al., 2012; Klotz, 2014). Title IX aroused discussion and interest in the position of coeducation and "served as a means of consciousness raising for women never before equaled in academe" (Jones & Komives, 2001, p. 231). Following the passage of Title IX, more women began to enroll in college. For students, this legislation worked to ensure equitable representation within areas such as athletics and STEM fields; provide comparable facilities, textbooks, and curricular material; and address sexual harassment on college campuses (Klotz, 2014). Additionally, it became unlawful for co-educational institutions to make distinctions regarding sex in matters of "admissions, financial aid, educational programs, or athletics" (Chambers, 2017).

**Challenges in the Workplace**

While such laws offered temporary comfort, they did not shield women and Black women from the negative experiences, subtle or direct, that have acted as barriers to their retention and advancement within higher education. Diehl (2014) interviewed 26 women in senior leadership roles within higher education to determine the types of barriers they faced and how they responded to adversity. Diehl concluded that women leaders in higher education encountered 21 types of barriers and identified 15 as professional (discrimination, advancement

issues, lack of leadership support); 5 as personal (relationships, family, health); and one as gender (discrimination, workplace harassment, etc.). This is consistent with other researchers, who have defined issues of discrimination and harassment as sociopolitical issues (Davis, 2009). These issues may include subtle or overt forms of racism and sexism. In addition to these experiences, Davis (2009) presented the concept of attitudinal barriers. This parallels to Diehl's description of professional barriers in that it examines gender differences and the impact of the glass ceiling for women leaders.

Similarly, the Leadership Labyrinth model (Isaac et al., 2012) also works to illustrate multiple factors that impact the identity and ultimately experiences of women as they advance to senior leadership roles. Figure 2 highlights the six categories of women's experience in their journey to advance to senior leadership. The categories within the model are grouped into three major sections: human capital, gender differences, and prejudice. Just as the concept of gender differences and prejudice has been supported within the literature, the section on human capital (Issac et al., 2012) is identical to Diehl's (2014) research specific to personal factors such as relationship, family, and health, which may also serve as a barrier to advancement.

To better illustrate the connection and uniqueness that exists between and among these areas (Davis, 2009; Diehl, 2014; Isaac et al., 2012), information is presented in the next section using the following categorization: gender differences and stereotypes, bias and discriminatory practices, and external and personal factors.

**Gender differences and stereotypes.** No matter the form of prejudice, the apprehensive nature regarding the effectiveness of women leaders may be influenced when women carry out their roles against the perceived characteristics of gender expectations (Rosser, 2003). Butler and Ferriers (2000) worked to explain gender expectations through the introduction of attitudinal
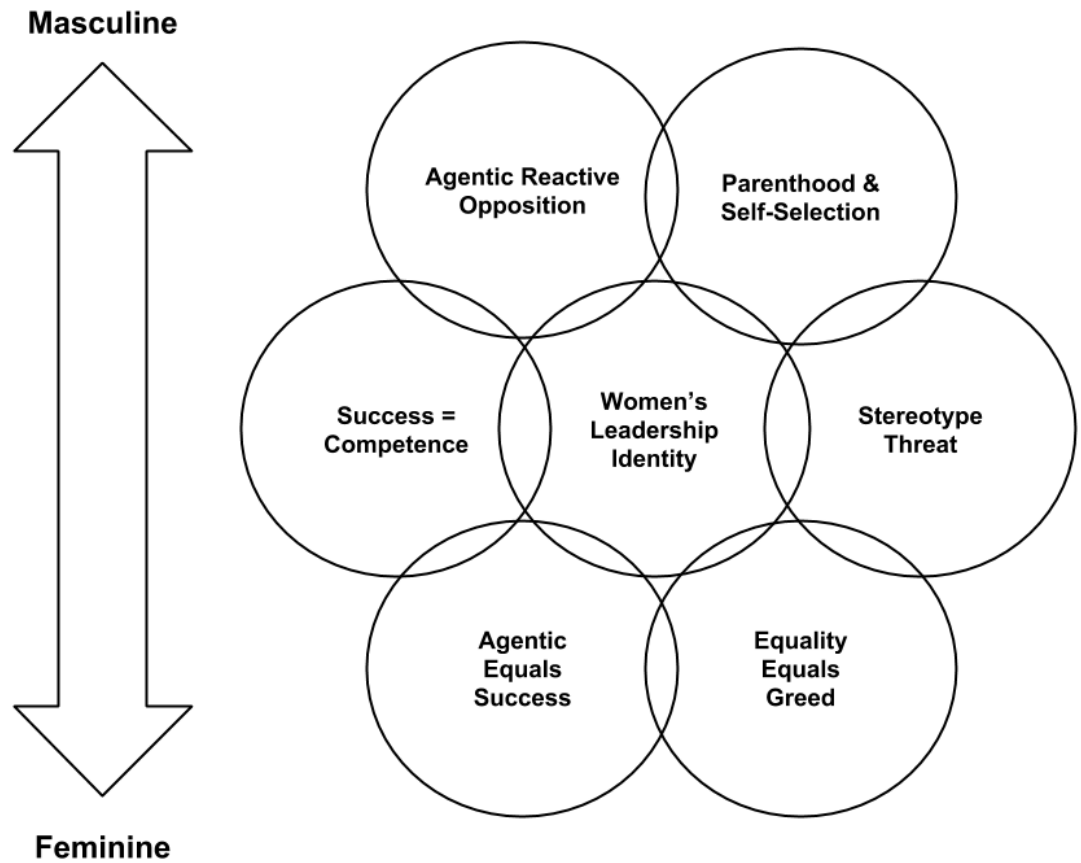
*Note.* This figure illustrates factors that impact the identity and ultimately experiences of women as they advance into senior leadership roles. Adapted from "Deconstructing the glass ceiling," by C. A. Isaac, A. Kaatz, & C. Carnes, 2012, *Sociology Mind*, *2*(1), pp. 80-86.

*Figure 2.* The Leadership Labyrinth Model.

barriers and present this concept using a framework that highlights the obstacles often found within the workplace setting. The first category within this framework, cultural barriers, presents the social norms and traditions that place women in a position of inferiority (Smith, 2006). The second category within the attitudinal barrier suggests that there are assumed differences between male and females (Davis, 2009; Smith, 2006). These barriers, if not addressed, form the basis of stereotypes and prejudice practices that pertain to women leaders. Hays and Kearney (1995) found that male and female leaders are held to different standards. This is similar to the Leadership Labyrinth model in that gender differences hold the notion that there are distinct differences between men and women (Northouse, 2013). Such labels reinforce gender stereotypes, resulting in negative views of women leaders that may contribute to the challenges they face. The next section seeks to introduce the concept of role congruity theory to illustrate how gender roles frame such gender stereotypes.

   ***Role congruity theory: A theoretical perspective on women in leadership***. According to Eagly and Karau (2002), prejudice stems from stereotypes or assumptions of a particular group that are inconsistent with the "attributes that are thought to be required" for certain social roles (p. 574). Thus, role congruity theory examines prejudice and its consequences as they relate to gender and leader roles. Role congruity theory serves as an extension of Eagly's (1987) social role theory, but it goes further to explore not only gender but additional roles, such as leadership. This theory holds the belief that evaluation of a stereotyped group member is lowered when the group member and incongruent social roles come together (Eagly & Karau, 2002). More specifically, female leaders are stereotyped as a result of the assumed incongruity of gender and leader roles.

*Gender roles*. To understand the intersections of gender and leadership, it is important to acknowledge the various concepts related to gender identity and gender roles. According to Bussey (2011), gender identity "is informed by knowledge of one's biological sex and of the beliefs associated with gender, [and] how one is perceived and treated by others depending on one's gender…" (p. 608). Traditionally, gender identity has aligned with one's perceived sex, specifically that a male is a man who exhibits masculinity and a female is a woman who exhibits femininity (Lev, 2004). Thus, gender refers to the social norms constructed to define the characteristics, actions, and roles that are appropriate for men and women (Patton, Renn, Guido, & Quaye, 2016). According to Bilodeau (2009), this is referred to as genderism, which is the notion that gender expressions align with expectations of the binary system. Common are the methods through which an individual chooses to convey their masculinity or feminine self, such as in one's speech, clothing, and grooming, as well as other perceived behaviors.

While this process is supportive of those whose gender expressions align with expectations, it is necessary to consider the experiences of those who choose not to conform. For example, what are the experiences of a female (woman) displaying masculine traits in a work environment or a female (woman) displaying feminine traits in an environment dominated by masculine males? Specific to academia, women faculty have reported being at a disadvantage because of the approaches and perspectives that are often considered from a masculine lens, which result in leadership and evaluation that does not consider their voice (Terosky et al., 2014).

Scholars have highlighted that gender stereotypes can result in individuals facing harassment and discrimination or being subjected to other bias practices (Patton et al., 2016). As more women begin to occupy leadership positions, gender stereotypes may become heightened

as many begin to question not only whether women can lead but also how leadership styles of women differ from men (Cook & Glass, 2014; Hogue & Lord, 2007; Northouse, 2013; Smith, 2015). Thus, the disproportionate makeup of women leaders may be connected to the stereotypes and "undervaluation of women's effectiveness as leaders" (Paustian-Underdahl, Walker, & Woehr, 2014).

It should be noted that there are various schools of thought that surround gender and leadership. Historically, leadership has been associated with traits that are categorized as masculine, such as speech or actions that are more direct and assertive in nature (Eagly, 2007). While these traits are used to describe males, feminine traits of leadership are highlighted by qualities that involve more collaboration, coaching, and mentoring (Eagly, 2007). Earlier research has addressed approaches to leadership, and they have suggested that while no significant difference exists between men and women, women use more team-oriented approaches, such as collaboration and partnership, whereas men portray characteristics that are less inclusive (Northouse, 2013). Men are described as independent, assertive, and decisive, while women are labeled as friendly and concerned with others (Heilman & Eagly, 2008; Heilman & Parks-Stamm, 2007). Critics who define leadership effectiveness by these traits argue that women are inferior leaders in comparison to men as "women lack skills and traits necessary for managerial tasks" (Northouse, 2013, p. 349). Such perceptions form the basis of gender stereotypes.

*Gender stereotypes*. Gender stereotypes play a large role in workplace perceptions of women leaders and can have an impact on one's ability to advance.

Stereotypical conceptions of what women are like are detrimental in their career-relevant consequences only when they negatively effect expectations… [which] are determined

33

not only by characterizations of a woman's attributes but also by how well they "fit" with

the attributes thought to be required to perform the job well. (Heilman &Parks-Stamm,

2007, p. 50)

This is similar to the lack of fit model in that an individual is judged, intentionally or

unintentionally, based on assumptions of who they are (Hoyt & Murphy, 2016). Thus, gender

differences play a role in the evaluation of leadership styles between men and women. It has

been referenced that masculine traits lead to more effective leadership (Eagly, 2007; Heilman &

Eagly, 2008; Heilman & Parks-Stamm, 2007; Jones et al., 2012). As a result, women are faced

with the challenge of balancing conflicting expectations of embracing their feminine traits

without appearing too soft while also portraying traits of leadership presumed to be masculine,

without being viewed as unfeminine.

The various perspectives and assumptions surrounding masculine and feminine qualities

point to the larger concern of the experiences of women in leadership roles. These experiences

may impact women leaders as they encounter the "double bind." Hoyt and Murphy (2016)

categorized this as women in leadership experiencing certain treatment contingent upon their

gender. Women often face the challenge of balancing the conflicts between their roles as leaders

and their gender (Eagly, 2007). As a result, women feel the cross-pressures of being negatively

judged for the portrayal of feminine behaviors associated with their gender while also receiving

negative criticism because they exhibit leadership behaviors that are perceived as masculine

traits (Eagly, 2007). For example, women who are assertive and direct may be viewed as

unfeminine whereas women who lack assertiveness may be viewed as too soft. In considering

the cross pressures, it is often challenging to determine when one form of oppression ends and

another begins. Cole (1993), former President of Spelman College, spoke of a time when she was

invited to a corporate dinner. In preparing for this occasion, Cole asked herself whether it was appropriate to wear a dress as opposed to a suit to match the "boys?" As women conform to gender roles, they may place into question their role as a leader. On the contrary, women who conform to leader roles may place into question their gender. For this reason, gender stereotypes are important to address because failing to do so can result in the questioning of oneself and how one will be perceived, which can result in feelings of being overwhelmed for some women leaders (Hoyt & Murphy, 2016).

This is further explained within the lack of fit model regarding bias in workplace settings, and it correlates to the forms of prejudice found within RCT. This model suggests that an individual suffers from perceived lack of fit when the position is inconsistent to the attributes of the individual (Hielman, 1983; Hoyt & Murphy, 2016). Within this model, Heilman (1983) argued that gender stereotypes contribute to perceptions of appropriate and inappropriate attributes. Thus, societal expectations associated with women may conflict with the desired expectations associated with senior leadership (Famiglietti, 2015). As a result, women may face barriers within the workplace that influence their advancement within college and university settings.

**Bias and discriminatory practices.** For many Black women, racism and sexism serve as dual barriers to advancement. As noted by Davis (2009), the lack of sensitivity regarding race and sex make Black women more vulnerable to discrimination within the workplace. For example, a qualitative, single case study conducted by Lloyd-Jones (2009) expounded on the experience of Black women in higher education administration at predominantly White institutions. Through in-depth interviews, Lloyd-Jones (2009) found that "despite achieving advanced levels of education and holding high-ranking positions within academia many African

American women in administrative positions encounter social inequity emerging from intersectionality" (p. 606). These social inequities can be described as experiences of racism, sexism, isolation, loneliness, and lack of trust that can hinder Black women from career advancement. The author went further to propose that racial and ethnic bias lead to unwelcoming and unsupportive work environments (Lloyd-Jones, 2009). As noted in Jackson's ERA model (2004), institutional environments that understand, appreciate, and have a commitment to diversity work to uphold the grounding principle necessary to recruit and retain Black administrators. Thus, experiences of discrimination can greatly impact the retention of this group.

Specific to sex discrimination, Burgess and Bargida (1999) shared that descriptive and prescriptive components of gender stereotypes may result in discrimination, specifically disparate impact or disparate treatment. Descriptive components are "beliefs about the attributes, roles, and behaviors that characterize men and women" whereas prescriptive components are "beliefs about attributes, roles, and behaviors to which men and women are expected to conform" (Burgess & Bargida, 1999, p. 666). To elaborate further, descriptive components suggest who men or women are while prescriptive components suggest who men or women should become. Disparate impact results from descriptive components and may have an adverse impact on a specific group due to bias practices (Burgess & Bargida, 1999; Eagly & Karau, 2002). Disparate treatment, on the contrary, occurs when an individual violates gender expectations (or fails to conform), resulting in a hostile working environment.

**Personal factors.** Just as gender differences and discriminatory practices may impact the experiences of women leaders, there are also external and/or personal factors that contribute to their experience. These are referred to as situational categories such as family obligations and

work-life balance (Smith, 2006), which is similar to the Leadership Labyrinth model (Isaac et al., 2012). As an example, women may not advance because they opt to put parenthood ahead of their careers. For many women, family and child care expectations may result in shifting work-related tasks to accommodate for these additional responsibilities, and some women make the determination not to have children or marry in order to dedicate themselves to their career (Northouse, 2013). However, in doing so women may limit themselves in terms of visibility and miss opportunities to receive consideration for advancement. Alternatively, women may be identified as "superwoman," juggling the needs of work and family (Northouse, 2013). Although commendable, this may quickly lead to burnout. However, to present a fair description, some men have let go of opportunities to be closer to family as well. Given the history of women and their entry into the workforce, it is not unusual to learn of a woman pausing and/or delaying her own advancement opportunities for the sake of family. History has revealed that such schools of thought are influenced by gender stereotypes that support the assumption that women should prioritize their role as caregivers (Chambers, 2017).

**Institutional factors: The glass ceiling and the glass cliff.** In addition to the barriers mentioned in the previous section, women may also face institutional barriers that impact their advancement. More specifically, institutional "barriers may hinder individual women's advancement and success in leadership, taken together, gender-based leadership barriers contribute to the glass ceiling" (Diehl, 2014, p. 54). The glass ceiling effect can be described as the invisible barrier that allows women to see the elite leadership positions that exist but prevents them from reaching these positions, regardless of their accomplishments (Davies-Netzley, 1998; Davis, 2009; Diehl, 2014; Famiglietti, 2015; Northouse, 2013).

The glass ceiling is not isolated to solely women in higher education but extends itself to corporate America as well. The same startling statistics that reflect the makeup of higher education administration are also found within corporate offices. Within Fortune 500 companies alone, women represent less than half of executive and senior-level officials and only 6% of CEOs (Warner & Corley, 2017). Women who occupy these senior-level positions may find that they are isolated from informal networks that would assist in career advancement. This isolation can be characterized as "outsiders on the inside" (Davies-Netzley, 1998). This suggests that women have worked to secure senior leadership positions by advancing to roles that are seldom held by women yet they are limited in terms of experience because they are not extended the same opportunities as their male counterparts. Given the very subtle forms of gender-bias, it may be challenging to substantiate such actions as discriminatory.

Stated more directly, women do not have access to networks that would expose them to opportunities that were before unknown as well as individuals who may advocate on their behalf. Within attitudinal barriers, this is defined as a qualificatory category, there is a limitation in meeting the necessary credentials, which ultimately impacts women's access to opportunities (Smith, 2006). In a study conducted by Arini, McPherson, Midson, and Wilson (2011), a group of 26 participants took part in an interview. The researchers sought to answer two questions: (a) "What helps or hinders women to advance in university leadership roles, as reported by women?" and (b) "What changes are needed in order to enable women to advance in university leadership roles?" (Arini, McPherson, Midson, & Wilson, 2011, p. 48). They concluded that in addition to other categories, the university environment (e.g., the official and informal policies and procedures) and invisible rules (e.g., playing the game) served as significant factors for

career advancement for women (Arini et al., 2011). It should be noted that the article provides insight to the challenges of women, but it does not focus on Black women in particular.

While the glass ceiling may serve as a barrier to women seeking elite leadership positions, there are critics who argue the glass ceiling does not exist. Baumgartner and Schneider (2010) suggested that there is no glass ceiling present but rather an illustration of queen bee syndrome: women who have made it to the top and believe that if they achieved high-ranking positions without assistance, then other women can also. However, just as there are critics there are many who argue the glass ceiling is an all-too-real occurrence for many women. Research conducted by Isaac, Kaatz, and Carnes (2012) supported the notion that gender stereotypes and specific traits contribute to the glass ceiling effect, and the select few who break through the glass ceiling may ultimately experience what has been labeled "the glass cliff."

Glass cliff is a metaphor used to characterize the unique timing in which a woman is selected into a leadership role. To expound further, during times of organizational turbulence or crisis, women are appointed to serve in "precarious leadership roles" (Peterson, 2016; Ryan et al., 2016). This is referred to as the feminization of roles, dubbing the role as "women's work" because as these roles shift, they become less prestigious and more time consuming, and there is greater exposure to risk, reduced job protection, and limited advancement opportunities (England & Boyer, 2009; Peterson, 2016). Thus, women work to obtain leadership positions and risk a potential fall off the cliff at the height of their leadership (Peterson, 2016; Ryan, Haslam, & Kulich, 2010). While there are some who suggest this is an intentional set up for failure, there are others who suggest women are selected for these roles because of their ability to problem solve and be innovative (Peterson, 2016; Ryan et al., 2010). Thus, in many ways the appointment of women leaders can be tied back to gender stereotypes in which women are thought to be

collaborative and intuitive (Eagly, 2007; Loughlin, Arnold, & Crawford, 2012). However, despite the fact that women and Black women may be viewed as resilient because of the strategies they use to continue to climb the professional ladder, it does not take away from the lived experiences of this group and the barriers that hinder advancement. However, it does present a need to consider how women, in particular Black women, navigate these challenges.

**Navigating Challenges**

While barriers can be challenging, responding to them can be even more difficult as the impact could further support or hinder one's professional advancement. As part of a research study that examined the barriers faced by 26 women in senior leadership roles within higher education, Diehl (2014) shared five general themes that serve as strategies to navigate challenges. Within the first theme, women reported that through adversity came growth and an opportunity to redefine themselves (Diehl, 2014). Thus, adversity may be viewed as liberating and a path of discovery for deeper meaning. For example, some women leaders may embrace adversity because it is viewed as a strengthening tool, allowing the journey or experience to become just as significant as the final outcome. The second theme emphasized that perspective matters (Diehl, 2014). In many ways, this can be likened to the concept, Is the glass half empty or full? Women believed that they could overcome their circumstances, thus viewing the experience as temporary or a means to an end. The third theme highlighted the importance of privacy during adversity. Participants expressed a need to share sensitive information with only a few trusted people and to find time to reflect alone (Diehl, 2014). The fourth theme suggested that in order for women leaders to move past adversity, they must be able to make meaning of it, whether positive or negative (Diehl, 2014). The final theme suggested that it is important for women leaders to remember that they are "survivors" and are one of only a few women (Diehl,

2014). Thus, all work contributes to a larger purpose and will work to assist others moving forward.

Klinger's incentive-disengagement model also provides a framework that highlights responses to perceived barriers, which is classified as stereotypes within the workplace setting. This model supports the concept of stereotype threat theory, which holds the "perspective that one will be judged on the basis of social identity group membership rather than actual performance or potential" (Block, Koch, Liberman, Merriweather, & Roberson, 2011, p. 571). The incentive-disengagement model outlines potential responses to stereotypes that may serve as a barrier within the job setting. Specifically, one may choose to conform to the stereotype or counteract the stereotype (Bergeron, Block, & Echtenkamp, 2006).

Within the framework, it is suggested that potential responses to stereotype threat will fall into one of the following categories: (a) fending off the stereotype, (b) discouraged by the stereotype, and (c) resilient to the stereotype. Fending off the stereotype is categorized as a reaction that involves distancing oneself from the perceived negative stereotype (Block et al., 2011). In the first category, this act is described as "dis-identification" wherein one will deemphasize the negative component under scrutiny while simultaneously maintaining characteristics of identity that are not connected to the stereotype being judged (Hippel, Walsh, & Zouroudis, 2011). While women distance themselves, it is important to consider the impact that this may have internally. For example, Davis (2009) reported that Black women may hold the perspective that they are judged based on job obtainment through affirmative action rather than actual performance or potential, and as a result, they may work harder to prove they are worthy of the position. The efforts used to prove this stereotype wrong may lead Black women to experience burnout or experience mental and/or physical health concerns (Davis, 2009).

41

The second response, discouraged by the stereotype, leads to disengagement and feelings of withdrawal as one concludes that the stereotype cannot be changed. Disengagement can lead to "defensive detachment of self-esteem from a particular domain… and that the long-term effects include reduced motivation and performance" (Hippel et al., 2011, p. 317). The final response, resilient to stereotype threat, acknowledges the assumption being made but does not disconnect with the group being identified or become disengaged. Rather, efforts are made to challenge assumptions in order to build a more inclusive community (Block et al., 2011).

Hoyt and Murphy (2016) worked to explain a similar concept regarding stereotype threat; however, their focus was isolated to women leaders. Through their work, the authors presented a framework to expound on the experiences of women leaders when faced with stereotype-based expectations, which is highlighted in Figure 3. Within this model, Hoyt and Murphy present three stages. The first stage highlights that a situation first occurs, subtle or blatant in nature, to trigger the perceived threat (Hoyt & Murphy, 2016). The stereotype cues can be associated with the literature that discusses role congruity theory, specifically that female leaders are stereotyped as a result of the assumed incongruity of gender and leader roles (Eagly & Karau, 2002). The consequences of women leaders responding to stereotype threat can lead to vulnerability responses, reactance, or resilience, which are described in stage three of the framework (Hoyt & Murphy, 2016). These reactions are identical to earlier research regarding responses to stereotype threat. For example, decreases in performance to disengagement and dis-identification (Block et al., 2011) can be associated with vulnerability responses (Hoyt & Murphy, 2016). Likewise, engaging in counter-stereotypical behavior by adopting a style that is not stereotyped (Block et al., 2011) would be similar to reactance response (Hoyt & Murphy, 2016). Challenging the perceived stereotype (Block et al., 2011) would support resiliency (Hoyt & Murphy, 2016).

While the authors argue that stereotype threat can exist for women leaders, there are methods for buffering and/or reducing the potential occurrence. These are presented in stage 2 of the framework (see Figure 3). A buffer serves as a barrier to protect or shield against the effects of stereotype threat. Individual-level factors take into consideration how women leaders view their own leadership performance, with those who have a high self-rating demonstrating the ability to buffer threat effects because they possess a high level of self-efficacy and think of themselves as successful leaders (Hoyt & Murphy, 2016). The second method for buffering threats focuses on the impact of role models. Specifically, role models help to counteract the stereotype by reinforcing that the "stereotyped domain is attainable" as well as generate a sense of belonging (Hoyt & Murphy, 2016).

Thus, various organizational and/or individual factors influence responses, which can alter the course of action one choses to take. However, it is important to keep in mind that individual factors may include the current career level of the individual as well as where an individual may be in their own identity development with regard to race and gender.

**Identity development: Critical Race Theory and Black feminist thought.** Critical race theory (CRT) and Black feminist thought (BFT) support identity development as it pertains to gender and race for Black women and illustrates methods for responding to stereotype threat. Critical race theory seeks to deconstruct racialized content within policies and policymaking practices by examining items with the appropriate cultural context in mind (Howard-Hamilton, 2003). Thus, CRT focuses on debunking myths of color blindness and meritocracy instead of placing emphasis on only overt forms of racism, neglecting racism that is present but subtle, also referred to as microaggressions (Howard-Hamilton, 2003). This is achieved by collecting and using experiences to challenge beliefs associated with the dominant group through the act of

43
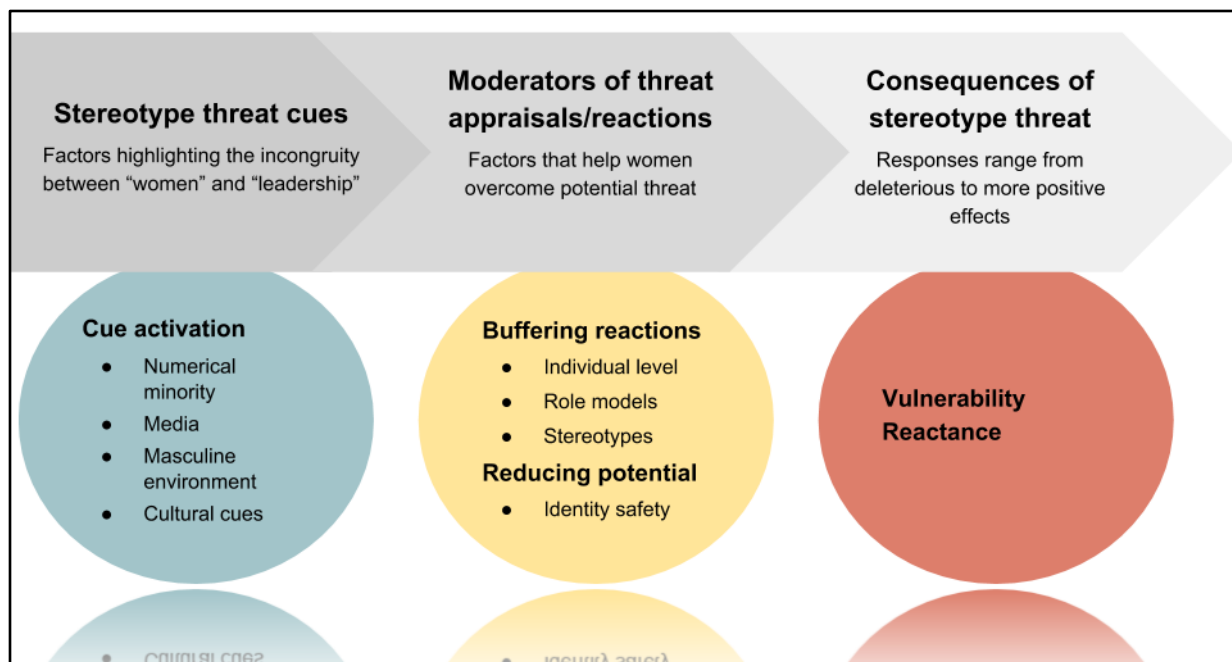
*Note.* This figure illustrates women's responses to stereotype threat. Adapted from "Managing to clear the air: Stereotype threat, women, and leadership," by C. L. Hoyt & S. E. Murphy, 2016, *The Leadership Quarterly*, *27*, pp. 387-399.

*Figure 3.* A stereotype threat in leadership context.

counter-storytelling. Counter-storytelling occurs in spaces that offer shelter or may serve as a shield to bias, stereotypes, and discrimination and instead offers support and resources (Howard-Hamilton, 2003).

Black feminist thought serves as another framework that speaks to the identity of Black women. It takes into consideration the intersecting identities of women, such as race and sex, and explores the impact these identities have on other areas such as politics, education, and economics (Pasque, 2011). While the feminist movement did work to support the advancement of women and give voice to their perspective, there are some who suggest it did not fully consider the experiences of all women. Thus, Black feminism focused on the oppression of Black women in all forms, as it is challenging to isolate "race from class from sex oppression" as they are often intertwined (Pasque, 2011). However, it should be noted that feminist perspectives for Black women were not developed solely in response to the women's movement. Although a contributing factor, it also grew from sociopolitical and historical dynamics (Pasque, 2011). While both groups have faced discriminatory and unfair practices due to their gender, the experiences of Black women have also been compounded due to race. The intersections that make up the identity of Black women give an additional layer to their experiences.

In this regard, Black feminist thought works to shift the "outsider within status" (Collins, 2002). For example, Black women have shifted the narrative, telling their stories through lived experiences (Howard-Hamilton, 2003). Collins (2002) outlined three themes that form the guiding principles of Black feminist thought. The first theme places ownership of storytelling back into the hands of Black women (Collins, 2002). Thus, this framework is molded after the lived and shared experiences as told by Black women. Second, in supporting Black women's identity there is a need to recognize that each has a unique story, but there are areas between and

among Black women where those experiences intersect (Collins, 2002). Lastly, while there are shared experiences there exist various identities in addition to race and gender that bring about a new layer or lens to better understand the experiences of Black women (Collins, 2002).

These frameworks help to understand how Black women view and/or reflect on experiences of bias and prejudice due to one's race or gender. This is parallel to the discussion on stereotype threat, specifically the final phase that works to challenge the perceived stereotype (Block et al., 2011) and resiliency (Hoyt & Murphy, 2016). Together, these concepts can assist in responding to stereotype threat, which may also work to support retention and career advancement.

**Spirituality.** Research also highlights that spirituality can assist Black women in dealing with adversities and stress such as racism, sexism, and classism within the workplace (Mattis, 2002). A study conducted by Bacchus and Holley (2005) examined the experiences of 10 professional Black women to determine how they defined spirituality and how they used it to cope with stress related to work. Within their research, the authors distinguished between religion and spirituality. Whereas religion is centered one's faith and the active expressions used to acknowledge beliefs to an ultimate being, spirituality is more focused on obtaining personal meaning and relationships, which may or may not include religious components (Bacchus & Holley, 2005; Watt, 2003).

Bacchus and Holley found that professional Black women could manage stress related to work by using spirituality to "turn things over" to a higher power, understand their purpose, and "confront and accept reality" (Mattis, 2002). The study concluded that there exist five methods for which spirituality functions as a coping mechanism. Under the first method, spirituality serves as a barrier against the "effects of environmental stressors" to heal emotional wounds

(Bacchus & Holley, 2005). The second method examines the impact of spirituality, specifically "prayer, meditation, or inspirational texts" enhance personal strength and allow Black women to tackle job demands (Bacchus & Holley, 2005). This is similar to Mattis's (2002) reference to tapping into an inner strength. The next two areas highlight that spirituality provides general guidance and guidance in decision-making. For example, one participant in the study shared,

> [M]y spiritual beliefs hold me back from reacting or acting in irrational ways especially when I am hurt or angry or upset. My spirituality or the way I conduct myself based on my religious beliefs prevent me from doing the wrong thing…. (Bacchus & Holley, 2005, p. 78)

Thus, spirituality serves as an inner compass, guiding and keeping professional Black women on the right path. This may work to support the final method, appraising stressors. Spirituality allows for the assessment of the work-related stress to determine what are its root causes and potential impact. These items are consistent with the work of Watt (2003), as the author identifies psychological resistance and identity development as benefits of the practice of spirituality. Specifically, psychological resistance helps to mentally resist and challenge negative images pertaining to Black women. For example, Black women may build a network of support by intentionally securing and developing relationships with people who counter negative messages (Watt, 2003). This is stated because spirituality can also support the development of Black women's identities. Stewart (2002) highlighted that spirituality allows Black women to define themselves internally as opposed to definitions outlined by society.

Meyers Optimal Theory Applied to Identity Development serves as a model to further expound on the connection between spirituality and identity development. It emphasizes that initially there is an absence of general awareness but highlights that identity is first developed

with great influence and reinforcement by society (Watt, 2003). In the next phase, dissonance, an individual goes through an experience and realizes that there are dominant and non-dominant groups (Watt, 2003). As immersion results, an individual learns to accept and appreciate the parts of his/her identity that may not be fully accepted by others (Watt, 2003). While this serves as a positive outlet for self, the individual may also hold negative assumptions about the dominant group. The next phase allows one to have greater security in their identity, understanding and appreciating the multiple layers that forms one's overall identity (Watt, 2003). Additionally, there is greater transparency to the many identities that are associated with a community, as well as forms of oppression that may exist (Watt, 2003). The last phase leads to complete acceptance, acknowledging positive and negative incidents and seeing it all as an opportunity to grow (Watt, 2003).

**Mentorship and sponsorship.** In addition to spiritual guidance and personal identity development, women may seek the support of mentors and sponsors. Mentorship is crucial to the success of aspiring Black women leaders (Peters, 2011). More specifically, as women secure leadership positions historically held by men, they must work to develop networks that offer support and assist in overcoming barriers (Tran, 2014) as well as avoid experiences of the glass cliff. Thus, it becomes necessary to acknowledge the strength in mentorship and sponsorship. This is suggested because the positive experiences and success in career journeys is in large part the result of mentoring relationships (Brown, 2005; Davis, 2009; Northouse, 2013; Tran, 2014). For Black women, securing a mentor is more likely to support retention and advancement within an institution (Bova, 2001; Jackson, 2004). However, it should be noted that lack of a mentor does not suggest that one will be unsuccessful as there are many Black women who have advanced without guidance from a mentor (Crawford & Smith, 2005).

According to Kumar and Black Beard (2012), a mentor is an individual who serves in the role of a trusted counselor. Thus, mentorship is a "reciprocal" relationship, usually between an entry-level administrator and a more senior-level administrator that aids to promote career advancement and organizational competence (Jones et al., 2012). Brown (2005) and Bova (2001) went further to suggest that mentorship is a mutually beneficial exchange of behaviors between the mentor and mentee. Mentorship has also been defined as "developmental interactions" by two or more individuals with the intent of professional or personal development (Madsen, 2008).

While mentorship may consist of several definitions, the impact is the same; specific to Black women, mentorship can provide institutional support and lead to increased retention efforts. In a study that examined the mentoring relationships of women college presidents, it was found that more than half of the 91 respondents had mentors and that these relationships assisted in their ability to move through the ranks of higher education administration (Brown, 2005). In a separate study conducted by Tran (2014), participants described "(a) the role [that] mentoring, both formal and informal, [has] played in your professional development and growth? (b) What role, if any, does mentorship play in the work that you do?" (p. 305). From this study, four themes emerged.

The first theme highlighted that mentoring is not always visible (Tran, 2014). Mentorship may be present; however, due to lack of role models, it may limit one's ability to recognize the experience as mentorship. The second theme emphasized that while mentoring may not always be visible, it is constant (Tran, 2014). The exchange of knowledge is constant and serves as a mutual benefit for all parties as multiple perspectives are obtained and presented. The third theme suggested that mentoring is self-initiated (Tran, 2014). Under this theme, there is a need to be mindful that others may be watching. Thus, you may be sought after to be someone's mentor

or to be a mentee. The final theme presented a critical approach to mentorship by viewing it as multi-dimensional (Tran, 2014). This theme highlighted that mentorship is multi-level and multi-dimensional. It is multi-level because one can mentor up, across, or down. In mentoring up, a mentor assists the supervisor in becoming more aware and sensitive of topics (Tran, 2014). However, in mentoring up one must be strategic as the goal is to educate and not offend. On the contrary, in mentoring across one works to help their peers by presenting opportunities and engaging in discussion to strengthen the skill set of the mentee (Tran, 2014). In mentoring down, the mentor offers support to others who may have questions and just need assistance in figuring out how to navigate various environments (Tran, 2014).

Just as mentorship can be multi-dimensional, there are also various models that exist for mentorship. These include traditional, professional, and institutional. Traditional mentorship uses more common structures such as mentor and protégé, wherein the mentor uses their position to help the mentee develop in their career (Davis, 2009). Professional mentorship is associated with a staff development program and is usually a directive stemming from top leadership (Davis, 2009). For professional mentorship to be successful, there must be mutual agreement. In essence, there must be some incentive for the mentorship program. Institutional mentorship goes beyond professional mentorship and is associated with a policy-driven system (Davis, 2009).

While mentorship can be impactful, it is important that Black women not limit themselves to mentorship networks (Brown, 2005; Jones et al., 2012; Wilson & Johnson, 2001). "Multidimensionality characterizes mentoring as a more fluid process, one that requires movement across the different social planes" (Tran, 2014, p. 310). Thus, there is benefit to having mentors who are of the opposite race and gender (i.e., cross-gender mentoring) as the sharing of information may offer insight into a network that Black women are not frequently part

of or associated with. Bova (2001) proposed cross-cultural mentoring to assist in developing

stronger support systems and to expand networks for Black women. This is suggested because

even with excellent credentials, women may find it challenging to advance without endorsements

from other people in positions of leadership (Brown, 2005). Stated more directly, men are better

able to enter and navigate senior leadership opportunities within higher education because the

college presidency is dominated by men who have access to these networks (Brown, 2005).

Thus, with or without intent women are excluded. For this reason, mentorship and sponsorship

becomes even more important for women in general and Black women in particular. While

mentorship and sponsorship are similar, they are not identical. Whereas mentors offer guidance,

a sponsor takes the role of mentor a step further and uses their power and influence to support

women and minorities (Mattis, 2001) and works to provide additional access to opportunities,

such as professional networks and resources (Allen et al., 1995).

This is important because networks better prepare aspiring leaders. For example, Niehaus

and O'Meara (2015) sought to examine the impact of professional networks and its relationship

to the career advancement of faculty. Specifically, the authors reported that while individual

success stems from commitment, perseverance, leadership abilities, and skill sets of the

individual, there is a significant benefit to professional networks advancing one's career

(Niehaus & O'Meara, 2015). Such networks extend an individual's social capital and may work

to assist in presenting opportunities that may have been unknown. Through their study, it was

learned that faculty with off-campus networks reported having significantly more social capital,

expanding their visibility and ultimately status. However, it is reported that women faculty are at

a disadvantage as they are less likely to break into such networks, resulting in greater

experiences of isolation (Terosky et al., 2014). This has significant implications, as without

51

access to such networks there is a lack of inside knowledge, resulting in missed opportunities as well as recognition and needed support, all of which support retention and advancement (Terosky et al., 2014).

**Trajectory to the Presidency**

The Chief Academic Officer (CAO) role is an area in which access and opportunity has been limited, intentionally or unintentionally, for women leaders. The CAO serves as a key position to assist with maintaining the academic vision of the institution and leading and supervising faculty (Martin & Samels, 2015). While the role of the CAO may vary from institution to institution, there are key traits and responsibilities that make an individual successful in this role. The CAO provides leadership to all operations that fall under the area of academics; in this regard, the CAO is sometimes referred to as Provost, who also serves as the second in command after the president of the institution (Walton & McDade, 2001).

Thus, the ideal candidate for CAO should have a terminal degree and experience teaching, conducting research, publishing, and developing curriculums (Walton & McDade, 2001). While these are the more tangible skills, there is also a need for a CAO to possess the ability to work well with others, provide effective leadership, problem solve, and more importantly, have the administrative knowledge and understanding of how to operate a business (Walton & McDade, 2001). In this regard, skill sets such as fundraising, budgeting, managing politics, and having patience become of importance. Thus, it is not unusual to find that the CAO position traditionally leads to a college presidency. However, recent CAO census data revealed that 45% of them have no desire to obtain a presidency, and 25% were undecided (Cook, Nellum, & Billings, 2015). One of the most frequently cited reasons for CAO to not aspire the presidency is their discomfort with fundraising (Ekman, 2015). This information has been shared

because it is possible that the lack of representation of Black women leaders within the CAO position is not associated with factors that hinder or support advancement but rather, it is due to a lack of desire to serve in the position altogether.

While this could be one factor impacting advancement, it is also important to consider that there is limited scholarly research concerning CAOs, and even fewer studies exist on women who serve as CAO (Walton & McDade, 2001). Studies have been conducted to understand the responsibilities of this position and the background of individuals overseeing this position (Moore, 1987; Walton & McDade, 2001). For example, a study conducted by Walton and McDade (2001) examined women in the CAO position. Within this study, participants completed a 53-item survey, and the results illustrated that the typical profile of a female CAO aspiring the presidency was a White woman who held a terminal degree, had spent roughly 22 years working in higher education, was married and may or may not have had children, and was in her early to mid-50s (Walton & McDade, 2001). While this study provided information regarding the makeup of women CAO, it does not focus on the unique experiences of Black women specifically.

### Summary

The experiences of women and Black women leaders can contribute to their desire to remain within higher education and presents a need to consider methods to enhance their overall experience. While some choose to stay at an institution, others may voluntarily remove themselves from the environment based on the experiences they encountered, bias/discrimination, gender differences, and personal and/or institutional factors. Given the already disproportionate makeup of their leadership, there is a need to consider personal and institutional efforts to retain women and Black women in the academic environment.

In recent years, studies have been conducted to better explain the causes of turnover related to women administrators within higher education (Jo, 2008; Rosser, 2004). Studies have found three main causes that lead to voluntary turnover for women administrators: frustration of their role, failure of the organization to recognize their work, and lack of advancement opportunities. Women administrators often grow frustrated in their roles because they do not have complete authority, limiting their ability to carry out their role fully, and lack recognition, which may lead to women administrators feeling undervalued (Jo, 2008). The final area of frustration, which centers on opportunities for advancement, is believed to be the main reason for turnover amongst women administrators (Jo, 2008). These items are parallel to Jackson's (2004) ERA model in that an institution's method of engagement works to create meaning and purpose, ultimately contributing to the retention of the professional.

While studies have been conducted to explain turnover, a review of the literature has also illustrated that significant strides have been made as women have gained greater visibility within the field of higher education. However, there remains a low percentage of Black women senior administrators. Jackson's (2004) ERA model does a great job in highlighting the various components needed to recruit and retain Black administrators within higher education. While this information considers items that should be present, these categories need to be examined further. For example, how are these components implemented from a personal and professional lens, if at all? Does the method used support or hinder Black women in reaching the last category within this model, career advancement? In considering the limited visibility of Black women leaders within the presidency and other senior administrator positions, there is a need to consider the path that Black women take in securing such roles. For this reason, an examination of Black women in the CAO position become of importance to understand (Walton & McDade, 2001).

## CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

A qualitative approach best served the purpose of this study because it provides an opportunity to collect in-depth data to understand Black women's experiences regarding career advancement, as opposed to forming hypotheses or explanations about them (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The overarching research question guiding this study is What institutional and personal factors support or hinder the advancement of Black women Chief Academic Officers?

### Research Method

The method used to carry out this study was a Narrative inquiry research design. A narrative inquiry approach was selected for this study because it respects the stories of participants as data that can stand on its own, as a "pure description of [their own] experience" (Patton, 2002, p. 116). Specific to higher education, as shared by Safarik (2003), "higher education organizations are essentially people and because these individuals bring their own personal and professional backgrounds to their interpretations of organizational life, narrative approaches [to research] may be particularly useful" (p. 419). Narrative inquiry originated within the humanities. It places emphasis on the lived experiences of individuals through storytelling (Creswell, 2013, 2014). Storytelling serves as a framework to further examine the way in which individuals experience events (Patton, 2002; Squire et al., 2014). Narrative inquiry focuses on human experience, constructing and reconstructing meaning through personal stories (Webster & Mertova, 2007). While storytelling and narratives are similar in nature, there are distinctions. Narratives go beyond the simple ordering of events and work to examine and analyze the experiences of shared stories to assist in establishing meaning (Squire et al., 2014; Webster & Mertova, 2007). Creswell (2014) shared that a benefit to narrative research is that it highlights the identity of the individual and works to show how the individual views himself or herself. It

provides knowledge by describing human experiences in which actions and happenings contribute positively or negatively to one's purpose and goal obtainment (Saldaña, 2009).

Just as there are benefits, there are challenges associated with qualitative research and, more specifically, narrative inquiry research. To discuss the experiences of participants, the researcher must collect enough data on them to better expound on their individual lives. This may be challenging because it requires more probing and exploration of participants' personal or professional history (Creswell, 2014). Additionally, the researcher must be cognizant of their own background, because unintentionally a research may bring into the study their own experience and as a result this may frame, intentionally or unintentionally, how the participant's story is retold (Creswell, 2014).

I come to this study with a transformative worldview. Such worldviews seek to address issues of inequality and oppression and work to provide a voice for participants, promote change, and improve the experiences of the larger impacted group (Creswell, 2013, 2014; Mertens, 2010). I do this through my own work as I am employed as a senior administrator within higher education in the division of Student Affairs Since my introduction to higher education as a profession, I have been interested in the experiences of Black women leaders and how these experiences may contribute to advancement opportunities. I have a total of 10 years of progressive professional experience; therefore, I bring practical knowledge and understanding of institutions of higher educations to this study. However, these experiences also bring with them a point of view. Towards this end, using NVivo enabled me to annotate and produce memos throughout the entire interview so as to be able to check my own biases against the experiences described by the women participants (Wainright & Russell, 2010). This in addition to member checks enhanced the trustworthiness of data analysis.

## Sampling Frame

For purposes of this study, I identified Black women leaders who serve in the capacity of provost or chief academic officer (CAO) at four-year, public, doctoral degree-granting institutions that are not classified as historically Black colleges and universities (HBCU) as the sample population. The provost/CAO position was selected as it is the traditional pathway to the presidency. While provosts and CAO exist at every institution, this study focused on ones at four-year, public, doctoral degree-granting, non-HBCU institutions. This institutional classification was selected because the American Council for Education noted in a 2017 study that the percentage of women provosts/CAO at public, doctoral degree-granting institutions declined from 2008-2013. For this reason, the experiences of the few minority women leaders become of importance to understand. There was no limit on the years of service or involvement within higher education. This was intentional given the small percentage of Black women leaders in provost/CAO positions, as adding to the current criteria would further limit the available number of participants.

After obtaining Institutional Review Board approval to conduct this study (see Appendix A), I used a snowball sampling method to secure participants. Snowball sampling is a technique that involves a researcher securing a participant, who in turn recommends another person for consideration, and that participant may also recommend someone. Thus, a ripple effect occurs (Atkinson & Flint, 2001). Snowball sampling is beneficial because it serves as an informal method for reaching concealed populations that otherwise may remain hidden (Atkinson & Flint, 2001). Opponents of this method have suggested that it increases selection bias, as participants are not randomly selected but instead are dependent on those previously interviewed, making it difficult to generalize (Atkinson & Flint, 2001). However, with populations that are not as

visible, snowball sampling may be the one of the few options available to learn more about their experiences (Atkinson & Flint, 2001).

Specific to this study, I identified three current Black women CAO at four-year, public, doctoral degree-granting, non-HBCU institutions. Initially, I submitted an email notification to the National Association of Black Women in Higher Education as well as the National Association for Chief Academic Officers. Within the correspondence, I explained the purpose of my study and requested contact information, specifically the name and email address, of Black women serving in the capacity of CAO at any four year, public doctoral degree granting institution, non-HBCU. Following the submission of these requests I was informed that the associations current roster was not up-to-date or no response was provided. Given that this method proved unsuccessful, I conducted a web search using the following search phrase: list of four-year public colleges and universities. From this search, I was guided to the NICHE website and ran a query for four year public institutions. A total of 755 institutions populated. From this list, I visited the website of the first 100 institutions. I reviewed the institutional classification to determine if it was a doctoral degree granting institution. This was done by visiting the institutions graduate school department and reviewing the list of programs offered, in addition, to reviewing the institutions profiles page. For any institution that met these criteria I searched the institutional website for an organizational chart and visited the page of the chief academic officer. I maintained a list of all black women chief academic offices. Out of the 100 school websites visited only three could potentially be classified as a Black woman. A google search was done and the results could confirm that each self-identified as a Black woman by their biographies and LinkedIn profiles. I contacted potential participants via email, providing information regarding the study and requesting consideration of participation. The form

contained a link to allow participants to indicate their interest to participate and provided

demographic information (see Appendices B and C). Of the three women only one responded

and agreed to participate in the study. In addition, this participant was also able to recommend an

additional person for consideration. I used the method outlined above to seek consideration and

obtained the consent of a second participant. To secure a final participate I sought the assistance

of a mentor who previously served as the Vice President for Student Affairs. He forwarded my

correspondence (see Appendix B and C) to current vice presidents of student affairs and to chief

academic officers requesting their consideration to participate and/or to share with those meeting

the criteria. While I do not know the total distribution number one individual made contact with

me and agreed to participate in this study. For this reason, I used the same method outlined

above and obtained the consent of a third participant.

Each participant was provided a consent form to acknowledge (a) participation in this

study; (b) the limited risks associated with the study; and (c) the ability to withdraw from the

study at any time. The participant was asked to return the consent form via email (see Appendix

D). Upon receipt of the consent form, I worked to schedule an interview. While efforts were

made to have an in-person or video conference interview, phone conferencing was used as an

alternative method. Thus, all three participants were interviewed via phone.

### Data Collection

A total of three participants were interviewed for this research study. A pseudonym was

used for participants to maintain confidentiality of their names and institutions. Two of the three

interviews were audio recorded. One participant requested not to be audio recorded and for this

reason, notes were taken during the interview. All interviews were roughly an hour. One

interview experienced an interruption resulting in the call being terminated but the connection

was reestablished and the interview continued. Following the interviews, participants were provided the opportunity to review the transcription to ensure correct interpretation of their narrative.

While every effort was made to host a meeting in person, phone conferencing was used as an alternative method to collect information. This dynamic may have impacted the collection of information in several ways. The use of phone conferencing could have hindered my ability to see non-verbal cues of participants, thereby missing opportunities to follow up and/or probe certain topics further. Additionally, the use of phone conferencing may have impacted the quality of the interaction, resulting in participants sharing less information than if they were in person. This contributes to the final item, which centers on the length of time participants gave to this interview. While each serve in a capacity that limits their overall availability, it is believed that face-to-face interviews would have provided a better opportunity to engage with participants thereby extending the meeting time and potentially the amount of information shared by participants.

The data collection method for this study consisted of unstructured interviews, defined by Corbin and Morse (2003) as having the overall objective to create a space where a participant can feel comfortable enough to share her story in the way that she seeks to convey her experience (Olson, 2011). During an unstructured interview, the researcher's role is to listen intently and when needed probe or present questions for clarification (Rubinstein, 2002). It should be noted that there are researchers who support this method but also believe that it is more appropriate to probe or present follow-up questions after the participant has shared their story in order to not intrude (Wong, 1998). In unstructured interviews, participants have significant control of the interview layout. Thus, they can narrate their experience from the angle

with which they are most comfortable. This helps to reduce some of their distress, resulting in minimal, if any, harm to the participant (Corbin & Morse, 2003).

Unstructured interviews typically consist of four phases: pre-interview, tentative, immersion, and emergence. Within the pre-interview phase, the researcher engages in conversation unrelated to the research to build and establish trust (Corbin & Morse, 2003). This sets the tone for the remainder of the interview and future meetings, if needed. More often, participants have a goal in mind when they sign up to do an interview (Corbin & Morse, 2003), and allotting time to form a connection, present the purpose of the interview, and review consent information works to address the concerns of many participants. As it pertains to this study, the researcher worked to build a relationship with participants by providing an introduction to the study and presenting the purpose for the interview.

The second phase of the unstructured interview is referred to as the tentative phase. During this time, the conversation gradually transitions to the interviewee telling their story. The participant shares information based on their comfort level and the reactions of the researcher, both verbal and non-verbal, which contribute to the degree of involvement by the participant (Corbin & Morse, 2003). Thus, the researcher should listen intently but not come across as judgmental. Phase three, the immersion phase, continues with narration by the participant, but it is the method of participation that a researcher will need to be mindful of. This is stated because participants share information differently, and where a participant begins their story speaks to a larger point (Corbin & Morse, 2003). Just as important as where a participant starts is how they navigate through sharing their experience. For example, some participants may move chronologically through events whereas others may jump back and forth between thoughts or topics, and others just need time to process information before sharing (Corbin & Morse, 2003).

These pieces work to convey meaning and highlight moments in time that stand out for a participant for a specific reason. It should also be noted that no method is better than the other, as participants will adapt to the method that is most comfortable for them.

For the purposes of this study, I allowed the participant to narrate the interview. In this regard, rather than posing structured questions, requests for information were made by "introducing very broad topics for discussion within the context of a general conversation" (Olson, 2011, p. 39). Patton (2002) discussed a similar yet unique approach, referred to as the "one-shot question" approach. Within this approach, the researcher presents to the participant a single question that is broad enough for the participant to respond and share information they determine is relevant. This concept is also referred to as the "grand tour question" because it allows participants to "tell their story as they see it, feel it, and experience it" (Corbin & Morse, 2003, p. 339). I presented follow-up questions based on the participant's initial response. Specific to this study, the one-shot or grand tour question that was used to initiate the interview consisted of the following: Can you share what experience(s) you feel brought you to this point in your career? This was intended to provide an opportunity for the participant to expound on their life and personal and professional experiences. The intent of the interview was not to serve as a question-and-answer session. Rather, the goal of the interview was to allow the participant to share thoughts candidly, providing a steady flow from one topic to the next (Creswell, 2013, 2014). However, I also had questions prepared that relate back to the ERA model (see Appendix E). I intended to only use these questions if necessary to aid in the exchange of dialogue between me and the participant.

The final phase of an unstructured interview is the emergence phase. During this phase, discussion transitions to more neutral topics and serves as the final moments prior to the

researcher concluding the interview. "The phase of emergence is the time that without fear of influencing the narrative flow, the researcher can provide information, advice, or validation" (Corbin & Morse, 2003, p. 333).

## Data Analysis

Upon conclusion of the interview, it was transcribed. Participants were provided a copy of the transcription for review and to ensure accuracy of information. This was done intentionally as to uphold the authenticity of the narrative as retold by me (O'Dwyer & Bernauer, 2013; Schensul, 2012). Following review, I worked to analyze data by identifying themes.

Specifically, NVivo software was used for purposes of data analysis. NVivo serves as computer assisted qualitative data analysis software and works to provide a smooth transition from data collection to data analysis in order to code participant narratives for the identification of themes (Bringer, Johnston, & Brackenridge, 2006). This coding method was selected because it is appropriate for qualitative studies.

Thus, following the completion of interviews, I used NVivo to analyze the data collected (Wainwright & Russell, 2010). While there are benefits to the use of NVivo, there are critics who suggest that usage of computer software results in the researcher becoming disconnected from the data and that there is a more frequent desire to code without purpose, resulting in the loss of creativity (Bazeley, 2007). However, supporters of NVivo have stated that this analysis method maintains the perspective and/or voice of the participant(s), which allows for a deeper understanding of their experience (Saldaña, 2009).

Specific to this study, I reviewed the transcriptions of each participant to search for identical terms and phrases. These were coded by name or phrase. For example, as participants shared experience, advice, or general opinions on the benefits of selecting, securing, or serving

as a mentor the section was coded as "mentorship". I then generated a note for each, which served as a brief citation for how the term or phrase was used. I listed whether the experience was institutional, personal, both, or neither. I followed up to denote whether it was viewed as a support, hindrance, or neither. Once completed, I reviewed each note to identify potential patterns. I focused initially on any items that could be associated with the ERA model. I then reviewed items that were not associated with the ERA model, which served as emergent themes.

## Limitations

As with any study, there is a need to acknowledge its various limitations. While this study sought to collect data shared through the lens of Black women, the experiences of participants are not representative of all Black women. As highlighted within the discussion on Black feminist thought, there is a need to recognize that Black women each have a unique story, but there are areas between and among Black women where those experiences intersect (Collins, 2002). Additionally, this study does not capture other minoritized groups. This is important to acknowledge because the experiences of this population may not represent that of all women, nor does it represent the experiences of everyone in provost/CAO positions. The third limitation within this study is that it examines Black women within predominantly White institutions. It is likely that Black women at other institutions may have experiences that would be worthy of further exploration. Lastly, this study focuses on four-year, public, doctoral degree-granting institutions. Thus, there may also be information relevant to the advancement of Black women if taken from the perspective other institutional categories, such as community colleges or private institutions. While limitations exist and there is a need to understand that every participant's story is their own, it is important to acknowledge that the sharing of information works to the

benefit of all minoritized groups. In the words of Anna Julia Cooper (1892), "When and where I enter... then and there the whole... race enters with me" (p. 31).

## Assumptions

I carried out this study with the assumption that all Black women have experienced factors that have both hindered and supported their career advancement. It is possible that Black women not associated with this study may have experienced only factors that either supported or hindered their career advancement. I also assumed that these experiences are related to one's race and gender. There is a need to acknowledge that the experiences encountered, whether it supported or hindered one's career advancement, may have been associated with factors outside of one's race and gender.

## Summary

I anticipated that a qualitative narrative inquiry approach would work to identify factors that hinder and/or support the career advancement of Black women leaders within higher education. Additionally, this approach allowed participants to share their experience using their own voices. Their narratives worked to frame meaning regarding their experiences. In considering the components found within the ERA model, this generates opportunities to expand representation and enhance experiences of minoritized groups within senior administration. In Chapter 4, these themes are presented and discussed in greater detail. The experiences of Black women CAO serves a pathway for advancement that can be used by other women who aspire the same career success of this study's participants.

# CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to examine factors that may hinder and/or support the career advancement of Black women chief academic officers (CAO). The Engagement, Retention, and Advancement (ERA) model was used as the theoretical framework for this study and served as a guide to answering the following research question: what institutional and personal factors support or hinder the advancement of Black women Chief Academic Officers? For the purpose of this narrative inquiry, a snowball method was used to secure three Black women who serve in the capacity of CAO at a four-year, public, doctoral degree-granting institution that has non-HBCU status.

This chapter presents the demographic profile of the sample studied, an analysis of the participant's narratives, and identified themes that emerged from this study. To protect the identity of participants, each was provided a pseudonym for the purpose of reporting findings and analysis.

## Description of Sample Population

Three women were interviewed for this research study. Each participant self-identified as a Black woman. Each participant reported that they serve in the capacity of CAO. All participants have worked in higher education for 30 years or more, with experiences ranging from serving in the professoriate, to department chair, to Associate Dean, to Dean and CAO. All participants have a terminal degree, and each participant reported that they have been in their current position less than 5 years. With the exception of one participant, each had a linear progression into the position of CAO. Each participant had a portfolio of service, awards, and recognition both internal and external to the institution, and each participant has engaged and continues to engage in research with an ongoing list of journal, article, and book publications.

Two participants self-disclosed having children in the early to mid-stages of their career. Participants reported being the first or one of the few in their family to ever attend and graduate from college. Information has been provided below that is specific to each participant.

Michelle has spent 33 years in academe. In her prior role, she served as Dean of the law school. Michelle attended a private, Ivy league, research university where she earned her Juris Doctorate. At the time of this study, she was employed at a four-year, public institution. Michelle is married but did not specify whether she has children.

Elizabeth has been in the field for slightly over 30 years. Elizabeth served as a department chair on two separate occasions and went straight into a vice president position. She then transitioned to the role of dean prior to serving in her current position. She attended a large, four-year, public research university and earned a Doctor of Philosophy in journalism. Elizabeth is married and has children.

Diane has spent 37 years within academe. She served as dean of the graduate school prior to assuming the role of CAO. She attended a large, 4-year, public research university and earned a Doctor of Philosophy. Diane is married and did not specify whether she has children.

## Summary of Findings

The following data details the findings of this study, in relation to the ERA model. These data highlight factors that hindered and/or supported participants career advancement. Of the 12 subcategories described within the ERA model, participants shared experiences related to recruitment, incentive packages, mentorship opportunities, empowering the administrator, leadership opportunities, and retention. Thus, six of the 12 subcategories were present for each participant despite whether the experiences were self-initiated or carried out by the institution. Only one participant shared experiences that could be classified as a subcategory of in-service

professional development, professional release time, and beyond diversity experience. While all participants shared information that correlates to the subcategory of career advancement, the information provided was general in nature and served as recommendations for individuals aspiring to such positions. No participant reported experiences connected to the subcategories of professional development funds and orientation programs. Lastly, participants presented several themes that were not explicitly categorized within the ERA model. These included self-reflection and internal motivations; faith, spirituality, and religion; family upbringing and support; and paying it forward. The remainder of this section expounds on the items mentioned above in greater detail. Table 1 serves as a summary of this information.

### Pre-Engagement

As shared previously, all participants reported personal and institutional factors that supported their recruitment. Diane highlighted that she was actively recruited for the position of CAO and noted that she received "various requests to enter administration" and was "asked to put [her] name in the hat" when the CAO position opened. Specifically, Diane referenced that the outgoing CAO also served as her mentor and had provided her with exposure to the CAO role prior to his departure. Diane expressed that when the search began he requested she apply for the position. Although Diane had the endorsement of the outgoing CAO she was modest in sharing her recruitment experience, stating that "while encouraged to apply, it was a national search, and I felt fortunate to have received the offer to serve in the CAO capacity."

Others reported that while they were not actively recruited for the position, they had positive influences and encouragement to pursue career advancement opportunities throughout their lifetime. For example, Michelle shared that growing up she did not even anticipate going to college because higher education was never emphasized in her family. She recounted a

Table 1

*Themes*

| Categories & Subcategories | N |
| --- | --- |
| **Pre-Engagement** | |
| Recruitment | 3 |
| Orientation Programs | 0 |
| Incentive Packages | 3 |
| | |
| **Engagement** | |
| Empower Administrator | 3 |
| Leadership Opportunities | 3 |
| Mentoring | 3 |
| In-Service Professional | 1 |
| | |
| **Advancement** | |
| Professional Release Time | 1 |
| Professional Development Funds | 0 |
| Beyond Diversity Experience | 1 |
| | |
| **Outcome** | |
| Retention | 3 |
| Career Advancement | 3 |
| | |
| **Emerged Themes** | |
| Self-reflection and internal motivation | 3 |
| Faith, spirituality, and religion | 3 |
| Family upbringing and support | 3 |
| Paying it forward | 3 |

discussion she had with her mother previously and shared that, "my mother always wanted to go to college but her guidance counselor had laughed at that idea until she cried. My mother became a secretary and asked me if I would do her the honor of doing something she did not have the chance to do, which was go to college." Although Michelle aspired to be a legal secretary, a slightly more advanced role than her mother, she reported that an advisor encouraged her to explore the idea of law school. While not a path directly to the role of CAO, Michelle reported that she feels her professional course had been set and influenced by women who wanted the best for her.

Elizabeth, however, had a slightly different introduction to the role of CAO. Originally, she sought to pursue a career as an educator within the field of journalism. More specific, Elizabeth shared "when I first went in I was going to change the world in general as an educator," speaking to research she had conducted on students and their perceptions of journalism. She continued to state that "this [higher education leadership] was not my chosen or original profession. And along the way, I have had opportunities to work as a department chair… a vice president… a dean… and [now] here." Elizabeth reported that each experience worked to prepare her for the role of CAO.

While each participant expressed receiving support and encouragement to pursue new career options, Michelle also shared a comment that speaks to recruitment in terms of access,

> I will also say that I think I was really at the right place at the right time, for which I am
> grateful but which makes me sad for people coming along behind me. I grew up right at
> the time when people were looking to make opportunities for people of color; there I was.
> You know everybody today says they care about diversity but they don't really, so I feel
> like I've got some opportunities – doors were thrown open for me.

She went further to state that in her professional journey not only did institutions seek skilled individuals but also there were intentional efforts to diversify the make-up of faculty, students, and staff that in her opinion, "do not seem to be as readily opened [to intentional diversification] today."

Overall, participants did not report any individual or institutional factors that may have hindered their advancement as it pertained to recruitment. While participants did not directly state institutional factors that worked to support their advancement, they reported positive influences within the institutional setting that further encouraged them to consider advancement opportunities.

**Orientation Programs**

In contrast to recruitment experiences, no participant reported formalized orientation programs for the position of CAO. However, participants each shared that they worked at their institution for several years prior to serving as the CAO or they had been in the Dean position prior to occupying the CAO position and had observed many of the responsibilities that were to be carried out.

**Incentive Packages**

A large area of consensus centered on incentive packages. Each participant shared the importance of women receiving salary and benefits that were comparable to their counterparts. While this was stated, participants also shared that they themselves failed to make salient points during their own negotiation process. For example, Elizabeth stated,

Well I'm going to let you down here because I didn't really negotiate. I negotiate for everybody else, but when it came to doing it for myself, I defaulted back to all of the

literature that says women are not as strong negotiators. You think it's a stereotype until

it's you, and I didn't do it.

Although this was the experience of participants of this study, each shared that they work to

advocate for others, encouraging other professionals to negotiate better offers for themselves.

Specifically, Michelle stated,

I think that women need to know what they are worth. And how would we? Because we

often do not have people to tell us what we are worth. We have to have the confidence to

walk into settings and say, "I want to be offered what I am worth."

Diane emphasized the importance of pulling available information to serve as a guide. For

example, she shared, "It is important that one is always knowledgeable about the mean salary.

There is data that is available by public record of most public institutions." Diane went further to

state that the position is rather limited, sharing,

There is only CAO at any institution, thus there is not another position to compare it to.

For this reason, it may be advantageous to review of the salary of the previous CAO

before the position was vacant. While not absolute, it provides a starting place or range

for the negotiation process to begin, and it can be used as a reference.

While this recommendation was provided by Diane, she also shared that most CAO/Provost

positions are selected by a search firm and the institution's president. Thus, "there is not a tough

negotiation process to go through or rather there should not be one," and this is because the

search firm and president have determined that you are wanted, and when you get to that level,

there is a general understanding. Diane provided two points for consideration: "take advantage of

the fact that you are wanted" and "aim high."

For each participant, despite that the negotiation process was not self-initiated, they did not feel as though their career had been hindered as a result. In contrast, each participant reported that the institution presented a fair and very reasonable salary and benefits package, adding to their feelings of institutional support.

While salary and benefits were the focal point of incentive package discussion, Michelle also stressed that women should not limit an incentive package to solely salary and benefits as other items are worthy of consideration. For example, Michelle reported that she presented to her institution two items that were not based on salary or benefits. She stated, "They were the only two things that I cared about. I didn't negotiate over salary, starting date, or title. I asked for two things, and the university said sure." While Michelle did not disclose her two items, she did encourage women in general to assess what is important to their overall success and advocate for those items.

## Engagement

The category of engagement consists of four subsections: empower administrator, leadership opportunities, mentoring, and in-service development. During interviews, participants flowed in and out of discussion as it pertained to these areas. For example, each participant viewed mentorship as a valuable and necessary component for career advancement. However, participants reported being empowered when provided with meaningful leadership opportunities and effective mentorship.

**Empower Administrator**

While participants shared that it is important to be empowered, it was also reported that at times it is necessary to empower and trust yourself. For example, Michelle shared,

I've had regrets about decisions but not because I thought they were the wrong decisions at the time. Maybe in retrospect, if I had known this [information]. But I worked with the information that I had, and I try to make the best decision I could make. Just don't be afraid to be who you are in an environment, and if people don't like that, then maybe that's the wrong environment.

Elizabeth shared a similar perspective, stating, "Don't worry about being liked. Worry about being respected and being able to sleep at night." Elizabeth continued by sharing that while faculty and other administrators may not always agree with her decisions, she maintains their support because she is ethical.

**Mentoring**

Participants were also united in their perspective regarding mentorship, viewing it as a component of empowerment. Overall, participants reported that formalized institutional programs as well as self-initiated approaches were impactful to their career advancement. It should be noted that participants defined self-imitated approaches as non-formalized programs. Each offered perspectives regarding mentorship experience, expounding on the make-up of mentors and the role that mentors have within professional advancement. For example, Elizabeth highlighted that she participated in a leadership institute that also had a formalized mentorship program dedicated to African American leaders who aspire the presidency. She shared that she was paired with a female mentor, who at the time, was a university president. Since this experience, Elizabeth reported that she "always seeks strong mentors, people who can open

doors and let me know the things and challenges they have faced." Diane reported having both formal mentors and informal mentors. For example, she shared that while serving as the Dean she received professional mentorship from her immediate supervisor, the Provost, and this relationship provided her with an opportunity to better understand the components that make up the CAO position, which worked to her benefit when she was later encouraged to consider the role. Specifically, she reported that an individual "should not wait to seek a mentor" and should be open to having a mentor of a different background, stating, "At times, you can't wait because you may be the first of your kind."

Diane did not speak to her own mentorship experience but did provide two recommendations for individuals seeking mentorship. First, "it is important that you find people who are going to let you in and help you be successful in that role," and second, you need to "find a person that is successful in the role that you seek regardless of their background." Elizabeth expounded on this further by stating,

> If you want to have a mentor who is at the top of the university, you generally get a male person. There's nothing wrong with that, but they don't give you insight into how women navigate this space. So then, you need another person who may not be at the top of the university but has had some experiences you haven't had that can help you with that. Then, if you're a woman of color it's really hard to find someone of color who can be a mentor. But if you can, it's not likely to get that all in one person, now you have [multiple] people. You have colleagues, and then you have people at your level who are mentors in their own ways because they are having different experiences than you're having.

While this was a shared experience, Michelle also discussed the importance of paying it forward and serving as a mentor, opposed to being solely on the receiving end of mentorship. For example, Michelle shared, "Many people over the years have encouraged me to explore things I hadn't even contemplated. It's what I have tried to do as a professional. I've tried to look back at people coming behind me and have them [explore] ideas [and] jobs they may not have been exposed to." Similarly, Elizabeth reported that mentorship is "vital, and therefore when people ask [her] to mentor them, [she] will do it if they are serious." Participants stressed that mentorship worked both ways. While each referenced this point in different ways, participants were clear that when it comes to mentorship, the quality of the experience is greatly dependent on what efforts and energy the mentee puts into the development of the relationship.

**Leadership Opportunities**

While they are two distinct subcategories, participants shared experiences that can be linked to both leadership opportunities and in-service professional development both internal and external to the institution. Each shared intentionality about connecting with groups that would support students of color as well as using such experiences as an opportunity to strengthen their skill sets as professionals. For example, Michelle shared, "It seems to me not a duty but a responsibility and the right thing to do to engage with members of the community." In this regard, efforts should be made to be visible within the local community. Elizabeth expounded on this point, reporting that she previously and currently sits on several boards. For example, she served on the board of the symphony, the high school catholic girls school board of directors, as well as the board of the summer arts festival. Elizabeth viewed it as an opportunity to

> help people understand [the] university's role in a community. To find opportunities for
>
> students… as a senior administrator, you have to have some visibility, and those boards

76

allow you to take the name of your organization, your university out into the community. Participants also reported that internally they were able to connect with groups that would expand their experience and network. Elizabeth was the most vocal in this regard, sharing that she leads several committees within the university with emphasis on fundraising and budgeting, faculty relations, and curriculum development.

**In-Service Professional Development**

Only one participant spoke directly to professional development opportunities. It was stated by Elizabeth that one should be intentional about obtaining skill sets within the areas of budgeting and human resource management. While they were self-initiated, Elizabeth reported that these efforts were greatly supported by her institution.

For example, Elizabeth shared that at many institutions the CAO also serves as the Chief Budget Officer and "is certainly going to control the lion share of the university's budget because most of the budget is in personnel and in faculty." While expressing the complexity of a university budget, Elizabeth shared that as monies are generated, "it goes in different pots before it gets to academic affairs. Then how [do] you prioritize that so that the university can run so you can meet the mission of the institution, which of course is primarily to educate students. But also to develop and nurture faculty." When asked how are faculty needs were met, Elizabeth shared,

> The human resource element is even more tricky than the budget because you are in an environment where there are many highly educated, competitive, critically thinking people. That's who you want in a university. Those people also have needs to be managed professionally, differently. What they need in professional development is different from what someone in a corporation needs.

Given this information, Elizabeth was asked what training or in-service items would be needed to better support a CAO in this area. Elizabeth stated that "you don't need to have an MBA, but you need to understand how the budget for that specific university operates." Although this was general advice, Elizabeth shared that she took part in a Harvard institute for educational management a number of years ago. The experience provided an opportunity to learn more about "balance sheets, profit and loss statements… to understand how the money flows and how you have to be responsible for it, to present a final analysis."

<div align="center">**Advancement**</div>

**Professional Release Time**

Each participant addressed work life "maintenance": the need to maintain balance between personal life and work while recognizing that at various stages one may require immediate attention and response, thereby reducing their visibility and/or presence in the other category. For example, Elizabeth shared,

> I work hard, and I work a lot, but I don't think I'm out of balance… I had kids, mother of young children, and had to make some decisions about what I could and could not do… so if it was something that someone else could do, their father or someone else, I let those people do it. That's hard! You want to do everything, but I couldn't do the work I had to do and make every meeting. Sometimes, there were times when only "mommy" will do, if you're fortunate enough to have one, and I wasn't going to let them miss out on those. So, I had to just look at the calendar and say I'm doing this, I'm not doing this…

While Elizabeth shared information directly, Michelle and Diane alluded to professional release time when speaking of their faith, which is addressed in greater detail in the next section. All

participants reported having a great respect for the faculty position, thus maintaining a scholarly life because it has remained at their core and was still a true passion.

**Professional Development Funds**

No participant shared experiences regarding professional development funds; however, they discussed the importance of supporting, nurturing, and developing faculty. Thus, participants viewed this area more as a means of faculty support. For example, Elizabeth spoke at great length regarding the complexity of an institutional budget due to competing priorities. Although there is a need for balance, she shared that faculty are "highly educated, competitive, critically thinking people," and they have needs to be managed professionally, and supporting these needs may differ between and among faculty.

**Beyond Diversity Experience**

Only one participant spoke to experiences beyond "diversity"-related events. While the information shared was general and served more as a recommendation, Elizabeth emphasized that women and people of color aspiring to the CAO position should engage in opportunities specific to managing and operating large budgets, human capital, and serving on committees and/or signature programs that connect back to students and/or faculty. More specifically, Elizabeth reported,

> I'm co-chair of a search committee for the Vice President of University Advancement. That's a big field with the [fund]raising, relationship building, and the communication aspects. So, I wanted that role, and I was able to get it… I'm also leading a task force for faculty, which we've never undertaken anything quite like this before; so, that was a major undertaking.

**Outcomes**

Each participant spoke passionately about the need for more women minorities in positions such as the CAO role. This was primarily present within the subcategory of retention and career advancement. Each participant stressed that they remain in the field because there is much more work to be done. Elizabeth stated directly,

I might have left if the work had gotten done, but as I move forward in my career, I see we're still dealing with recruiting students of color. We're still dealing with recruiting faculty of color. I can't leave! Because that work is not done.

Additionally, each participant spoke to institutional support, highlighting that the good experiences outweigh the bad. Michelle shared, "They [professionals of color] come to [this university], and then they look up 30 years later, and they are still here. I think that's because this is a place that many people can feel that its values are aligned with theirs."

**Career Advancement**

Like retention, participants spoke more generally about career advancement and did not express whether they sought it beyond the role of CAO. Instead, participants highlighted that it is challenging to think about next steps when you do not see Black women presidents at public, doctoral degree-granting institutions more commonly. One participant stated, "I think part of what contributes to being so low in representation is that it's just a path you don't see. So, you don't know how to best position yourself." Another stated,

One of the things I think of, except for HBCUs, we don't have a lot of African American women college presidents who any of us regularly see. Forget whether you know the person, you don't see them on CNN, MSNBC, like who are they? So, it's really hard in my mind to think of an 18 year old who said, "I want to go to college because ultimately I

want to be a university president." If you're not in a position to say that… then you might

not take the path that would make that achievable when you're 40 or 45. I think that still

affects these roles.

This matches the words of another participant who shared, "If you haven't seen those

opportunities, it's hard to move in that direction."

## Emerging Themes

While information was provided related to the ERA model, participants also shared

information that was not directly associated with the framework. These include self-reflection

and internal motivations; faith, spirituality, and religion; family upbringing and support; and

paying it forward. For example, although participants shared mostly positive institutional

experiences, even when information was shared that spoke to negative encounters, participants

stated that "perspective matters" and women in general needed "tough skin" to serve in any

leadership capacity. For example, Michelle reflected on her experience, stating,

When I look back at [a former leader], one of the things I was always struck by was how

happy people were as he stumbled and fell. But I often reflect on the fact that I've never

experienced that. I've always had people who encouraged, applauded, and supported me.

I've never felt that I had to overcome people who wanted me to fail.

Elizabeth shared that when faced with a challenging situation, she must remind herself why she

is sitting in her position. She stated that she often hears her mother's voice say, "Well, what are

you doing there if you're not going to make a difference?" Elizabeth went further to share that

for someone coming into the position of CAO, "It won't necessarily be easy. There will be

people who don't want you in any high-level environment, and you just have to say, "So what."

When participants were asked what helps them to stay focused, Michelle shared that her faith provides her with a certain calmness to deal with and respond to workplace issues. More specifically, Michelle stated,

It [my faith] has been a huge part of my life; it has given me an anchor. It has let me stay calm. I think it has helped me remember what is important and what is not. I think that is associated with the characteristics I possess. I have the ability to let things roll off my back and not take them personally. People often say, "How can you do that knowing that person just did a really crappy thing to you?" But it did not end up hurting me. I think that comes from faith… I think the reason I can see past that is a calm that informs my life that I just think is rooted in my faith.

Diane shared similar information and even referenced that her faith supported her in maintaining a healthy work-life balance. This was illustrated in action, as Diane was preparing for an event sponsored by her church home while conducting this interview. For Diane, her faith also served as an "anchor," and it has guided her professionally and personally.

**Internal Motivation**

Participants stressed that having integrity and remaining true to themselves was important. For example, Elizabeth shared,

They never see me coming, but it's a secret to my success to a certain extent because they cannot really anticipate. They think they know where I'm going to come down on an issue. I'm going to come down on the issue that is in the best interest of our students. If you take me on my word, then we'll get along.

This adds to an earlier statement made by Elizabeth: "Don't worry about being liked. Worry about being respected and being able to sleep at night."

All participants shared the importance of the "formal rules of engagement." Each participant shared that years of experience taught them when "being present at the table" and using their voice would be vital, and just as important was understanding that every battle is not worth the fight. Michelle advised, "Be selective with your battles. Sometimes, peace is better than proving to others that you are right." While this was shared among participants, there were no examples or recommendations offered to maneuver through this experience.

**Family Support and Upbringing**

Each participant spoke to positive influences from family members, with emphasis on the role of their mother. For example, Michelle shared that she never thought that this would be her chosen profession, nor did she ever "anticipate going to college." Michelle reported that the importance of higher education was never emphasized in her family, but her mother always wanted better for her. For this reason, Michelle reported that she was encouraged to go college because of her mother. Michelle had intentions to become a legal secretary and was later encouraged to go to law school by a college advisor. Although specific to Michelle, each participant reported having positive influences that encouraged them to pursue career advancement opportunities.

**Paying It Forward**

Participants emphasized throughout the interviews that serving in this position was never just about them. Each highlighted that their success was due to the care and support of many others. Thus, participants felt they had a responsibility to assist other up-and-coming women of color. For example, Elizabeth shared, "I am not a person who gets to a position and says, 'Well, I'm here now—everybody else figure it out.' I didn't have to figure it out by myself." Elizabeth also stressed that there is an "allegiance as people of color to excellence and to make sure that

when we're in a space, that we do the best that we can." For her, while people of color should have support along the way, she intentionally stated that we don't get a pass from one another, nor should we, or we're not doing our part. Now if the system or the institution is standing in our way and I'm in a place to help, then I'll do that, but just because you have showed up, no.

**Summary**

In review, the information provided by participants aligned with the ERA model. Participants shared information that connects to six of the 12 subcategories, despite whether the experience was self-initiated or carried out by the institution. Additionally, two subcategories, orientation programs and professional development funds, were not discussed by participants. Thus, it is unknown if factors were present for participants that served as a hindrance or benefit. While each participant shared their thoughts on career advancement, the information provided was not specific and served more as general advice for aspiring leaders to consider. Also, only one participant shared information that related to the subcategories of professional release time and beyond diversity experience. Thus, in review of the four overarching categories that comprise the ERA model, participants' experiences centered on engagement, specifically empowerment, leadership opportunities, and mentoring, and more so than the categories of pre-engagement, advancement, and outcomes. Lastly, participants introduced several new themes, which included self-reflection and internal motivation; faith, spirituality, and religion; family upbringing and support; and paying it forward. The next chapter works to consider these findings in relation to existing literature.

# CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

This chapter presents discussion in relation to the findings outlined in Chapter 4. The Engagement, Retention, and Advancement (ERA) model is used to expand on various aspects of participants' experiences, with emphasis placed on the subcategories found within pre-engagement and engagement. The chapter then shifts to discuss the themes that emerged during this study. The chapter concludes with a discussion on the potential limitations of the ERA model when examining the experiences of Black women Chief Academic Officers (CAO).

As mentioned in prior chapters, the ERA model goes beyond the discussion of institutional diversity and focuses on inclusive practices that work to develop and retain Black administrators. Thus, the experiences of this study's participants become important to understand because factors affecting them may contribute to advancement and retention efforts. The foundational principles that guide the ERA model outline that to recruit and retain talented Black administrators, institutions should consider the value of forming and maintaining meaningful relationships with members of the African American community and be committed to diversity and affirmative action (Jackson, 2004). These guiding principles seem to holistically support the experience of one participant, Michelle; as she explained, "I grew up right at the time when people were looking to make opportunities for people of color… that do not seem readily opened today." The experiences described by this participant show the intentionality of an institution to attract and hire individuals from minoritized groups as well as create an environment that is inviting.

While these two concepts serve as guiding principles, four overarching categories comprise the ERA model: pre-engagement, engagement, advancement, and outcomes (Jackson, 2004). Each category is further defined by subcategories that illustrate the various components

that must be present to attract and retain Black administrators. Pre-engagement includes recruitment, orientation programs, and incentive packages. Engagement encompasses the following subcategories: empower administrator, leadership opportunities, mentoring, and in-service professional development. Advancement covers professional release time, professional development funds, and beyond diversity experience. The final category, outcomes, consists of retention and career advancement. It is hypothesized that when these components are implemented and reinforced, Black administrators are successfully retained by an institution.

As outlined in Chapter 4, the experiences of participants varied, but overall, the majority fell within the categories of pre-engagement and engagement more than the two remaining categories. The next section presents the experiences of participants as they pertain to the ERA model and existing literature. These sections have been divided in relation to the four overarching categories: pre-engagement, engagement, advancement, and outcomes.

<div align="center">

**The ERA Model: Pre-Engagement**

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**Recruitment**

Overall, participants shared they were encouraged to consider advancement opportunities throughout the course of their careers. While participants spoke positively of their own experiences, they were transparent in pointing out that this is not the experience of all minoritized groups. For example, Elizabeth stated,

> I might have left if the work had gotten done, but as I move forward in my career, I see we're still dealing with recruiting students of color. We're still dealing with recruiting faculty of color. I can't leave! Because that work is not done….

In this regard, the participants' focus centers on access. This in many ways relates to existing literature that highlights the barriers women face with entry into leadership positions.

**The glass ceiling.** The "glass ceiling" effect is a concept used to described the challenges women face regarding entry into leadership roles. The glass ceiling effect serves as an invisible barrier that allows some to see elite positions but prevents them from reaching these opportunities (Davies-Netzley, 1998; Davis, 2009; Diehl, 2014; Famiglietti, 2015; Northouse, 2013). Some have referenced that "women of color" face a "concrete ceiling" that further complicates their ability to break barriers (Reynolds-Dobbs, Thomas, & Harrison, 2008). The concepts of the glass ceiling and concrete ceiling are relevant to the ERA model because they emphasize the difficulties that exist for women leaders to transition smoothly through these categories. For example, Chapter 2 presented information on attitudinal barriers that serve as a limitation for women who met the necessary credentials for certain positions but were limited in terms of experience because they had not been afforded access to certain networks (Smith, 2006). Such access would assist in providing experiences, such as those outlined with the ERA model's category of engagement, to better support advancement opportunities. Thus, the glass ceiling and concrete ceiling may impact Black women's ability to transition from category 1 – pre-engagement, to category 2 – engagement in a way some Black men may or may not be affected. Long term, this may significantly delay successful completion of the remaining categories.

Although participants shared concerns regarding entry into leadership roles for minoritized groups, they themselves did not report experiences that could be defined as barriers to recruitment. Why might the experiences of participants not align with existing literature? It is possible that participants may not feel as though a barrier is present for them because they have reached their desired career goals and interpret their experience as one of institutional support. For example, all of the participants currently hold the position of CAO, and none of them

expressed a desire to serve in a more senior leadership capacity. This aligns with recent CAO census data, which revealed that 45% of current CAO had no desire to obtain the presidency and 25% were undecided (Cook et al., 2015). Thus, it is possible that participants spoke generally because from an individual perspective, they do not feel as though a barrier existed/exists for them; however, they still recognize that this is not everyone's experience. Another possibility is that participants may not want to speak out against their institution. This is worthy of consideration because given their leadership role for the institution they may be in a promotional mindset and thereby focus more on the positive attributes.

**The glass cliff.** While separate from the ERA model, literature has also presented the "glass cliff," which centers on unique times when a woman is appointed to serve in a leadership capacity, specifically during organizational turbulence, crisis, or downfall (Peterson, 2016; Ryan et al., 2016). Although the ERA model focuses on recruitment, there is a need to consider how the glass cliff may impact women leaders' ability to "bounce back" and secure future career advancement opportunities, given tumultuous circumstances under which they led in prior settings, their varied degrees of success and grace under fire. However, it should be noted that participants in this study reported being part of a key or signature projects within the institution that have and remain successful to date. Participants also reported that intentional efforts were made to connect them to areas that are important to the CAO role, including but not limited to enrollment management, budgeting, fundraising, curriculum development, and human capital. Thus, experiences that could be defined as a build up to the glass cliff were not reported for participants of this study.

**Orientation Programs**

While participants spoke to experiences that aligned with the ERA model, they did not discuss formalized orientation programs. Thus, it is unknown if this served as a hindrance or was a means of support. It is possible that participants did not discuss experiences regarding formalized orientation programs because they may have been informally oriented. This has been presented for consideration because participants reported being present at their institution prior to serving in the capacity of CAO and expressed having a familiarity with the institution. Participants also reported that they were familiar with the CAO position because they had been able to observe the prior administrator serving in that capacity. Thus, it is possible that the role of CAO does not require a structured, formalized orientation program because the position itself requires community relations and interactions to successfully carry out responsibilities. In this regard, rising administrators naturally orient themselves because they must seek opportunities to connect rather than waiting for them to be presented or introduced. Michelle emphasized this point when she shared, "it seems to me not a duty but a responsibility and the right thing to do to engage with members of the community." This aligns with the ERA model's reference to orientation programs. Within the framework, Jackson (2004) highlighted that "informal" orientation programs may include forming relationships with the community, such as local churches and professional or service groups that work with and for underserved populations. The interactions and partnerships work to form and maintain personal connections that may further assist minoritized groups by reinforcing a sense of belongingness. This is important because it may work to counteract feelings of loneliness or burnout (Peterson, 2016).

**Incentive Packages and Negotiations**

The final subcategory within pre-engagement centered on incentive packages. As presented in Chapter 4, participants reported that they did not enter into negotiations pertaining to incentive packages. However, they did not feel hindered professionally as a result. Likewise, participants did not feel as though they were hindered by their institution. Instead, participants expressed that they were supported by their institutions because they were provided a fair salary and benefits package to the point they felt it unnecessary to negotiate. However, participants recognized the importance of negotiations and shared that while they did not negotiate for themselves, they work to advocate for others. Thus, the question still lingers: What is the significance of negotiating, and how do women navigate this process effectively? Also, aside from salary and benefits, what are other items that should be considered?

While the ERA model speaks to sufficient and equitable financial packages for Black administrators, there is also a need to examine how this may be compounded when gender is also considered. Studies have examined gender differences and their relation to salary and total pay, negotiations, and evaluations that may lead to salary increases (Babcock & Laschever, 2003; Kray, Reb, & Galinsky, 2004). Findings from these studies yield similar results, most notably that women are not paid equal to their male counterparts. Several explanations may contribute to this phenomenon. For example, it is reported that women are less likely to enter negotiations in comparison to men (Babcock & Laschever, 2003). While this may not appear to be a large concern from a surface level, unanticipated consequences heighten the effects and/or barriers women face over time in their career.

Accepting an initial offer that does not translate to one's worth, such as years of experience, training, and education, may contribute and may even widen the gender pay gap over

time (Babcock & Laschever, 2003). This is important to consider because when women fail to ask for an initial starting salary that represents their worth, every future raise is now dependent on that starting salary. Consider this example:

> Suppose that at age 22 an equally qualified man and woman receive a job offer for $25,000 a year. The man negotiates and gets his offer raised to $30,000. The woman does not negotiate and accepts the job for $25,000. Even if each of them receives identical 3 percent raises every year throughout their careers… by the time they reach age 60 the gap between their salaries will have widened to more than $15,000 a year, with the man earning $92,243 and the woman only $76,870 (Babcock & Laschever, 2003, p. 9)

This example illustrates Michelle's reflection when she shared, "I think that women need to know what they are worth. And how would we? Because we often do not have people to tell us what we are worth…."

Authors Babcock and Laschever (2003) explained this statement in greater detail, suggesting that women have learned to interpret their income based on need as opposed to worth. So why do women fail to negotiate, even if they view income through a need-based lens? Scholars suggest that it is because they are concerned that professional relationships will be negatively impacted (Babcock & Laschever, 2003; Davis, 2009; Hoyt & Murphy, 2016; Isaac et al., 2012). For example, asking for a salary increase may give the appearance that they are not grateful for the opportunity, resulting in a supervisor questioning their true intentions. Another reason that it may be challenging for women to negotiate is due to social norms that exist, which do not view assertiveness by a woman as a positive feature (Babcock & Laschever, 2003; Butler & Ferriers, 2000; Eagly, 2007; Hoyt & Murphy, 2016; Isaac et al., 2012; Rosser, 2003). As described in Chapter 2, gender stereotypes may contribute to women not advocating for

themselves out of concern they will be negatively received. Hoyt and Murphy (2016) described this as the "double bind," and Eagly (2007) referred to this experience as "cross pressures." While different terms are used, the impact remains the same: Women are judged for exhibiting feminine behaviors while also being criticized for displaying leadership behaviors that are often characterized as masculine. For example, when a woman is assertive, this can be viewed as them being "pushy" or considered to be someone that may be "difficult to work with," and as a result, women may experience being "left out of key networks," "passed over," or "undervalued" more often than men (Babcock & Laschever, 2003, p. 11).

Despite the fact that, women may have reservations about negotiations, strategies exist that can offer support and create a more positive experience. Mentorship, which is discussed in greater detail below, provides opportunities that can help develop and encourage women to challenge the status quo (Babcock & Laschever, 2003). For example, it may be beneficial for a mentor to explain how and what to ask or consider as part of negotiations. Additionally, it may be advantageous if a mentor presents the overall impact that can occur in the long run if they do not ask (Babcock & Laschever, 2003). This approach can assist women and others to see the larger picture. However, it is important not to rush this process, as there is a need to consider the experiences of these women and the dilemmas they face. For this reason, it may also be worthy of consideration to have a third-party advocate. This aligns with the experience of participants as they reported advocating for others to ensure better incentive packages. The benefit of this approach is that another person in a position of authority can push the agenda as well as absorb some of the blowback that could result without negatively impacting the potential recipient of the incentive package. A final recommendation pertains to managers, who can also work to better support employees by examining practices to ensure fair access and opportunity. While this can

be time-consuming work, it results in more positive outcomes that build loyalty and an inclusive environment, as well as work to reduce turnover (Babcock & Laschever, 2003).

These items become even more important when considering the adverse consequences. Recently, the University of Denver Sturm College of Law agreed to a settlement to avoid further litigation when seven women faculty filed a claim for pay inequity. Lucy Marsh, who worked at the institution for 31 years, was one of the two most experienced professors on staff, yet she was the lowest paid professor within the department (Mitchell, 2018). Court documents revealed that female full professors at the institution received about $11,000 less in salary that their male counterparts (Mitchell, 2018). In evaluation of this information and more, the university agreed to a $2.6 million dollar settlement that served as back pay and covered attorney fees for these seven women.

This example further illustrates that (a) no matter how talented and powerful women are, self-initiated negotiations are challenging, and (b) the adverse consequences of pay inequity can be damaging for an institution, not only financially but also in terms of reestablishing trust for staff and faculty moving forward. To aid in its effort of reestablishing trust, the University of Denver Sturm College of Law agreed to conduct a pay equity study for the next five years, implement discrimination training for all employees, and create a private site that allows faculty to view specific information such as salaries and positions as a means of transparency (Mitchell, 2018). While these methods may assist in healing relationships, institutions can be more intentional and take proactive steps to reduce and eliminate occurrences that perpetuate gender and race discrimination.

## The ERA Model: Engagement

Despite participants' concerns regarding access and equitable incentive packages, they spoke positively about their experiences when discussing engagement, the second category within the ERA model. Participants collectively defined the category of engagement as meaningful mentorship experiences that exhibited the subcategories of empowerment, leadership opportunities, and professional development opportunities. For this reason, emphasis is placed on the role that mentorship has in the career advancement of Black women CAO.

While the data provided by participants varied slightly, it all supported existing literature and worked to emphasize the significance of mentorship (Davis, 2009; Jones et al., 2012; Peters, 2011; Tran, 2014). For example, participants' experiences support the notion that both formal and informal mentor structures are beneficial (Tran, 2014). Elizabeth and Diane reported being part of a formalized mentor program dedicated to African American leaders who aspire to the presidency, and all participants expressed having informal mentors. Each shared that when it comes to mentorship, the quality of the experience is also associated with the effort and energy that the mentee puts into developing the relationship. For example, Elizabeth shared that "Mentorship is vital, and therefore when people ask me to mentor them, I will do it if they are serious." In this regard, participants viewed mentorship as a reciprocal relationship. This supports the perspective that mentorship is a mutually beneficial exchange that aids to promote career advancement and organizational competence (Bova, 2011; Brown, 2005; Jones et al., 2012).

Similarly, Tran (2014) conducted a study on mentorship that resulted in several themes that align with this study's participants' experiences. Tran's research sought to understand the role that mentorship has in the professional development and growth of an individual as well as

the role that mentorship plays within career advancement. Four themes emerged from their study (Tran, 2014). The first theme states that mentorship is not always visible. This suggests that while mentorship is present the recipient may not recognize or define the experience as such, given their limited exposure. Second, while mentorship may not always be visible it is constant. This theme works to expound upon the first by emphasizing that mentorship is present even if it is not visible. Third, mentorship is self-initiated. This means that while an individual may seek to serve as a mentor there is also benefit in self-initiated requests for mentorship. And finally, mentorship is multi-dimensional. This theme illustrates that mentorship is not restricted to traditional formats, but may include instances where one mentors up, for example a protégé educating a senior administrator on specific topics.

In review, the themes listed were also part of Diane, Michelle, and Elizabeth's experience. For example, they alluded to mentorship being self-initiated. Diane shared information that supports this perspective by stating that an individual "should not wait to seek a mentor." She also offered the following recommendations for consideration: "It is important that you find people who are going to let you in and help you be successful in that role" and it is important to "find a person that is successful in the role that you seek regardless of their background." The last recommendation provided by Diane also serves as the fourth theme within Tran's (2014) study, which holds that mentorship is multi-dimensional and can be cross-cultural (Bova, 2001; Davis, 2009; Tran, 2014). In this regard, mentorship can occur when one mentors up (educating supervisors on sensitive topics), down (assisting others in navigating this space), or across (assisting and educating peers). Similarly, mentorship can be effective when mentor/mentees do not share the same race or gender (Brown, 2005; Jones et al., 2012; Tran, 2014; Wilson & Johnson, 2001). Participants shared information that works to support the

literature in this regard. Elizabeth may have been the most direct in sharing a statement that speaks to each of these areas; she stated,

> If you want to have a mentor who is at the top of the university, you generally get a male person. There's nothing wrong with that, but they don't give you insight into how women navigate this space. So, then you need another person who may not be at the top of the university but has had some experiences you haven't had that can help you with that. Then if you're a women of color, it's really hard to find someone of color who can be a mentor. But if you can, it's not likely to get that all in one person; now you have [multiple] people. You have colleagues, and then you have people at your level who are mentors in their own ways because they are having different experiences than you're having.

In review of this statement, Elizabeth stressed the significance of multiple mentors, including individuals who may or may not share your identity, because of the insight they bring to an area in which an aspiring leader may or may not have access. Thus, the information gained can assist to better navigate the professional journey. Diane also provided insight into this area by stating, "At times, you can't wait [to seek a mentor] because you may be the first of your kind." This comment in many ways supports an earlier statement made by Diane in that one "should not wait to seek a mentor." This reference carries additional importance when considering that self-initiated approaches may also help a mentor of a different background better understand the needs of person seeking mentorship.

Thus, the impact that mentorship has on career advancement can be far-reaching for many Black women leaders. This is stated because cross-cultural mentorship, for example, presents additional opportunities for individuals in positions of authority to extend the mentor

relationship by also serving as a sponsor. In this regard, sponsorship allows an individual to use their position to better support minoritized groups and assist with access to certain networks (Allen et al., 1995; Brown, 2005; Mattis, 2001). This access is beneficial because it works to expose Black women leaders to the other components within the category of engagement: experiences that seek to empower the administrator, provide leadership opportunities, and professional development. Coupled together, these experiences work to successfully position Black women leaders for career advancement opportunities.

## The ERA Model: Advancement and Outcomes

The ERA model argues that to position oneself for career advancement opportunities, professional release time, professional development funds, and experiences that go beyond diversity initiatives are needed. It should be noted, however, that although participants did not speak directly to their own development, they placed emphasis on supporting the professional development needs of faculty. Thus, whether intentional or unintentional, participants' leadership styles illustrated common characteristics that exist for women leaders specific to being nurturers and developers. However, their experiences support existing literature, as the next section presents in greater detail. It illustrates how participants work to balance competing priorities. Second, information is introduced regarding limitations that exist for Black administrators when work centers solely on diversity-related initiatives.

**Professional Release Time**

Participants referenced the need to balance work, relationships, family, and health/wellbeing. This is described by Smith (2006) as a situational category to include family obligations and work-life balance. Northouse (2013) shared a similar concept, identified as "superwoman," wherein women juggle the needs of work and family. Participants, however,

97

referenced the need for "maintenance" as opposed to juggling because work and life are a reality, and at times, one may require immediate attention. This study's participants shared that while they often find themselves in a position of balancing competing priorities, they are grateful to also have a supportive family network to assist them during times of conflict. For example, a participant expressed that while she works hard, she recognized that "I couldn't do the work I had to do and make every meeting." Thus, to maintain a balance, participants shared that at times they needed just to say, "I'm doing this, I'm not doing this."

This strategy is important to consider given the "professional profiles" and experiences of Black women leaders, which in many ways are connected to their history in America (Catalyst, 2004). In a study conducted by Reynolds-Dobbs, Thomas, and Harrison (2008), a total of 963 Black women leaders within Fortune 1000 companies were surveyed to examine the images that hindered Black women's career advancement. From their study, five themes emerged that served as the stereotypical image of Black women leaders, one of which was being superwoman.

**Beyond Diversity Experience**

Specific to the image of superwoman, Black women were characterized as an "overachiever," "intelligent," "articulate," "professional," and "assertive" (Reynolds-Dobbs et al., 2008, p. 136). While these attributes present a very positive image of Black women leaders, there are drawbacks to this perception or image. Because of its associated strong work ethic and talent, superwoman status gives a false impression that Black women professionals can and will do it all. As a result, they are frequently asked to support university initiatives that go beyond the typical 9-5 work schedule and are often placed on committees and task forces that are opposite to their colleagues (Reynolds-Dobbs et al., 2008). Jackson (2004) referred to this experience within the ERA model, specifically the category of advancement, when sharing that institutions should

98

work to incorporate experiences that go beyond diversity and align more with the needs of the position and an administrator's future career goals.

Thus, professional release time and beyond diversity experience as outlined within the ERA model become essential to consider because in trying to live up to the superwoman image as well as acquire the necessary credentials, Black women professionals may feel a need to over-perform and as a result experience extreme burnout. Given the high potential for burnout, it may also work to explain why participants of this study preferred to use the term maintenance and not classify themselves as a superwoman.

## Beyond the ERA Model: Emergent Themes

In review, participants reported few negative experiences that could have served as a hindrance to advancement. Participants have worked to positively frame their experiences, which include personal and institutional support to advancement. The perspectives shared by participants were coded as emerging themes and have been categorized into the following: self-reflection and internal motivation; faith, religion, and spirituality; and paying it forward. These categories are addressed in greater detail below.

### Self-Reflection and Internal Motivation

Participants shared experiences that center on self-reflection and internal motivations as a means to counter challenges faced. The information provided by participants supports approaches described in a study conduct by Diehl (2014). Within this study, a total of 26 women in higher education senior administration were interviewed to learn more about the adversity and barriers they faced within the workplace setting. Diehl's (2014) study revealed that women faced 21 barriers, which were grouped into 3 larger categories: professional (discrimination, advancement issues, lack of leadership); personal (relationships, family, health); and gender

99

(discrimination, workplace harassment, etc.). To navigate these challenges, Diehl (2014) reported five strategies that women implemented, including (a) use the experience to serve as a strengthening tool for growth; (b) understand that perspective matters and the experience can serve as a means to an end; (c) recognize that privacy is important and provides an opportunity to reflect alone; (d) apply meaning to any scenario, whether positive or negative; and (e) acknowledge that women leaders are "survivors" and may be first or few of their kind, thus all work serves a greater purpose.

In review, three of the five methods also align with the approaches used by Diane, Michelle, and Elizabeth to navigate these challenges. For example, Diehl (2014) shared that "perspective matters" and unpleasant circumstances should be viewed as a temporary means to an end. Diane, Michelle, and Elizabeth were transparent and acknowledged that this path is not easy, with one participant sharing, "There will be people who don't want you in any high-level environment, and you just have to say so what." Michelle added that during such experiences, her faith has "given me an anchor. It has let me stay calm. I think it helps me remember what is important and what is not." Continuing with this theme, Elizabeth reported that during difficult times, she thinks of a common reference shared by her mother, "Well, what are you doing there if you're not going to make a difference?" For Elizabeth, understanding that while the journey may come with challenges, it all works to achieve the end goal.

Diane, Michelle, and Elizabeth's perspectives also align with the third category found within Diehl's (2014) study, "maintaining privacy" during challenging times. One participant shared, "They never see me coming, but it's a secret to my success to a certain extent because they cannot really anticipate… but I'm going to come down on the issue that is in the best interest of our students." This strategy supports the work of Diehl (2014) because it emphasizes

the significance of discretion and being strategic with the sharing of information. Michelle alluded to this when she shared that she does not have regrets about decisions in the moment because she uses the information available to make the most informed decision. For participants, integrity played a large role in their decision making, thereby allowing them to be confident in the outcome. This was also supported by participants' advice for aspiring leaders, to use discretion and to be "selective with your battles [because] sometimes peace is better than proving to others that you are right."

The final theme within Diehl's study (2014) suggested that it is important for women leaders to remember that they are survivors, and while work can be challenging at times, it all contributes to a larger purpose of expanding opportunities for minoritized groups. Thus, in review the experiences of Diane, Michelle, and Elizabeth are supported by the literature. To state this more directly, participants reflected on why they remain in their field and alluded to recognizing that their work is contributing to a larger purpose and will better support those who are following the same path. Specifically, Elizabeth shared, "I might have left if the work had gotten done, but as I move forward in my career, I see we're still dealing with recruiting students of color. We're still dealing with recruiting faculty of color. I can't leave. Because the work is not done." In this regard, participants' responses connect to literature that discusses navigating challenges as a form of resiliency because it also works to support up-and-coming leaders (Block et al., 2011; Hoyt & Murphy, 2016). It also aligns closely with a statement made by Georgia Congresswoman Stacey Abrams: "We have the power to redraw the image of leadership so we can all see ourselves reflected in its face."

**Self-Doubt**

While participants shared experiences, information was also provided that extends beyond the ERA model. For example, research has suggested that women experience moments of self-doubt that may largely impact work performance (Clance & Imes, 1978; Hutchins, 2015; Parkman, 2016).

Authors Clance and Imes (1978) first used the term "imposter phenomenon" (IP) to illustrate how high-performing individuals have instances when they feel unsure about their success or ability regarding work performance, interpreting their progression as "mere luck" or an attribution to external factors beyond their control. Thus, those who experience imposter phenomenon may externally give the appearance that they are confident, but internally they possess strong feelings of fear and insecurity. Imposter phenomenon is common for individuals who exhibit perfectionist-type work expectations, are competitive, or work in stress-induced environments (Clance & Imes, 1978). Imposter phenomenon is not unusual for faculty within academe, as evidence has highlighted that tenure-track faculty have greater levels of IP due to higher education's "publish or perish" culture compared to those in mid- to latter stages of their career (Hutchins, 2015; Parkman, 2016). This concept is more fully explored with respect to women of color in "Presumed Incompetent: The Intersections of Race and Class for Women in Academia" (Gutiérrez, Niemann, & González, 2012).

While research has illustrated IP as a common occurrence, participants of this research study did not report having IP-related experiences while serving in the capacity of CAO. Rather, participants spoke to having confidence and being self-assured. It is possible that participants may have experienced IP in earlier stages of their career when working to obtain tenure and have now been exposed to various scenarios that allow them to feel more confident in their role and

abilities. Thus, experiences of self-doubt are less frequent, if present at all. Another alternative, similar to Diehl's (2014) study, is that participants have experienced IP but interpret it as a natural part of the journey for women leaders, thereby legitimatizing feelings of self-doubt and redefining the experience as a means to an end. Furthermore, voicing IP concerns contemporarily may reveal a degree of vulnerability with which these otherwise powerful women would prefer not to reconcile at this career stage. In this vein, suppressing IP could be an expression of conforming with social desirability (Liden, Fu, Liu, & Song, 2016; Sendjaya, Pekerti, Härtel, Hirst, & Butarbutar, 2016).

No matter the explanation, it is important to consider how IP may impact aspiring women leaders, especially Black women, because "imposter feelings might be particularly problematic for women of color in that they have not only family and gender role expectations, but also stereotypical racial role expectations and oppression to face" (Clance, Dingman, Reviere, & Stober, 1995, p. 84). Thus, the effect of IP may result in emotional exhaustion or job burnout, which may ultimately impact retention efforts for this population (Hutchins, 2015). In considering the already limited presence of Black women CAO and in understanding that tenured positions serve as a pathway to these roles, it becomes important to implement strategies that work to reduce and/or eliminate experiences of IP. Hutchins (2015) presented potential options that can assist in tempering such occurrences. For example, individuals can secure strong mentors who are able to challenge and combat feelings of self-doubt through positive reinforcement by affirming skill sets and attributions; in addition, institutions can establish guidelines that are more transparent and implement policies that promote work-life maintenance (Hutchins, 2015). Another method that may work to counteract experiences of IP centers on the role spirituality, which is discussed in the next section.

**Faith, Spirituality, and Religion**

An area not defined as a subcategory within the ERA model but presented by participants centered on faith, spirituality, and/or religion. Research on Black women and spirituality highlighted that Black women manage stress related to work by using spirituality to transfer their problem and better understand their purpose as well as to "confront and accept reality" (Jones et al., 2012; Mattis, 2002). Michelle's experiences are supported by the literature when she shared that her faith has given her "an anchor" and has helped her to "stay calm" because it allows her to "remember what is important and what is not." This may also be connected to the emerged theme of self-reflection and internal motivations as it pertains to perspective. As Michelle stated, her faith provides her with the ability to "let things roll off my back and not take them personally." This supports the work of Bacchus and Holley (2005), who shared that spirituality can be a coping mechanism because it serves as a barrier to environmental stressors, enhances personal strength to address work-related responsibilities, and provides guidance and reassurance during decision-making.

**Paying It Forward: No "Queen Bee Syndrome" Here**

Another area not defined as a subcategory within the ERA model focuses on the role or expectation that Black women place upon themselves to pay it "forward." The experiences of participants contradict existing literature that introduces the concept of "Queen Bee Syndrome" (Baumgartner & Schneider, 2010). This is the notion that women who have made it to the top believe that if they achieved high-ranking status without assistance, then other women can do the same. While this concept has been presented within the literature, the participants' experiences do not support this narrative. For example, Elizabeth shared, "I am not a person who gets to a position and says, 'Well, I'm here now; everybody else figure it out.' I didn't have to figure it

out by myself." This was further emphasized by participants' desire to remain in their field, in part, because there is still a need to recruit and retain persons of color.

Just as participants sought to support aspiring women leaders, they also expressed an obligation to support other Black administrators. Elizabeth alluded to this when she shared that there is an "allegiance as people of color to excellence and to make sure that when we're in a space, that we do the best that we can." For this participant, perseverance was important. While recognizing that there is work on the part of the individual, Elizabeth also stressed, "Now if the system or the institution is standing in our way and I'm in a place to help, then I'll do that." In this regard, Elizabeth's statement describes a form of advocacy that relates to critical race theory in that she challenges policies and policymaking practices that may promote bias, stereotypes, and discrimination (Howard-Hamilton, 2003). Thus, participants genuinely cared about the progress of aspiring leaders and viewed advocacy for minoritized groups as an expectation and welcomed responsibility. In this vein, it may be the case that the "Queen Bee" phenomenon has racial intersections that pertain to some groups of women but not others.

## The ERA Model: Reflections and Potential Limitations

While participants shared many experiences that support the ERA model, other areas serve as a limitation. More specifically, the ERA model is transparent on items to consider for Black administrators. However, it is not as clear on items of intersectionality, specifically to gender and race. This presents the need to consider whether the ERA model should be expanded to encompass components that experienced by Black women in leadership. For example, the ERA model reports that equitable incentive packages should be presented to Black administrators; however, the model does not expand or allude to Black women leaders and the challenges associated with negotiations, as it pertains to the incentive package process.

105

The experiences of participants prior to serving in the role of CAO worked to support the various components found within the ERA model. However, it may be worthy to consider whether the ERA model is applicable for Black women within positions including and beyond the CAO role. For example, it may be worthy to consider whether various components within the ERA model become more pertinent and should be sought after, strategically, once positions such as CAO have been obtained. This includes heightened attention to leadership opportunities and mentorship. This is presented for consideration because participants' experiences centered mostly on the category of engagement, as illustrated within the ERA model.

Just as there are general reflections there are also limitations present within this study. Overall, participants spoke positively of their experiences, and times seemed reluctant to speak against their institution. For example, when various occurrences could have been interpreted as a hindrance, participants did not feel it was on the part of the institution and/or found a way to interpret the experience as a necessary part of the process. This reinterpretation of negative experiences may be a form of articulated social desirability given the generally powerful role these women play on their campuses. As expressed, it is possible, given the participants classification or role within the institution that they are in a mindset of promotion, thereby making it a challenge to reference the institution negativity. Another alternative is that participants have been successful within this system, as evidenced by their obtainment of the CAO position, and may frame their situation as one of institutional support. While this or other factors could have contributed, overall it limited a deeper review of potential systemic/institutional racism that may be present.

Another limitation present within this study centered on participants' tendency to deflect from their negative experiences by speaking in generalized tones rather than offering a vignette

from their personal experience. For example, one participant spoke to the challenges of negotiation and how she did not advocate for herself upon hire. As the participant continued to share information the discussion went from her personal experience to a more general reference of "women need[ing] to know what they are worth." This phrasing limits the personal account of the participant. While this could be associated with the participant's discomfort of personal disclosure it is also possible that the line of questioning could have been enhanced. Follow up questions could have been presented to pull out this information. For example, the participant could have been asked, "from your experience, do you feel that you know your worth and, if so, how do you communicate that others?" It is believed that this method would have challenged participants desire to deflect and draw more onto their personal narratives.

The third limitation present within this study pertains to the criteria for participation, specifically Black women CAOs from four year public doctoral degree granting institutions, non HBCU. While attempts were made to secure more than three participants, it is the researchers belief that expanding the participant pool to institutional types that are also HBCU would have offered more participants for consideration and also provided the opportunity to compare and contrast experiences within these institutional categories. Overall, expanding the pool would have provided more participants and potentially more data to analyze.

The final limitation presented for consideration focuses on the questions presented to participants. Rather than asking questions specific to the ERA model during the interview, such as incentive packages, orientation programs, and community relations, it could have been advantageous to implement five to 10 structured questions in the initial questionnaire participants were asked to complete. This amendment could have worked to capture participants' experiences in relation to the ERA model upfront, providing more time to explore and discuss experiences as

well as factors that may have played a role in their career trajectory that are outside of the framework. This may be beneficial to understand what factors may compliment the ERA model. Additionally, conducting interviews face to face, opposed to over the phone could have worked to gather more information from participants. This is stated because non-verbal cues may indicate a need to probe and explore topics further.

It is also worthy to note that while carrying out this study, time constraints could not be avoided. Each participant was accommodating and worked to take part in this interview despite their pre-existing busy calendar. However, the reduced time played a factor in the amount of information that could be obtained from each participant. I believe that had additional time been provided, participants would have shared more information that could further speak to their experience.

### Recommendations for Future Research

In review of this study, information was provided that worked to validate existing literature. There was also new information presented by participants that is worthy of further exploration. While this study focused solely on Black women CAO, I recommend that consideration be given to examining factors that may hinder and/or support career advancement of CAO within other minoritized groups. This is recommended because the experiences of Black women do not represent the experiences of all minoritized groups. For this reason, I suggest that further research is done.

Participants also alluded to but did not expound on search firms charged with the responsibility to recruit, nominate, and/or select the final candidate of choice for the CAO position. While this may be a common experience with senior administration, it also presents an opportunity to examine the role that search firms have within the recruitment process. For

example, what are the experiences of individuals who participate in a search firm recruitment and selection process? How do these experiences align or differ from those who do not participate in a recruitment and selection process that is facilitated by a search firm? This information would contribute to existing literature and may work to assist up-and-coming leaders in understanding the role that search firms have within the job search process.

Another area worthy of study centers on the impact of mental health and self-care. Participants expressed that faith helps to keep them calm, focused, and grounded. While this is one method there are many strategies to support mental health and self-care needs. For example, it may be important to explore the role of counseling for Black women in higher education leadership. In considering some of the challenges highlighted within the literature, of women and Black women experiencing isolation and lack of belongingness, it would be beneficial to understand how women and Black women specifically, address their own mental health needs. This becomes more important considering the rise of college student mental-health concerns nationwide. More specific counseling for Black women higher education leaders may work to serve a dual purpose; to provide support for Black women to address their own needs and to provide them with support to take care of the needs of others. Self-care, although not identical to mental health is another avenue through which Black women are able to be intentional with personal development. While participants of this study described faith as the primary focus of their self-care and mental health needs it is also important to explore other methods and strategies that can be utilized to serve as a healthy form of self-care. For this reason, further study may be needed in this area.

## Conclusion

In carrying out this study, I anticipated learning more about the personal and institutional factors that both hindered and supported the career advancement of Black women CAO. In addition to learning more about the experiences of Black women leaders, I was inspired by their tenacity, honesty, and words of encouragement for aspiring Black women CAO. The information shared by participants aligned with existing literature, with participants providing information that centered largely on the subcategory of mentorship. While the information provided by participants was largely positive recounts of experiences their narratives illustrate both the progress and opportunities that exist moving forward. One of the most significant contributions was participants emphasis on the role of mentorship in career development. Participants stressed the significance of positive mentorship experiences and reported it as the link to other subcategories found within engagement and advancement opportunities. Overall, this study sought to highlight the experiences of Black women senior administrators in higher education and shows the need for continued advocacy to increase their representation in the workplace.

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# APPENDIX A: INSTITUTION REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL LETTER

**EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY**
**University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board**
4N-64 Brody Medical Sciences Building· Mail Stop 682
600 Moye Boulevard · Greenville, NC 27834
Office **252-744-2914** · Fax **252-744-2284** ·
**www.ecu.edu/ORIC/irb**

## Notification of Initial Approval: Expedited

From:      Social/Behavioral IRB
To:        Tamika Wordlow
CC:
           Crystal Chambers
           Tamika Wordlow
Date:      1/16/2018
Re:        UMCIRB 17-002630
           Second in Command

I am pleased to inform you that your Expedited Application was approved. Approval of the study and any consent form(s) is for the period of 1/15/2018  to 1/14/2019. The research study is eligible for review under expedited category #6, 7. The Chairperson (or designee) deemed this study no more than minimal risk.

Changes to this approved research may not be initiated without UMCIRB review except when necessary to eliminate an apparent immediate hazard to the participant.  All unanticipated problems involving risks to participants and others must be promptly reported to the UMCIRB.  The investigator must submit a continuing review/closure application to the UMCIRB prior to the date of study expiration.  The Investigator must adhere to all reporting requirements for this study.

Approved consent documents with the IRB approval date stamped on the document should be used to consent participants (consent documents with the IRB approval date stamp are found under the Documents tab in the study workspace).

The approval includes the following items:

| Name | Description |
| --- | --- |
| Appendix D Participant Demographic Form | Surveys and Questionnaires |
| Appendix E Interview Protocol | Interview/Focus Group Scripts/Questions |
| Consent form | Recruitment Documents/Scripts |
| Dissertation Proposal | Study Protocol or Grant Application |
| Informed Consent | Consent Forms |

The Chairperson (or designee) does not have a potential for conflict of interest on this study.

# APPENDIX B: NARRATIVE RESEARCH CONSENT LETTER

January 1, 2018

Dear Potential Research Study Participant,

I am an EdD student at East Carolina University (ECU) in the Educational Leadership department of the College of Education. I am asking you to take part in my research student entitled, "Second in Command: Examining the factors that impact the career advancement of Black women chief academic officers."

The purpose of this research is to explore factors that hinder and/or support the advancement of Black women Chief Academic Officers (CAO). Interviews will be conducted to help identify themes regarding experiences that may impact the advancement of Black women into senior leadership positions within higher education. By doing this research I hope to learn about the collective experiences of participants, specific to recruitment and engagement efforts that attracted them to their positions; practices, positive or negative, that have contributed to their decision to remain in their position; discriminatory practices perceived within one's career development (if any); and experiences of marginalization as an underrepresented minority in the profession (if any).

The amount of time it will take you to complete participation is 1-2 hours. If you agree to take part in this research you will be asked questions that relate to your career, which may include factors that led to your interest in the field and ultimately this position.

This research is overseen by the ECU Institutional Review Board (IRB). Therefore some of the IRB members or the IRB staff may need to review my research data. However, the information you provide during our interview will not be linked to you. Pseudonyms for both you and your institution will be created. Further, please know that I will take precautions to ensure that anyone not authorized to see your identity will not be given that information.

If you have questions about your rights when taking part in this research, please contact the Office of Research Integrity & Compliance (ORIC) at phone number 252-744-2914 (weekdays, 8:00 am – 5:00pm). If you would like to report a complaint or concern about this research study, call the Director of ORIC, at 252-744-1971.

Your participation is completely voluntary. Additionally, you may discontinue participation at any point. If you decide you are willing to take part in this study, please complete the following link (Click here) . I will then work to schedule a one-on-one interview at a time convenient for you. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Tamika Wordlow
Principal Investigator

# APPENDIX C: PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHIC FORM

The following questions are presented to collect general information regarding the demographics of the population being interviewed.

(Once a potential participant has clicked on the link) Thank you for your consideration to participate in this research study! Please complete the information listed below. Should your information support the criteria for this study I will work to contact you to schedule a one-on-one interview, which will occur at a time and location most convenient for you.

1.) Please enter your first and last name

2.) What is your current title/position

3.) What is your current institutional classification?

4.) How long have you worked in higher education?

   a. Less than 5 years
   b. 5-7 years
   c. 7 or more years

5.) How long (i.e. years) have you served in your current role?

   a. Less than 5 years
   b. 5-7 years
   c. 7 or more years

6.) What is your highest degree of completion?

   a. Bachelor's
   b. Masters
   c. PhD, EdD, or JD

7.) Please enter your preferred contact method (i.e. email address and/or phone number including area code)

8.) Please specify your availability

   a. Weekdays (standard business hours)
   b. Weekdays (after 5pm)
   c. Weekends Only
   d. Schedule varies please work to confirm a date & time

Thank you for completing this form. You will be contacted shortly regarding your submission.

# APPENDIX D: INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

*East Carolina University*

# Informed Consent to Participate in Research
Information to consider before taking part in research that has no more than minimal risk.

Title of Research Study: Second in Command: Examining the factors that impact the career advancement of Black women chief academic officers.

Principal Investigator: Tamika Wordlow
Institution, Department or Division: ECU School of Education; Educational Leadership
Address: 364 Wright Building, Greenville, NC 27834
Telephone #: 252-328-5665
Study Coordinator : Dr. Crystal Chambers, Chair
Telephone #: 252-328-4649

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Researchers at East Carolina University (ECU) study issues related to society, health problems, environmental problems, behavior problems and the human condition. To do this, we need the help of volunteers who are willing to take part in research.

**Why am I being invited to take part in this research?**
The purpose of this study is to explore factors that influence the advancement of Black women Chief Academic Officers (CAO). Interviews will be conducted to help identify themes regarding experiences that may impact the advancement of Black women into senior leadership positions within higher education.

You are being invited to take part in this research because of your experience serving in the capacity of Chief Academic Officer/Provost at a four-year public doctoral degree granting institution (non-HBCU). The decision to take part in this research is yours to make. By doing this research I hope to learn about the collective experience of participants, specific to factors that may hinder and/or support career advancement. The researcher will seek to learn information regarding the recruitment and engagement efforts that attracted them to their positions; experiences, positive or negative, that have contributed to their decision to remain in their position and/or institution; discriminatory practices perceived within one's career development (if any); and experiences of marginalization as an underrepresented minority in the profession (if any).

If you volunteer to take part in this research, you will be one of about 3 people to do so.

**Are there reasons I should not take part in this research?**
The research participant will be employed as a Chief Academic Officer/Provost of a 4 year public doctoral degree granting institution (non-HBCU). Additionally, the research participant will self-identify as a Black woman and will have agreed to participate in the study.

**What other choices do I have if I do not take part in this research?**
You can choose not to participate.


**Where is the research going to take place and how long will it last?**
The research will be conducted in person, when feasible. Should this option not be available FaceTime, Skype, and/or Teleconference will be used as an alternative method. Questions will be open-ended, to allow participants to share their experience without prompting. The researcher will follow the lead of the participant, presenting follow up questions based on initial information shared by the participant. Given the topic, the researcher may conduct multiple interviews per participant to fully capture the lived experiences of participants. The total amount of time you will be asked to volunteer for this study is 1-2 hours.


**What will I be asked to do?**
You will be asked to do the following: actively participate during the interview. Please know that pseudonyms will be provided since the assumption is participates may wish to remain anonymous. As shared, interview questions shall consist of open-ended questions. Participates will be encouraged to share information regarding their lived experiences as they desire. Follow up questions may be presented to better understand how these experiences influence the participant's recruitment, engagement, and advancement. Audiotaping will be implemented, to be used for transcription following the interview. Transcriptions will be provided to the participant to ensure accuracy of information collected during the interview.


**What might I experience if I take part in the research?**
We don't know of any risks (the chance of harm) associated with this research. Any risks that may occur with this research are no more than what you would experience in everyday life. We don't know if you will benefit from taking part in this study. There may not be any personal benefit to you but the information gained by doing this research may help others in the future.


**Will I be paid for taking part in this research?**
We will not be able to pay you for the time you volunteer while being in this study.


**Will it cost me to take part in this research?**
 It will not cost you any money to be part of the research.


**Who will know that I took part in this research and learn personal information about me?**
ECU (the people and organizations listed below) may know that you took part in this research and may see information about you that is normally kept private. With your permission, these people may use your private information to do this research:
- The specified study team (my dissertation committee) will know that you took part in this research and may see information about you. However, any published work as a result of this study will include the use of pseudonyms, as mentioned above.


**How will you keep the information you collect about me secure?  How long will you keep it?**
The data will be maintained by the researcher for three years after the completion of the research, by recommendation of the Institutional Review Board. Electronic transcriptions and recordings will be maintained by the researcher on her personal computer. After three years, all interviews will be erased and copies of data collection will be destroyed. (Participants may request that interviews not be audio-recorded. However this may result in the researcher not fully capturing the interview)

**What if I decide I don't want to continue in this research?**

You can stop at any time after it has already started. There will be no consequences if you stop and you will not be criticized. You will not lose any benefits that you normally receive.

**Who should I contact if I have questions?**

The people conducting this study will be able to answer any questions concerning this research, now or in the future. You may contact the Principal Investigator at 252-328-5665 (weekdays, between 8:00 am and 5:00pm).

If you have questions about your rights as someone taking part in research, you may call the Office of Research Integrity & Compliance (ORIC) at phone number 252-744-2914 (days, 8:00 am-5:00 pm). If you would like to report a complaint or concern about this research study, you may call the Director of the ORIC, at 252-744-1971

**Are there any Conflicts of Interest I should know about?**

The Principal Investigator nor the specified study team (dissertation committee) has a potential conflict of interest to disclose pertaining to this study.

**I have decided I want to take part in this research. What should I do now?**

The person obtaining informed consent will ask you to read the following and if you agree, you should sign this form:

- I have read (or had read to me) all of the above information.
- I have had an opportunity to ask questions about things in this research I did not understand and have received satisfactory answers.
- I know that I can stop taking part in this study at any time.
- By signing this informed consent form, I am not giving up any of my rights.
- I have been given a copy of this consent document, and it is mine to keep.

_____     _____

**Participant's Name  (PRINT)**          **Signature**          **Date**


**Person Obtaining Informed Consent**:  I have conducted the initial informed consent process. I have orally reviewed the contents of the consent document with the person who has signed above, and answered all of the person's questions about the research.

_____

**Person Obtaining Consent  (PRINT)**          **Signature**          **Date**

**APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL**

**QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW NARRATIVE RESEARCH: A QUESTION POOL**

Data to be explored includes: What are the lived experiences of Black women Chief Academic Officers? How have the lived experiences, personal or professional, impact the advancement of Black women Chief Academic Officers? What can participants tell us about the engagement and recruitment efforts that initially brought them to their positions at their respective institutions? What effect did retention practices have on their decisions to remain in various positions throughout their careers? What personal experiences may have led to alienation and/or marginalization as underrepresented minorities in the profession, if any? What discriminatory practices, if any, have participants perceived throughout their development careers? Have various institutional factors supported career outcomes for individuals, in their own views? Have various institutional factors hindered career outcomes for individuals, in their own views? Have various personal factors supported career outcomes for individuals, in their own views? Have various personal factors hindered career outcomes for individuals, in their own views?

*Questions specific to the framework, only used by the researcher if necessary to facilitate conversation between researcher and participant:*

**Pre-engagement**

*For each professional level position that you have held within higher education:*

How did you find out about this position?

Was the initial interview in person, by phone, or by other means?

Were you actively recruited for your role or did you seek out the opportunity?

Describe the agenda of the on-site interview, including the people you met, their positions, and the subject of the conversations.

What was the nature and tone of the contacts that you had with this institution during the hiring process? Did they use email, written letters, phone calls, or other means?

Reflect upon recruiting practices that you experienced when entering the profession.

Recall any salient points that need to be made regarding your negotiation process with your employer. How were salary and benefits presented to you? Was there any room for negotiations?

Described in detail the orientation program that you underwent when joining your institution.

Are issues around the subject of diversity covered at your institution during orientation? Are diversity issues discussed proactively by your institution? Or by your university advancement division? How were/are they handled, if at all?

Reflect upon your institution's commitment to the principles of diversity.

Discuss any details regarding the incentive package offered by your  institution(s) to you during negotiations. In addition to salary and benefits, were any special "perks" such as professional development training, additional leave time, etc. offered?

**Engagement**

*For each professional level position that you have held within higher education:*

What efforts have you made to engage with the local community organizations? What efforts, if any, have you made to connect with the African American community?

What are some of the organization that you have become involved with due to your professional role with your institution?

Are the opportunities you have taken or have been granted that have empowered you within your institution? Such as leading search committees? Serving on internal or external institutional boards? Governance roles? Etc.?

Reflect upon your efforts to engage with the local community, both at the University and in the broader town/city area. Recall any good or bad experiences in this regard.

State the leadership opportunities that you have taken advantage of/utilize at your respective institutions. Were leadership opportunities primarily pursued by you? Did your employer encourage pursuit of opportunities?

Discuss any formalized mentoring programs at your institution. Were you actively involved? Did your institution encourage your involvement?

Were any alternative plans made for time commitments that you have may allocated toward mentoring? Have you made any commitments to informal mentoring?

Do you find yourself mentoring a higher percentage of minority students/young professionals?

What type of in-service professional development opportunities have you been granted? Have you attended conferences regarding your specific area of specialty?

Have you been actively recruited or chosen to participate in organizations with subgroups pertaining to minority professionals in your subarea or expertise?

**<u>Advancement</u>**

*For each professional level position that you have held within higher education:*

Have you been granted professional release time to pursue other endeavors? If so, did you actively request the time or was the subject mentioned to you by your employer? What is your opinion regarding the validity or value of professional release time? If you have been granted leave time, how have you used the time?

Describe or list/provide details of professional development conference in which you have participated. Have you been granted professional development monies that you have been able to

allocate toward meaningful career development/educative causes? How often are professional development opportunities available?

Do you have to pursue opportunities that push your professional boundaries/contribute to greater learning, or are they encouraged? What activities have you participated in that you might describe as "beyond diversity experience"? For example, have you participated in groups/projects that have contributed to a better understanding of operations on your entire campus/at your institution?

Do you have to actively pursue activities beyond the subject of diversity or do they become available? Do you notice any differences internally versus externally in terms of opportunity availability?

**Outcomes**

*For each professional level position that you have held within higher education:*
Regarding retention, what efforts have you made professionally that you would consider contributing toward your institutions' desire to retain you as an employee? What efforts have your institutions made to contribute toward the retention of you as an employee? Would you say you attracted the desire to retain you as an employee or are the efforts primarily on the institutions' part in your view?

Regarding career advancement, what efforts have you seen that entails your promotion within and outside your home institution? What professional conferences have you been able to

participate in due to an investment in you by your employer (i.e., the sending of you to a conference to present, participate, learn, etc.)?

Did you actively pursue professional development opportunities, or were you assigned to participate/attend them (ex: conferences) by your employer?

## **Overall**

*For each professional level position that you have held within higher education:*

Do you subscribe to what might be described as the principles of diversity and affirmative action? If so/if not, why/why not?

Have you made meaningful connections within the African American community internal or your institution and external to your surrounding community? What proactive steps have you made regarding the establishment of relationships within the surrounding African-American community in your area?

What efforts have you made to become involved with mainstream volunteer opportunities and organizations in your town/city area where your institution is located?

Are there any additional elements or facts that you might share regarding your experience as an African-American within the field?