

Fall 11-1-2016

## **Institutional Racism through the Eyes of African American Male Faculty at Community Colleges in the Pacific Northwest**

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# Institutional Racism through the Eyes of African American Male Faculty at Community Colleges in the Pacific Northwest

Kimberly Harden

*Concordia University - Portland*

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Concordia University (Portland)

College of Education

Doctorate of Education Program

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INSTITUTIONAL RACISM THROUGH THE EYES OF AFRICAN AMERICAN  
MALE FACULTY AT COMMUNITY COLLEGES IN  
THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST

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Concordia University – Portland

College of Education

Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the College of Education

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education in

Transformational Leadership

Committee Chair, Julie McCann, Ph.D.

La'Toya Thomas-Dixon, Ed.D.

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Portland, Oregon

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## Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore the lived experiences of African American male faculty at community colleges in the Pacific Northwest. Regional data mirrors national statistics denoting the low number of faculty of color working at state-funded community colleges. The literature reviewed for this study suggests that African American male faculty experience racism and gender bias during their academic career journeys. This study sought insight from five African American male faculty to answer the overarching research question: What are the possible perceived institutional barriers that contribute to the underrepresentation of African American male faculty? These individuals were purposefully selected because their race, gender, and current professional position in higher education qualified them to provide important insights into the phenomenon being studied. Three methods of data collection were used in this study: (a) a biographical questionnaire, (b) semistructured interviews, and (c) field notes. Using critical race theory as the basis of analysis, this study suggests that African American male faculty at public, two-year, predominantly White institutions in the Pacific Northwest face institutional barriers to advancement based on race and gender. Institutions of higher education may find the results of this study helpful as they examine their practices and policies and purposefully create sustainable strategic diversity initiatives.

*Keywords:* African American, barriers, bias, career advancement, critical race theory, diversity, faculty, institutional barriers, male, microaggression, predominantly White institution, promotion, racism, recruitment, retention

## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my father, William (Bill) Harden. You taught me how to persevere and to have faith. Because of you, I am the strong woman I am today. Though you did not live to see me earn my doctorate, I felt your presence every step of the way. I love and miss you so much. I know you are dancing and rejoicing in Heaven.

To my nephew Jaylan, may God continue to protect and guide you as you navigate life as a young African-American man. I love you more than words can express and I hope all of your dreams come true.

The dissertation is also dedicated to Trayvon Martin, Jordan Davis, LaQuan McDonald, Eric Garner, Freddie Gray, Walter Scott, Brendon Glenn, Philando Castile, Alton Sterling, Tamir Rice, Samuel DuBose, Terence Crutcher, Keith Lamont Scott, Alfred Okwera Olango, Joseph Mann, and Michael Sabbie. I am sorry that you lived in a country that disrespects, devalues, and destroys the lives of African-American men. May you all rest in paradise.

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

Community colleges are viewed as accessible, affordable, and flexible institutions of higher education that understand, respect, and embrace diversity. The diversity found on community college campuses is reflective of that in the larger society in which we live (Zamani, 2003). State-funded community colleges provide higher education to culturally diverse student populations. However, these institutions have failed to diversify their workforce to mirror the student body population (Crawford & Smith, 2005). Faculty and administrators of color are grossly underrepresented (Aguirre, 1995, 2000; Collins, 1990; Gainene & Boice, 1993; Perna, 2001; Phillips, 2004; Swoboda, 1993; Thompson, 2008).

Research has shown that there is a lack of representation of African American faculty in institutions of higher education (Anderson et al., 1993; Jackson, 2008; JBHE, 2001; Turner, Myers, & Creswell, 1999). A 2014 study conducted by the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (D. DuPree, personal communication, February 12, 2016) found that 84% of full-time faculty at community colleges in the Pacific Northwest were White, and 53% were female. Given the number of White full-time and part-time faculty, both male and female, employed at the community colleges in the Pacific Northwest, these schools are deemed predominantly White institutions (PWIs). Williams (1989) defined the PWI as “an institution where the majority of faculty and administration are white, even if the student body has a large number of people of color” (p. 100).

### **Background of the Problem**

The majority of students enrolled at public, two-year institutions in the U.S. are students of color (American Association of Community Colleges, 2016). Community colleges throughout the Pacific Northwest also serve a majority of students of color. Community colleges

in King County, Washington, for example, have a higher student diversity score than the national 0.52 average (Community College Review, 2016). However, student diversity at community colleges in the Pacific Northwest does not translate into a diverse faculty. Data from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (n.d.) show that 25 African American males served as full-time faculty members in Oregon and 50 worked the community colleges in Washington State during the 2013-2014 academic year. No African American males worked as full-time faculty in Idaho. (See Appendix A.)

This data mirrors national statistics denoting the low number of faculty of color working in higher education. A report by the National Center for Education Statistics (2015) determined that African Americans comprise only 6% of all full-time faculty. African Americans faculty represent nearly the same numbers as they did two decades ago (Trower & Chait, 2002). Several studies found that African American male faculty are underrepresented and have lower academic rank and stature than their White counterparts (Allen, Epps, Guillory, Suh, & Bonous-Hammarth, 2000; Jackson, 2006; Turner, Myers, & Creswell, 1999; Wood, Nevarez, & Hilton, 2015).

### **Statement of the Problem**

The exploitation, segregation, discrimination, and general mistreatment of African Americans left a unique historical wound that continues to affect how others view and behave toward African Americans, particularly African-American males. African American men continue to face a number of challenges that impede their success both in the workplace and on campuses of higher education (Bailey & Moore, 2004). According to Allen, Epps, Guillory, Suh, and Bonous-Hammarth (2000), African American faculty are disadvantaged due to racial bias and oppression. African American men experience institutional barriers, such as racism,

sexism, discrimination, and academic bullying, that negatively affect their professional careers (Cornileus, 2012) and can result in psychological stress (Kessler, Mickelson, & Williams, 1999; Landrine & Klonoff, 1996; Watkins et al., 2006).

Any person of color may face barriers of racial oppression, workplace bullying, and/or lack of support; however, African American men were the focus of this research. The purpose of this study was to examine the lived experiences of African American male faculty at public, two-year PWIs in the Pacific Northwest and to explore the institutional barriers African American male faculty face while aspiring to full-time, tenure-track, or leadership positions in higher education. Though the Civil Rights Act of 1964 enabled African Americans to pursue a variety of educational and professional opportunities (U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.), full-time positions in the academy have consistently been elusive, especially for people of color (Dugger, 2011). African Americans, particularly males, have been relegated to part-time and non-tenure track faculty positions (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015).

### **Purpose of the Study**

Since there are few faculty of color—and even fewer African American male faculty—present at public two-year and four-year higher education institutions (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015), insight gained from the men interviewed for this study will benefit other African American male faculty as they navigate barriers to career advancement in higher education. The information gleaned not only will add to the body of knowledge of African American males in higher education but also may be useful in determining recruitment, retention, and promotion strategies for African American men. Additionally, college

administrators may recognize and begin to dismantle institutional barriers by developing inclusive policies that support a diverse campus culture.

My interest in this study is a personal one. I identify as a person of color, and for nearly four years I have served as faculty at a public, two-year institution of higher education. I became curious about the barriers faculty of color face when one of my students asked for a hug and stated that she was “thrilled to finally have a Black instructor, someone who understands.” I reflected on the comment and realized that my own first encounter with faculty of color didn’t take place until I was in my doctorate program. I began to ask myself, “Where are the other African American instructors and administrators? How is it that I teach at a college that has been nationally recognized for its diverse student population, but do not see many faculty of color on campus? Why are African American faculty not as visible on campus as other groups? Where are the Black male faculty? What barriers do faculty of color face, particularly male faculty, since there are fewer African American male faculty on campus than African American females?”

As a woman of color and as a faculty member, I have encouraged students, students of color particularly, to pursue higher education. Given that gender shapes experiences and expectations (Griffin & Reddick, 2011), I felt ill-equipped to advise Black male students and sought out African American male faculty to serve as mentors. The institution, however, had few African American male faculty. This reality led me to my research questions.

## **Research Questions**

The research questions were developed to examine the lived experiences of African American male faculty at public, two-year PWIs in the Pacific Northwest. This study is guided by one overarching research question and two subquestions:

1. What are the possible perceived institutional barriers that contribute to the underrepresentation of African American male faculty?
  - a. How have perceived barriers hindered the successful advancement of African American males in obtaining full-time, tenured, or leadership positions?
  - b. What strategies have such males used to cope with or overcome perceived institutional barriers?

## **Significance of the Study**

The significance of this study to higher education, and to society at large, is that it will prove useful for African American males who desire a full-time, tenured, or leadership position at a PWI, as well as for academic institutions that are looking to increase the number of and support the advancement of current and aspiring African American male faculty. African American men have made significant gains in the field of higher education; however, the disparity in the number of African American males who will serve as faculty at public, two-year community colleges is not expected to increase (Strauss, 2015). The dearth of African American male faculty is of great concern because it affects the academic success of African American college students (Malone & Malone, 2001; Umbach, 2006). The student–faculty relationship is a significant indicator of academic achievement (Tracey & Sedlacek, 1985). Positive relationships with faculty have been correlated with African American student academic achievement; African American students believe African American faculty members make more of an effort to interact



with them and are more supportive of their educational endeavors (Davis, 1994). Harper (2012) argued:

Those who are interested in Black male student success have much to learn from Black men who have actually been successful. To increase their educational attainment, the popular one-sided emphasis on failure and low-performing Black male undergraduates must be counterbalanced with insights gathered from those who somehow manage to navigate their way to and through higher education, despite all that is stacked against them. (p. 1)

This study will provide insight into challenges experienced by African American male faculty during their journey toward full-time, tenured, or leadership positions at public, two-year PWIs, provide recommendations to address the disparity in the number of African American males serving as faculty at institutions of higher education, and add to the limited body of research regarding the institutional barriers African American male faculty face in academe.

### **Research Design**

This study used Portraiture, a qualitative research methodology, to examine how the men of the study described their professional experiences in higher education. Portraiture is a method of qualitative research in which an investigator seeks “to record and interpret the perspectives and experiences of the people they are studying, documenting their voices and their visions—their authority, knowledge, and wisdom” (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. xv). Employing a qualitative research approach enabled this researcher to obtain deeper insight into the perceived institutional barriers African American male faculty face at PWIs as well as into the strategies used to overcome obstacles to success (Glatthorn & Joyner, 2005).

Purposeful sampling was used in this study, and participants were matched to specified criteria. Three methods of data collection were used in the study: (a) biographical questionnaire, (b) semistructured interview questions, and (c) field notes. For this study, Merriam's (2009) data management system was employed to assist with data analysis.

A purposive sample of African American male faculty who registered to attend the 20th annual Washington State Faculty and Staff of Color Conference (WA-FSOCC) and currently teach at a community college was invited to participate in this study. The participants, who (a) self-identified as male; (b) self-identified as African, African American, Black, or Black American; (c) worked at the time the study was conducted at a public, two-year institution of higher education in the Pacific Northwest, were willing and able to participate in the study. Faculty members were adults older than 18 years. Participants were not from a vulnerable population.

### **Conceptual Framework**

Critical race theory (CRT) was the conceptual framework that enabled this researcher to understand some of the barriers African American males face in their roles as faculty members at public, two-year institutions of higher education. Critical race theory is a conceptual framework created in the 1970s by African American, Latino, and Asian attorneys and social activists to address the relationship between race, the law, and other societal issues (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). Critical race theory highlights both the personal and relational aspects of race-based oppression, as well as the structural economic conditions shaping race-based experience and possibilities (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012).

The conceptual framework of CRT offers a platform for a Black male to use his own voice to share his experiences through narrative storytelling and, in this case, allowed the

researcher to recognize how race and gender influence his journey to full-time or tenured faculty. Critical race theory allows the researcher to recognize that the detailed narrative accounts that the African American male faculty provided are essential to understanding race relations at institutions of higher education and how they affect marginalized groups. As Delgado and Stefancic (2012) noted, stories from people of color have a different frame of reference, one far removed from those of the dominant cultural group. It is important that the counterstory of racialized dynamics be heard and shared. According to Shuman (2006), “People tell stories about their own experiences and then come to understand each other better” (p. 149).

### **Assumptions, Limitation, and Scope**

Two assumptions were relevant to the study: (a) all participants would be truthful and honest when providing their responses and sharing their perceptions of challenges and barriers they encountered during their journey as faculty members at public community colleges; and (b) the data collected would provide a detailed description of the institutional barriers that aspiring African American male faculty may encounter as they pursue a career in higher education, as well as some strategies that may assist them in reaching their professional goals.

A limitation of this study was that all the men who were interviewed taught at a public, two-year community college in the Pacific Northwest. Participants from other geographical locations were not included in this study. Future research is needed to replicate this study across other regions and other types of academic institutions, because the African American participants in this study were located in the Pacific Northwest and worked at public, two-year institutions of higher education. It would be valuable to see whether the findings are transferable to other institutions across the country.

## Organization of the Study

This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 provides an introduction into the study and explains the background of the problem, the significance of the study, and the conceptual framework; it also offers definitions used throughout the study. Chapter 2, the literature review, describes the historical plight of African American males in higher education; presents relevant literature regarding institutional barriers such as colorblind racism, sexism, and academic workplace bullying in academia in addition to literature that reports on the barriers African American male faculty face regarding hiring, retention, and career advancement; and offers a review of the conceptual framework used for the study. Chapter 3 provides explanations for the purpose of the study, the qualitative methodology used, and the participant selection process. This chapter also explains the data collection and data analysis procedures that will be used and addresses limitations of the study. Chapter 4 presents the qualitative data collected for this study through data analysis. The final section, Chapter 5, reiterates the purpose of the study and provides discussion and recommendations for future research.

## Definition of Terms

**African American or Black:** a citizen of the United States with total or partial ancestry from one of the Black racial groups of Africa. In this study, the terms *African American* and *Black* are used interchangeably.

**Colorblind racism:** an ideology used primarily by Whites to defend the racial status quo (Bonilla-Silva, 2003).

**Community college:** any accredited two-year institution offering an Associate of Arts or an Associate of Science as its highest degree (Cohen & Brawer, 1996).

**Critical race theory (CRT):** a theory that focuses on the relationships among race, the law, and other societal issues. The theory posits that institutional racism exists in the dominant culture and contributes to the oppression and marginalization of people of color (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012).

**Institutional barriers:** policies, procedures, or conditions that systematically discriminate against or oppress certain groups of people (National Center for Women and Information Technology, n.d.).

**Predominantly White institution (PWI):** an institution where the majority of faculty and administration have historically and predominantly been White, even if the student body has a large number of people of color (Williams, 1989).

**Racism:** “the conscious or unconscious, intentional or unintentional enactment of racial power, grounded in racial prejudice, by an individual or group against another individual or group perceived to have lower racial status” (Singleton & Linton, 2006, p. 40).

**Strategic colorblindness:** the patterns of behaviors used by Whites to avoid acknowledging race-related topics, to appear unbiased, and even to pretend not to see racial differences (Apfelbaum, Sommers, & Norton, 2008, p. 918).

**Underrepresentation:** inadequate or disproportionately low representation.

### **Summary**

African American male faculty are grossly underrepresented in academia (Aguirre, 1995; Allen, Epps, Guillory, Suh, & Bonous-Hammarth, 2000; Anderson et al., 1993; Collins, 1990; Jackson, 2006). The relevant literature suggests that race and gender influence the lives of African American men. Issues of racial and gendered stereotypes impede the professional advancement of African American male faculty. Advancement can include promotions such as

moving from adjunct professor, to tenure-track assistant professor, to tenured professor, to full professor. Career advancement can also mean promotion to an administrative leadership position, such as department chair, program chair, associate dean, dean, vice president, or school president. However, these advancements can be difficult for African American faculty to obtain (Alex-Assensoh, 2003; Collins, 1990; Cornelius, Moor, & Gray, 1997; Gasman, Kim, & Nguyen, 2011). Only by developing an understanding of the institutional barriers can effective strategies be developed and implemented to help African American males obtain full-time, tenured, or leadership positions in higher education. Critical race theory is the conceptual framework used in this study, because it offers a platform for African American men to share their challenges and triumphs in the academy in their own words. Few studies examine the perceptions and lived experiences of African American male faculty at public, two-year predominantly White institutions and explore the strategies used to cope with or overcome perceived institutional barriers.

This chapter provided an introduction to this qualitative research study, gave an explanation of the significance of the study to the field. This chapter included assumptions, information about the organization of the study, and a definition of terms. The following chapter will provide an introduction to the historical plight of African American men in higher education and the perceived institutional barriers that hinder their advancement to full-time, tenured, and/or leadership positions in the academy.

## **Chapter 2: Review of Literature**

This chapter is separated into two sections. The first provides a brief historical overview of the entry of African American men into the American higher education system. The chapter discussion presents issues that have affected African American males working within the academy. This study extended and refined knowledge in the area of navigating the barriers for advancement of African American male faculty at mainstream institutions of higher education and manifests mechanisms to allow them to navigate their careers successfully. The second section of this chapter presents a review of selected literature about critical race theory and concludes with a description of portraiture that was used for this study and how it pertains to the study of African American male faculty in higher education.

The review of literature includes the following: (a) the historical plight of African American males in higher education; (b) relevant literature regarding institutional barriers such as colorblind racism, sexism, and academic workplace bullying in academia that is detrimental to the advancement of African American male faculty at mainstream institutions of higher education; (c) literature that reported on the barriers African American male faculty face regarding hiring, retention, and career advancement; and (d) literature about the conceptual framework of critical race theory.

### **The Historical Plight of African American Males in Higher Education**

The historical plight of African Americans in higher education must be understood in efforts to recognize the current challenges experienced by African American male faculty members (Allen, Epps, Guillory, Suh, & Bonous-Hammarth, 2000). Though the first institution of higher education in the United States was established in 1636, the history of the U.S. higher education system is rooted in ancient Greek times when men were educated to be the “wisest and

the best” (Plato, 2000, p. vi). Attended by both Greeks and those from outlying areas, Plato’s “Academy” was the first university to educate “philosophers, statesmen, and generals” (p. vii). Chroust (1967) suggested that the Academy was a school for aspiring statesmen—“the first organized institute of political science in the Western world” (p. 25).

Harvard University (2015) claims to be “the oldest institution of higher education in the United States” (para. 1). Nearly two centuries after Harvard University was established in 1636, no African American student had received a degree from an American college or university (Slater, 1994). Africans and African Americans were deemed intellectually inferior and undeserving of education (Slater, 1994). The *Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* (2002) noted that prior to, and for years following, the Revolutionary War:

Blacks were not considered educable at the college level. Driven by strong, prevailing shared values about the biological and cultural inferiority of the Negro, virtually all institutions of higher learning in the United States adopted a universal rule of racial exclusion. (p. 104)

African Americans struggled against oppression and navigated barriers in the pursuit of higher education for nearly 200 years before the first African American male was admitted to a college or university in the United States. According to Humphries (1994), the struggle against oppression began in 1619 when Africans came to the New World as slaves. During the 18th and 19th centuries, slaves received little or no education. Slaveholders determined that slaves should not be educated because they believed enlightenment would lead to a lust for liberty (Woodson, 1915). Not everyone subscribed to this belief. According to Woodson (1915):

The early advocates of the education of Negroes were of three classes: first, masters who desired to increase the economic efficiency of their labor supply; second, sympathetic



persons who wished to help the oppressed; and third, zealous missionaries who, believing that the message of divine love came equally for all, taught slaves the English language that they might learn the principles of the Christian religion. (p. 2)

Fearing that education would threaten the slave system, Whites instituted laws forbidding slaves to learn to read or write and made it a crime for others to teach them (Barrows, 1836). The slaves' pursuit of education was not tolerated by the dominant culture (Humphries, 1994). Slave sympathizers were fined for trying to educate slaves. If a slave learned to read or write, the slaveholder might put out the eyes and cut off the hands of the slave; if the slave was articulate, the slave master would sometimes cut the slave's tongue out (Goddell, 1853). Slaves endured mental and bodily harm in their pursuit of higher education. In the illegal, unauthorized pursuit of an education, slaves risked and faced the wrath of and physical punishment from their owners and/or "slave breakers" (Harris, 1992).

Despite the generally held belief that African and African American slaves were not intellectually capable of getting an education and earning a college degree, a small number of African Americans were granted admission to colleges and universities in the early 1800s ("Key Events in Black Higher Education," n.d.; Slater, 1994). Graduating from Middlebury College in Vermont in 1823, Alexander Lucius Twilight became the first African American male to earn a college degree from an American college (Bennett, 1988; Ranbom & Lynch, 1988). Two other African Americans, Edward Jones and John Russwurm, graduated 3 years later from Amherst and Bowdoin, respectively (Bennett, 1988; Ranbom & Lynch, 1988). The awarding of college degrees to the three aforementioned African American men resulted in a movement to gradually extend education and college opportunities to freed slaves and African Americans in general. Approximately 30 African American men earned baccalaureate degrees during the period of

1619 to 1850 (Humphries, 1994). Oberlin College became the first U.S. institution of higher education to openly admit African Americans (Rudolph, 1990). Though some institutions had awarded college degrees to a few African Americans prior to the founding of Oberlin College, no other American college or university had adopted policies specifically permitting African Americans to attend in large numbers (Harper, Patton, & Wooden, 2009). Founded in 1833, Oberlin College sought students “irrespective of color” (Schuman, 2010).

Alexander Lucius Twilight, Edward Jones, and John Russwurm are recognized for their contributions towards helping African Americans gain regular, open access to higher education. These men were the 19th-century pioneers and early leaders who navigated barriers in pursuit of higher education. After graduating from Middlebury College, Twilight was offered a teaching position in New York and in 1829 became the principal of the Orleans County Grammar School in Vermont (BlackPast.org, 2015). Twilight made history when he became the first African American elected to the Vermont State Legislature in 1836 (BlackPast.org, 2015). Both Jones and Russwurm became educators and eventually emigrated to Africa to serve as school administrators (Amherst College, n.d.; Bowdoin College, n.d.).

Despite the tumultuous process of navigating barriers such as slavery, beatings, and societal opposition and oppression, African American males remained steadfast in their pursuit of higher education; they were awarded college degrees from mainstream institutions of higher education. Members of the dominant culture gradually accepted African Americans as people with a right to equal educational opportunities. Between 1865 and the early 1900s, almost 2,000 African Americans received undergraduate degrees (Humphries, 1994).

The exploitation, segregation, discrimination, and general mistreatment of African Americans left a unique wound that influenced how others view and behave toward African

Americans, particularly toward Black males. The history of racism and discrimination still affects African American men in the present day. African American males continue to face a number of challenges that impede their success both in the workplace and on campuses of higher education (Bailey & Moore, 2004). In the twentieth century, African American males' participation in higher education experienced periods of growth as well as a decline (Allen, Epps, Guillory, Suh, & Bonous-Hammarth, 2000). The decline has been attributed in part to the lack of African American male faculty in higher education (Allen et al., 2000; Heggins, 2004; Jackson, 2006; Wood, Nevarez, & Hilton, 2015). According to Wood (2008), "The underrepresentation of African-American faculty in public higher education is one of the most important ethical dilemmas facing colleges and universities today" (p. 1).

Research has shown that there is a lack of representation of African American faculty in institutions of higher education (Anderson et al., 1993; Jackson, 2008; JBHE, 2001; Turner, Myers, & Creswell, 1999). A disparity is seen in that African American students accounted for 13% of the enrollment of colleges and universities in 2004 (NCES, 2006a, p. 278); however, African American faculty represented merely 6% of the professoriate in 2013 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015). The number of African Americans faculty has barely increased in the last two decades (Trower & Chait, 2002).

### **Institutional Barriers**

A study conducted by Allen, Epps, Guillory, Suh, and Bonous-Hammarth (2000) found that African American faculty were disadvantageded due to racial bias. Jackson (2006) noted that African American males were underrepresented in upper-level administrative roles in higher education. African American men experienced institutional barriers, such as racism, sexism, discrimination, and academic bullying, that negatively affected their professional careers

(Cornileus, 2012) and obstructed the hiring, retention, and promotion of African American male faculty (Jackson, 2006, 2008; Turner et al., 1999). African American faculty were found to be disadvantaged due to racial bias (Allen et al., 2000).

Racism was found to be a dangerous and destructive concept that adversely affects millions of people of color, particularly people of African descent, here in the United States and abroad (Feagin & Sikes, 1994). Singleton and Linton (2006) defined racism as “the conscious or unconscious, intentional or unintentional enactment of racial power, grounded in racial prejudice, by an individual or group against another individual or group perceived to have lower racial status” (p. 40). Racism is a social construct that has fostered inequality and discrimination for centuries and has played a significant role in the African American experience for hundreds of years.

Attempting to eliminate racism, in December 1948 the General Assembly of the United Nations (UN) adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (The United Nations, n.d.). Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states, “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood” (The United Nations, n.d., para. 10). Despite the UN’s declaration, racism persists.

Racial oppression continues to be a problem both in U.S. society and globally. However, Constantine, Smith, Redington, and Owens (2008) noted that contemporary racism is different from the flagrant acts of antagonism that typified the pre-Civil Rights era in the United States (p. 348). Though openly racist acts were often regarded as unethical and socially unacceptable (Bonilla-Silva, 2003), racial inequity was sustained through the unconscious attitudes and

behaviors of White individuals who considered racism a thing of the past and shirked responsibility for ending it (Constantine et al., 2008).

### **Colorblind Racism**

Subtle forms of racist bias have been referred to as *colorblind racism* (Bonilla-Silva, 2003). Colorblind racism refers to White people's belief that considerations of race are no longer relevant in people's lives. According to Bonilla-Silva (2003):

Color-blind racism is a curious racial ideology. Although it engages, as all ideologies do, in "blaming the victim," it does so in a very indirect, "now you see it, now you don't" style that matches the character of the new racism. (p. 25)

Colorblind racism has been expressed in the beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors that are considered acceptable by many White individuals (Constantine et al., 2008). For example, some White individuals supported equal opportunity in an abstract manner; they opposed offering exclusive opportunities to minorities because these special chances endangered their own White privilege. According to Sue (2013), colorblind racism was so prevalent and embedded in societal values and practices that many well-intentioned White people were oblivious to their own racial biases and to how their attitudes contributed to the marginalization of disenfranchised groups. Bonilla-Silva (2003) contended that "the tentacles of color-blind racism have touched us all" (p. 15).

Many people, White and nonwhite, express the belief that race does not matter, that society should be colorblind (Apfelbaum, Sommers, & Norton, 2008; Doane, 2007; Plaut et al., 2009) and that individuals should be judged on "the content of their character and not the color of their skin" (King, 1963, para. 20). Plaut, Thomas, and Goren (2009) posited that Whites who acknowledged race were at risk of being perceived as racist. Therefore, Whites claimed they were colorblind and evaded discussions of race in order to appear unbiased (Apfelbaum,

Sommers, & Norton, 2008; Plaut et al., 2009). Apfelbaum et al. (2008) coined the phrase *strategic colorblindness* to describe the patterns of behaviors used by Whites to avoid acknowledging race-related topics, to appear unbiased, and even to pretend not to see racial differences (p. 918).

The concept of colorblindness was originally meant to combat institutional prejudice and discrimination (Sue, 2013). However, it now seems to have the opposite effect. Researchers found that colorblind protocols, which emphasize ignoring or minimizing racial differences, often resulted in greater racial bias and inequality (Apfelbaum et al., 2008; Neville, Lilly, Duran, Lee, & Browne, 2000; Park & Judd, 2005; Plaut et al., 2009; Richeson & Nussbaum, 2004; Zou & Dickter, 2013). Organizations that adopted a colorblind philosophy unintentionally encouraged discriminatory practices such as interpersonal discrimination among employees, whereas organizations that embraced a multicultural philosophy recognized and valued diversity and inclusivity (Purdie-Vaughns, Steele, Davies, Dittmann, & Crosby, 2008). Numerous studies have shown that strategic colorblindness inadvertently results in greater bias toward people of color (Apfelbaum et al., 2008; Neville et al., 2000; Park & Judd, 2005; Plaut et al., 2009; Richeson & Nussbaum, 2004; Zou & Dickter, 2013). Plaut et al. (2009) found that colorblindness resulted in lower engagement with people of color, whereas having a multicultural mindset resulted in significant and positive engagement with minorities (p. 444).

Colorblind racism has been found to include subtle forms of attitudinal racism manifested in words, referred to as *racial microaggressions* (Pierce, Carew, Pierce-Gonzalez, & Willis, 1978). Racial microaggressions are “subtle, stunning, often automatic, and nonverbal exchanges which are ‘put-downs’ of blacks by offenders” (p. 66). Davis (1989) further defined racial microaggressions as “stunning, automatic acts of disregard that stem from unconscious attitudes

of white superiority and constitute a verification of black inferiority” (p. 1576). Solórzano, Ceja, and Yosso (2000) described microaggressions as “subtle insults (verbal, nonverbal, and/or visual) directed toward people of color, often automatically or unconsciously” (p. 60).

Racial microaggressions are brief exchanges that send denigrating messages to specific individuals because of their group membership (Constantine & Sue, 2007; Franklin & Boyd-Franklin, 2002; Sue et al., 2007). Racial microaggressive messages were found to be communicated unconsciously by White individuals who do not recognize or understand the implications of their actions (Sue, 2013). Sue et al. (2007) identified three forms of racial microaggressions: *microinsults*, *microinvalidations*, and *microassaults*. Microinsults communicate a subtle yet demeaning message regarding a person’s racial heritage and identity (p. 274). A White person commenting that an African American is articulate and a Black person being told by a White person that the African American person has his or her job only because of affirmative action are examples of a microinsult. The statements are insults because the White people in these examples are communicating an underlying message that African Americans are unintelligent and inarticulate and that they do not view the African American person as qualified candidate for the position in question, respectively.

Microinvalidations are “interactions in which the experiences and reality of people of color are negated and diminished” (Sue et al., 2007, p. 274). Remarks such as “I don’t think of you as Black” or “When I look at you, I don’t see color, I just see an individual” are examples of microinvalidations; the inherent message is that racial beings are not valued (Gallagher, 2003; Neville et al., 2000; Solórzano et al., 2000; Sue et al., 2007; Sue, Capodilupo, & Holder, 2008). Microassaults are overtly racist interactions meant to hurt the intended victim (Sue et al., 2007, p. 274). Microassaults can be a verbal attack, such as using a racial slur, or a nonverbal attack,

such as intentionally serving a White customer before serving a person of color, or displaying artifacts of racism, such as a swastika or noose.

Racial microaggressions may seem trite and trivial to perpetrators; however, these frequent and negative slights have serious detrimental effects on the targeted individuals (Davis, 1989; Pierce et al., 1978; Sue et al., 2008). Research on racial microaggressions indicate that Whites refer to racial microaggression as simple misunderstandings, rather than an attribute of White supremacy, White privilege, or racist attitudes (Sue et al., 2008). White individuals were found to be generally unaware of the substantial harm that people of color experience as a result of being constantly subjected to various racial microaggressions (Constantine et al., 2008; Holmes & Rahe, 1967). Sue et al. (2008) suggested:

Because most White Americans associate racism with hate crimes and White supremacist groups such as the Ku Klux Klan and skinheads, they are unaware [of] how bias and discrimination have taken on an invisible nature that protects them from realizing their own complicity in the perpetuation of unintentional racism toward persons of color.  
(p. 330)

Racial microaggressions have been cited as a cause of unfair disparities between minority and majority groups. Specifically, racial microaggressions were found to have created inequities for Black Americans in education (Steele, 2003), healthcare (Smedley & Smedley, 2005), and employment (Miller & Travers, 2005). In the classroom, African American students reported experiencing microaggressive behaviors by White teachers and their White classmates that invalidated their contributions and excluded their participation in school activities (Accapadi, 2007; Bell, 2002; Solórzano et al., 2000; Sue, Lin, Torino, Capodilupo, & Rivera, 2009; Young, 2003). Racial microaggressions left many African American students with feelings of self-doubt



and low self-esteem that often resulted in lower classroom performance activities (Accapadi, 2007; Solórzano et al., 2000; Sue et al., 2009).

Racial microaggressions also contributed to the glass ceiling effect for African American employees (Constantine & Sue, 2007; Miller & Travers, 2005; Pierce, 1988; Sue et al., 2008; Sue et al., 2009). African Americans were prevented from attaining top-level positions through social isolation, expectations of failure, and workplace bullying (Brodsky, 1976; Hollis, 2012; Frazier, 2011; Keashley & Neuman, 2010; Matthiesen & Einarsen, 2010; Tye-Williams & Krone, 2014; Zapf, 1999). Hollis (2012) examined the manifestation of workplace bullying in higher education by surveying nearly 200 administrators. Hollis found that workplace bullying took an enormous toll on targeted individuals and had a huge financial impact on colleges and universities. Experiencing racial microaggression had physical and psychological consequences for African American students, including hypertension, depression, anxiety, and loss of self-esteem (Broman, 1997; Brown et al., 1994; Kessler, Mickelson, & Williams, 1999; Krieger & Sidney, 1996; Utsey, Ponterotto, Reynolds, & Cancelli, 2000; Watkins, Green, Rivers, & Rowell, 2006).

African American males faced dual burdens of racism and sexism and experience psychosomatic symptoms as a result of racial stress (Kessler, Mickelson, & Williams, 1999; Landrine & Klonoff, 1996; Watkins et al., 2006). Repeated racial slights sometimes affected Black males' well-being and led to "psychological invisibility," which is the belief that one's talents and abilities are not valued by the members of the dominant culture (Franklin & Boyd-Franklin, 2000, p. 33). Ralph Ellison (1952) explained the stress of psychological invisibility in his book *Invisible Man*:

I am an invisible man . . . I am a man of substance, of flesh and bone, fiber and liquids—and I might even be said to possess a mind. I am invisible, understand, simply because people refuse to see me . . . When they approach me they see only my surroundings, themselves, or figments of their imagination—indeed, everything and anything except me. (p. 3)

### **Sexism and Black Masculinity**

African American men have been found to face barriers different from those faced by their White male counterparts, and even by African American women (Cornileus, 2012; Hoch, 2004; White & Cones, 2013). Marginalization, devaluation, and bullying have been more profound for African American male faculty as they experienced barriers such as gendered racism (Cornileus, 2012) and ideals regarding the construction of Black masculinity (Hoch, 2004). Gendered racism means African American male faculty have been “subjects of prejudice, negative stereotypes and oppression because they are both Black and men” (Cornileus, 2012, p. 133).

In his book *Soul on Ice*, Cleaver (1968) addressed Black masculinity and challenged the White patriarchal order:

The white man’s image of the black man as the Supermasculine Menial [is] the personification of mindless brute force, the perfect slave . . . The Omnipotent Administrator conceded to the Supermasculine Menial all of the attributes of masculinity associated with the Body: strength, brute power, muscle, even the beauty of the brute body. Except one . . . This particular attribute is the essence and seat of masculinity: sex. The penis. The black man’s penis was the monkey wrench in the white man’s perfect machine. The penis, virility, is of the Body. It is not of the Brain. (pp. 152–153)

Ferber (2007) expounded on Cleaver's (1968) idea and examined four themes that pervade the modern construction of Black masculinity: "a continued emphasis on Black bodies as inherently aggressive, hypersexual, and violent; concern with taming and controlling African American males; inequality as a consequence of a deficient African American culture; and the acculturation of White male superiority" (p. 16). Even though the prevalence of interracial relationships is on the rise, Black masculinity still invokes fear because many people, particularly Whites, believe the stereotype that African American men are animalistic predators who target helpless women, especially White women. Connell (1995) noted that Black masculinity has historically been perceived as a "sexual and social threat to the dominant white cultures" (p. 197).

African American men, especially those who have attained advanced degrees, were found to have multiple identities that result in a hybrid form of masculinity (Lester & Goggin, 199; McClure, 2006). This mix enabled African American men to adopt a middle-class identity that historically has been attributed only to White males (McClure, 2006). However, this adaptation has not hindered or prevented others from bullying African American male faculty in the workplace (Hollis, 2012).

### **Academic Workplace Bullying**

Academic workplace bullying has also been identified as an institutional barrier to retention, promotion, and tenure for African American faculty (Frazier, 2011; Hollis, 2012; Matthiesen & Einarsen, 2010). Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf, and Cooper (2003) defined bullying as "harassing, offending, socially excluding someone or negatively affecting someone's work tasks" and noted that the bullied "person confronted ends up in an inferior position" (p. 22). Academic workplace bullying is a relatively new concept that involves long-term, systematic

interpersonal aggressive behavior against faculty by other faculty or higher education administrators (Frazier, 2011).

Academic workplace bullying was found to take the form of racism, discrimination, intimidation, exclusion, and gossip (Frazier, 2011; Hollis, 2012; Matthiesen & Einarsen, 2010). Examples of academic workplace bullying behavior included social isolation and exclusion from daily communication and events, personal attacks such as yelling and cursing, verbal insults and threats, and office gossip and cyber-bullying (Hollis, 2012). Although harassment is illegal under the Title VII Civil Rights Act of 1964 (U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, n.d.), there are no regulations in the United States against bullying. For incidents to be labeled bullying, “an imbalance of power must be present between the person being bullied and the aggressor, the behavior must occur over an extended timeframe, and those being bullying must be unable to defend themselves against those perpetrating the microaggressive behavior” (Frazier, 2011, p. 2).

Despite the passage of antidiscrimination initiatives and legislation, bullying was found to be prevalent in the workplace, particularly in higher education (Hollis, 2012; Matthiesen & Einarsen, 2010). Academic workplace bullying was found to disrupt the ability of faculty of color to perform their professional duties, negatively affect their social network, and stifle opportunity to attain promotion and tenure (Frazier, 2011; Thompson, 2008). Research suggests that incidents of incivility, emotional abuse, and workplace harassment against women and people of color have increased (Cortina, 2008). Nearly 37 million employees in the United States have been affected by workplace bullying; 54% of the African American employees surveyed reported being bullied by their colleagues (Workplace Bullying Institute, 2014). Hollis

(2012) surveyed administrators in higher education and found that 68% of African American men had faced academic workplace bullying. This is higher than the national rate (Hollis, 2012).

Studies conducted by Allen et al. (2000) and by Turner, Myers, and Creswell (1999) found that African American faculty were underrepresented and had lower academic rank and stature than their White counterparts. Jackson (2006) found that the employment trends of African American males in leadership positions in higher education was modest compared to that of their White male counterparts. White males continued to have greater employment in policy development and implementation positions than other race and gender groups (Jackson, 2006). African American males in leadership positions were found to be amassed at two-year colleges and relegated to lower-level positions (Jackson, 2006; Pittman, 2012). Laden and Hagedorn (2000) noted that faculty of color were marginalized, devalued, and bullied in the academic workplace due to the perception that they were hired only as a result of affirmative action policies.

Using culture-centered theory, West-Olatunji (2005) investigated the experiences of African American faculty in predominantly White institutions of higher education. Several themes emerged. However, the primary cogent experiences were that White faculty and administrators made little or no effort to fraternize with African American colleagues at or outside of work; African American faculty were frustrated by the aggressive behavior demonstrated by White faculty and administrators; and White colleagues frequently failed to acknowledge African American faculty as competent scholars (West-Olatunji, 2005). West-Olatunji's findings were in alignment with those of Namie and Namie (2009), who found that situations often escalated or nothing happened after employers were made aware of the bullying.

As Hollis (2012) noted, “Bullying which is pervasive, escalating hostility, and berating and mistreatment on the job can make any organizational a toxic workplace environment” (p. 1).

African Americans faculty were disadvantaged on all measures compared to their White counterparts (Allen et al., 2000). White males continued to have greater employment and career options than other race and gender groups (Jackson, 2006). White male and female faculty were the conceptualized epitome of scholarly excellence and superiority (Constantine et al., 2008). When interviewed, African American faculty described their experience of disrespect, discrimination, and devaluation that negatively affected their review and promotion process (Frazier, 2011; Salazar, 2009; Turner, Myers, & Creswell, 1999). These faculty members noted feelings of loneliness, social isolation, betrayal, and academic bullying when describing their experiences as faculty in higher education (Constantine et al., 2008; Frazier, 2011; Salazar, 2009).

Thompson (2008) found that African American faculty experienced both overt and covert racism and discrimination, and that their research was often discredited, especially if it concerned minority issues. According to Trower (as cited in Tuitt, Hanna, Martinez, Salazar, & Griffin, 2009), faculty of color were found to “bear a tremendous burden of tokenism, including feeling like they must be exemplars of their entire race and work twice as hard to get half as far” (p. 72). The suggestion that African American faculty are products of affirmative action led their White colleagues to view them through the lens of otherness and to presume their incompetence (Lazos, 2012; Patitu & Hinton, 2003).

### **Barriers to Recruitment, Retention, and Promotion in Academia**

In 2013, nearly 53,000 doctorates were awarded by U.S. institutions of higher education (Lederman, 2014). African Americans received five percent of all doctorates awarded in 2013

(Lederman, 2014) and just over six percent of all doctorates awarded in 2014 (National Science Foundation, 2015). Many argued that the lack of African American faculty in higher education was simply the result of low numbers of African American students earning doctoral degrees (Myers & Turner, 1995; Ottinger, Sikula, & Washington, 1993). Although the number of African Americans holding doctoral degrees is dismal, some scholars suggest that the lack of faculty of color is a result of problematic recruitment and hiring processes (Knowles & Harleston, 1997; Tierney & Sallee, 2008; Turner & Myers, 2000), not a dearth of qualified candidates.

According to Turner and Myers (2000), passive hiring strategies may contribute to the underrepresentation of faculty of color at institutions of higher education. At most colleges, faculty searches are done at the departmental level (Gasman, Kim, & Nguyen, 2011). Tierney and Sallee (2008) found that some departments may value diversity more than others departments and intentionally seek to hire faculty of color. Some departments, however, were found to maintain the status quo by recruiting former colleagues, usually White colleagues, deemed successful in terms of the amount of research conducted and the number of publications published (Gainene & Boice, 1993; Swoboda, 1993; Turner, 2002; Turner & Myers, 1997). Tierney and Sallee (2008) posited that institutions of higher education “cannot simply point to a low number of candidates as the simple causal explanation for lack of diversity. The recruitment process itself is fraught with difficulties” (p. 3). Turner, Gonzalez, and Wood (2008) suggested that academic institutions develop a systematic, multilevel approach to recruiting faculty of color. This recruitment strategy would educate administrators and faculty on the challenges that faculty of color face in the academic workplace (Turner, Gonzalez, & Wood, 2008), encourage institutional leaders to partner and collaborate with organizations that support faculty of color

(Davis, 2002; Knowles & Harleston, 1997; Turner, 2003; Williams, Berger, & McClendon, 2005), and minimize the economic gap between faculty of color and White professors (Knowles & Harleston, 1997; Phillips, 2004; Smith, Turner, Osei-Kofi, & Richards, 2004; Turner, Gonzalez, & Wood, 2008). Blauner (2001) asserted that institutional racism is so pervasive and embedded in American culture that most organizational leaders are unaware that their recruitment and hiring selection procedures are inherently and explicitly racist.

The literature on recruitment also addresses the retention of faculty of color. Turner, Myers, and Creswell (1999) identified six barriers to the recruitment and retention of faculty of color: social isolation, occupational stress, devaluation of “minority” research, the idea of being a “token hire,” racial and ethnic bias in recruiting and hiring, and racial and ethnic bias in promotion practices (pp. 30–31). African American faculty were found to be more likely to experience racism and discrimination (Aguirre, 1995), to feel isolated more often than their White counterparts (Turner, Myers, & Creswell, 1999), and to be less likely to be tenured faculty members (Allen et al., 2000; Collins, 1990; Cornelius, Moore, & Gray, 1997; Menges & Exum, 1983; Perna, 2001). These factors often resulted in low job satisfaction (Collison, 1999; Laden & Hagedorn, 2000; Olson, Maple, & Stage, 1995; Tack & Patitu, 1992). Trower and Chait (2002) argued that people of color are unsuccessful once they reach faculty status and noted that faculty of color often find their profession “uninviting, unaccommodating, and unappealing” (p. 34). This situation is due to the “chilly climate,” workplace bullying, and racial oppression African American faculty frequently endure.

### **“Chilly Climate”**

African Americans faculty, particularly African American male faculty, indicated that they did not have the support from administrators they believed was necessary to help them



navigate the “chilly climate” emanating from some institutions of higher education, overcome academic bullying, and receive promotion and tenure that their White counterparts have (Turner, Myers, & Creswell, 1999; Williams & Williams, 2006). Conditions such as these were found to have significant implications for how African American male faculty negotiate their work environment (Hollis, 2012). Cornileus (2012) concluded that personal and cultural identity influenced the career development of African American men and gendered racism constraints that negatively affected career development. Allen et al. (2000) noted, “The system of White supremacy, operating in the guise of individual and institutional racism, vigorously resists yielding access to the professorate to African Americans, even in clearly subordinated roles and numbers” (p. 126). The fact that African Americans possessed the lowest percentage of full professorships per capita was found to contribute to a negative work environment (Williams & Williams, 2006). Faculty of color often found themselves as the only one of few in their department and/or school at any given meeting or event (Turner, Myers, & Creswell, 1999). Many of these faculty members were instructors or assistant professors, not full, tenured professors (Jackson, 2006).

Workplace bullying and the constant use of microaggressions by White faculty has been found to result in mistrust, social isolation, illness (Hollis, 2012) and created a chilly climate (Turner, Myers, & Creswell, 1999) designed to force African American faculty out of educational institutions (Constantine et al., 2008; Salazar, 2009; Thompson, 2008). These negative behaviors also may have had deleterious fiscal implications for the institution that prevented it from meeting its goals and commitments to serve its student population.

## **Racial Oppression**

Although institutions of higher education encourage the pursuit of knowledge, personal awareness, and social justice, these organizations were not found to be protected from the influences and incidents of racism (Constantine et al., 2008). Colleges and universities are not safe havens that instinctively and fully protect African American students or faculty from the toxic effects of racism. Research shows that institutions of higher education promote a system of power, privilege, and in some instances, racial oppression (Aguirre, 2000; Alemán & Renn, 2002; Benjamin, 1997; Gregory, 2001). Institutional racism and racial oppression in the academy have been found to constitute powerful systems of privilege and power based on race that is propagated and perpetuated by seemingly innocent interactions among administrators, faculty, and students (Alex-Assenoh, 2003; Hiraldo, 2010). Hiraldo (2010) noted, “Higher education environments often support the imbedded hierarchical racist paradigms that currently exist in our society” (p. 55).

*Oppression* is the patriarchal, racist, and capitalist structure that immobilizes or diminishes specific groups based on gender, race and ethnicity, age, religion, and/or socioeconomic class (Eisenstein, 1979; Freire, 1970; Young, 2004). Oppression was found to entail interpersonal and institutional actions that block access and resources for oppressed groups (Bankston, 2000, Jaggar & Young, 2000; Johnson, 2000; Roth, 2005). According to Young (2004), oppression is perpetrated by a conceptualization of group difference: Groups determine what members are capable of doing and what those members deserve in terms of rewards and punishment for exhibiting or failing to demonstrate the desired attributes. Racial oppression was found to exist in higher education; African Americans have been an oppressed group both as students (Allen, 1992; Freire, 1970) and in the American professoriate (Allen et al., 2000;

Jackson, 2008; Jackson & Phelps, 2004; Pitman, 2010; Solórzano et al., 2000; Turner et al., 1999). Allen (1992) presented the results of a quantitative study regarding the differences in the college experience between African American undergraduates who attended historically Black colleges and universities and those who attended predominantly White institutions of higher education. Allen found that positive relationships with faculty are correlated with academic achievement (p. 35).

Jackson (2008) and Pittman (2010) found that many African American faculty are oppressed, and even demonized, in the academy by administrators, colleagues, and even students. In several studies, racial oppression was found to exist in institutional facets, including representation, workload, race-based service, and course expectations (Aguirre, 2000; Benjamin, 1997; Gregory 2001; Alemán & Renn, 2002). One example of racial oppression is the underrepresentation and distribution of African American faculty. Turner, Myers, and Creswell (1999) conducted a mixed-method study to investigate the underrepresentation of faculty of color in the Midwest. Their findings suggest that the predominant barrier for faculty of color is a pervasive racial and ethnic bias that contributes to hostile work environment (Turner, Myers, & Creswell, 1999). Similarly, Jackson (2008) conducted a quantitative study which found that human capital and merit-based performance measures were good employment predictors for White men in the academic workforce, yet not reliable employment predictors for African American males.

The racial and gender composition of faculty at predominantly White colleges and universities within the United States was found by Trower and Chait (2002) to be largely White and male. Despite efforts to diversify the racial and ethnic ranks of the academy, the percentage of faculty of color remained low in 2015, according to the National Center for Education

Statistics (2015). Pittman reported in 2012 that African American faculty “are concentrated in lower faculty ranks (i.e., 6.2% of assistant professors, 5.4% of associate professors, and 3.2% of lecturers)” (Abstract, para. 1). According to Patitu and Hinton (2003), faculty of color are more likely to hold positions at community colleges and historically Black colleges and universities. In addition to being heavily represented in lower faculty ranks of lecturers and assistant professors, African American faculty have consistently reported lower levels of success and job satisfaction (Constantine, Quintana, Leung, & Phelps, 1995; Dole et al., 2004; Watkins et al., 2006; Williams, Neighbors, & Jackson, 2003).

Several studies show that African American faculty are often regulated to race-specific roles and expectations (Aguirre, 2000; Benjamin, 1997; Alemán & Renn, 2000; Moses, 1997). Moses (1997) additionally found that African American faculty are expected to teach and research only racial scholarship. Additionally, African American faculty have usually been assigned greater teaching loads than their White peers, expected to advise a high number of students of color, and required to participate in diversity-related committees and contribute to multicultural initiatives on top of other required service obligations (Agathangelou & Ling, 2002; Aguirre, 2000; Allen et al., 2002; Balderrama, Teixeira, & Valdez, 2004; Kuykendall, Johnson, Laird, Ingram, & Niskode, 2006). Padilla (1994) referred to these obligations as *cultural taxation*. He defined cultural taxation as:

the obligation to show good citizenship toward the [academic] institution by serving its needs for ethnic representation on committees, or to demonstrate knowledge and commitment to a cultural group, which may even bring accolades to the institution but which is not usually rewarded by the institution on whose behalf the service was performed. (p. 26)

Although many African American faculty members were committed to their role as servant leader, the expectation that they would act as liaisons and problem solvers was an imposition on African American faculty (Padilla, 1994). Cultural taxation is a racially oppressive structure and presents obstacles that were found to hinder faculty retention, promotion, success, and job satisfaction (Baez, 2000).

Interpersonal racial oppression also negatively affected faculty of color, particularly African American faculty (Dole et al., 2004; Watkins et al., 2006; Williams et al., 2003). Prior research indicates that Black faculty members, and other faculty members of color, often felt isolated, discouraged, and devalued by their colleagues and administrators (Turner, 2003). Social isolation was a frequently reported experience, with African American faculty members stating that they received the “cold shoulder” treatment within institutions of higher education where they were employed (Burden, Harrison, & Hodge, 2005; Vasquez et al., 2006).

Constantine et al. (2008) identified seven themes of racial microaggressions in the professional lives of African American faculty. These themes were that African American faculty felt socially isolated and invisible, that their credentials were challenged, and that they received inadequate mentoring. African American faculty also reported that they felt judged by their White peers concerning their self-presentation (e.g. hair, attire, speech) (Constantine et al., 2008) and reported that their White colleagues behaved in ways that challenged African American faculty’s intelligence and positions as faculty members and undermined their credibility (Brayboy, 2003; Patton, 2004). These White colleagues also excluded African American faculty from social networks that would support the faculty member’s professional development and create a culture of collaboration (Brayboy, 2003; Burden, Harrison, & Hodge, 2005; Constantine et al., 2008; Patton, 2004; Vasquez et al., 2006). African American faculty

suggested that interactions with White colleagues were marked by microinvalidations that indicated African Americans embodied otherness and therefore should be excluded and alienated (Pittman, 2012). McIntosh (2002) found that Whiteness was a default standard by which others were seen and judged. As Lazos (2012) noted, “Whites and men start from a presumptions of competence; minorities and women do not and have to deal with a multitude of unconscious biases that put them at a disadvantage. The playing field is not level” (p. 175).

### **Critical Race Theory**

Critical race theory (CRT) is a theoretical framework created in the 1970s by Black, Latino, and Asian attorneys and social activists to address the relationship between race, the law, and other societal issues. According to Delgado and Stefancic (2001), “The critical race theory movement is a collection of activists and scholars interested in studying and transforming the relationship among race, racism, and power” (p. 3). The theory highlights both the personal and relational aspects of race-based oppression, as well as the structural economic conditions shaping race-based experience and possibilities.

Delgado and Stefancic (2012) identified four tenets of CRT:

1. *Interest convergence, material determinism, and racial realism.* Critical race theory maintains that Whites advocate for the advancement of people of color only if it enhances their own personal interest.
2. *Revisionist interpretations of history.* Critical race theory recognizes that people usually deny historical facts or amend history by applying a more comfortable interpretation of events.
3. *Critique of liberalism.* This tenet maintains the ideas of colorblindness, the neutrality of the law, and equal opportunity for all.

4. *Structural determinism.* Critical race theory suggests that organizations not only determine how they will operate and function, but also determine significant social outcomes. (pp. 21–34)

Critical race theory refutes the idea of meritocracy, which presumes that all individuals have access to the same opportunities and success (Zamudio, Russell, Rios, & Bridgeman, 2011). The conceptual framework of CRT acknowledges that the detailed, narrative accounts provided by the participants in this study are essential to understanding race relations at institutions of higher education and how they affect marginalized groups. As Delgado and Stefancic (2012) noted, stories from people of color have a different frame of reference, far removed from those of the dominant cultural group. It is important that the counterstory of racialized dynamics be heard and shared.

Blauner's (2001) concept of critical race theory was applied to this study to investigate the "character of our society, the role of racism, and the workings of basic institutions" (Blauner, 2001, p. 13). Blauner's definition of CRT is guided by four main premises (p. 14). First, racial and ethnic minorities are viewed in modern society as neither important nor resolute beings. Second, racism and racial oppression are interrelated. Third, Whites' attitudes and biases about race are the most important factors of race-relations. Fourth, long-term disparities exist between White and racial minorities.

Using a critical race perspective acknowledges that race is a central force in American life (Blauner, 2001). Blauner (2001) suggested that Whites preferred to adopt a neutral stance in regard to race relations instead of accepting the reality of racism, even though racism is not an imaginary problem, but one that is fundamental to our nation. According to Blauner, "Race

remained *at least* as central as class to our social order, pervasive and powerful in its impact on every area of existence” (p. 13).

In the United States, the concept of “Whiteness” is synonymous with visibility, virtue, and value (Jackson, 2008). The everyday conundrum of racism was found to affect mainly people of color (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001), and as Pierce (1988) noted, these events are psychologically and physically penetrating. Institutionalized racism in higher education will remain until new strategic policies are developed and implemented to support the hiring, retention, and promotion of faculty of color, particularly African American male faculty.

In 2007, racism was found to be so deeply rooted in the cultural, political, and societal structure of the United States that many people did not recognize it, or they conceded to it because it is ingrained in American culture and society (Patton, McEwen, Rendon, & Howard-Hamilton, 2007). Critical race theory is used to confront systematic racial oppression by encouraging the learner to share their experiences through narratives and meaningful conversation. The conversations may help expose the institutional racism exhibited at institutions of higher education. The experiences of African American male faculty often have been viewed through the lens of African American women (Patton, 2009). Although some commonalities in experiences exist, African American male faculty have a personal viewpoint that needs to be communicated, explored, and discussed. African American male faculty should be given the opportunity to articulate their stories in their own words and challenge the institutional culture through the counternarrative of their lived experiences.

### **Summary**

The purpose of this literature review was to examine the historical plight of African American males in higher education and the institutional barriers they faced in academia.



Through this literature review, the reader has been exposed to the challenges African American male faculty faced as they pursued careers in higher education. African American male faculty continue to be underrepresented in full-time, tenured, and leadership positions. Critical race theory highlighted the societal issues of racism and sexism to provide insight about the lived experiences of Black men who have faced institutional barriers, such as racial microaggressions and academic workplace bullying, that contribute to their underrepresentation in academe. This study is important for several reasons. First, the confusing and disorienting nature of microaggressions caused psychological turmoil for African Americans, who had to constantly question the intention and message of perpetrators (Sue et al., 2007). Few studies to date have examined in a systematic manner how a person perceives, interprets, and reacts to these negative experiences (Solórzano et al., 2000). Solórzano et al. (2000) noted, “It is important to study and acknowledge this form of racism in society because without documentation and analysis to better understand microaggressions, the threats that they pose and assaults that they justify can be easily ignored or downplayed” (p. 72). Additionally, as Pierce (1988) noted, it is important to identify the paradoxes associated with describing racial microaggressions. Such experiences have been found to result in mistrust among faculty members and to contribute to the departure of African American faculty members from the professoriate (Lee & Leonard, 2001). The goal of this study was to further understand and explore the African American male’s perspective of the experiences of their journey to obtaining a full-time, tenured, or leadership position at predominantly White institutions of higher education. The following chapter discusses the methodology and design used to generate findings for this study.

### **Chapter 3: Methodology**

This chapter provides a description of the methodological framework that served as the guide for this study. The purpose of the study was to determine what barriers African American male faculty faced at public, two-year, predominantly White institutions (PWIs) in the Pacific Northwest that hampered and prevented their recruitment, retention, and advancement to full-time tenured or leadership positions and to identify what coping strategies, if any, enabled the faculty to successfully navigate the perceived barriers. This investigation was designed to answer the following overarching question: (1) What are the possible perceived institutional barriers that contribute to the underrepresentation of African American male faculty?; and subquestions: (a) How have perceived barriers hindered the successful advancement of African American males in obtaining full-time, tenured, or leadership positions?; and (b) What strategies have such males used to cope with or overcome perceived institutional barriers?

Community colleges in the Pacific Northwest have a higher student diversity score than the national 0.52 average (Community College Review, 2016); however, that diversity does not translate into hiring faculty of color. Data from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (n.d.) show that during the 2013-2014 academic year, 50 African American males served as full-time faculty members and fewer than 70 African American males, out of 6,412 part-time faculty, worked at the community colleges in Washington State. There were no African American males working as full-time faculty at public, two-year PWIs in Idaho; there were however, seven African American male part-time faculty. In Oregon, 25 African American males served as full-time faculty at public community colleges; there were 10 African American male faculty members.

Research is necessary to discover the obstacles and aspirations of African American male faculty. Hughes and Howard-Hamilton (2003) suggested that examining the barriers African American males face in higher education in a general way would not be as effective as using a more focused approach. Any mandate that is generalized is likely to make such males feel yet again as if they are not being recognized as individuals, which will only make the problem of underrepresentation worse. Using a phenomenological approach gave this researcher insight into the perceived institutional barriers African American male faculty faced at PWIs as well as into the strategies used to overcome obstacles to success.

### **Purpose of the Proposed Study**

Though higher education institutions were founded by and for affluent White males, in the early 1800s, freed African and African American slaves pursued the opportunity for higher education. In 1849, Charles Lewis Reason became the first African American college professor (BlackPast.org, 2015). Today, many African American males serve as professors in higher education. Due to their race, these individuals are often viewed as cultural “outsiders” by the traditional, predominantly White members of the academy (Collins, 2000).

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the lived experiences of African American male faculty at public two-year institutions in the Pacific Northwest. Since there are few faculty of color—and even fewer African American male faculty—present at public two-year and four-year higher education institutions (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015), insight gained from the men interviewed for this study may benefit other African American male faculty as they navigate barriers to career advancement in higher education.

This study is significant to higher education, to African American males who desire a full-time, tenured, or leadership position at a PWI, and to academic institutions that are looking

to increase the number of and support the advancement of current and aspiring African American male faculty. African American men have made significant gains in the field of higher education; however, the number of African American male faculty is disproportionately low. The dearth of African American male faculty is of great concern because it affects the academic success of African American college students (Malone & Malone, 2001; Umbach, 2006). Positive relationships with African American faculty have been related to Black student academic achievement (Davis, 1994). A recent study by Cherng and Halpin (2016) found that students of all races perceived teachers of color more favorably than White teachers. The student–faculty relationship is a significant indicator of academic achievement (Tracey & Sedlacek, 1985).

This study provides insight into challenges experienced by African American male faculty during their journey toward full-time, tenured, or leadership positions at public, two-year PWIs; provides recommendations to address the disparity in the number of African American males serving as faculty at institutions of higher education; and adds to the limited body of research regarding the institutional barriers African American male faculty face in the academy. The information gleaned not only adds to the body of knowledge about African American males in higher education but also may be useful in determining recruitment, retention, and promotion strategies for African American men. Additionally, as a result of this research, college administrators may recognize and begin to dismantle institutional barriers by developing inclusive policies that support a diverse campus culture.

### **Research Design**

A qualitative research design was employed to obtain a phenomenological view of the participants' experiences (Glatthorn & Joyner, 2005). Qualitative research methods allow the

researcher to uncover the meaning of a phenomenon. According to Merriam (1998), “Qualitative research is an umbrella concept covering several forms of inquiry that help us understand and explain the meaning of social phenomena with as little disruption of the natural setting as possible” (p. 8). Qualitative research brings up a great deal of descriptive data because researchers who use this approach gather a lot of information about a participant’s life experience by hearing the participant describe it himself or herself (Merriam & Simpson, 2000).

The main objective of this study was to achieve a greater understanding of the phenomenon of interest (barriers) from the participants’ perspective and not from that of the researcher. In qualitative research, the goal of the investigator is to learn the meaning participants attribute to certain actions, problems, issues, or events (Creswell, 2013). Researchers do not impose their viewpoints on study subjects or have preconceived ideas about how people will think or react (McMillan, 2012). Instead, qualitative practitioners allow meanings to emerge directly from study participants and work to understand how those meanings influence the participants’ behaviors. As a researcher, I was interested in the participants’ viewpoints, how they interpreted their experiences, and what meaning they attributed to their experiences (Merriam, 1998).

One appropriate way to examine the barriers African American male faculty face as they pursue a career in academia is through in-depth interviews. The purpose of in-depth interviews is to gain knowledge about a particular topic by interviewing individuals directly affected by the issue (Patton, 2002). Interviews allow researchers to capture opinions and perspectives of a program’s target audience, explore the breadth and depth of opinions regarding an issue, and understand differences in perspectives and what factors influence opinions and/or behavior (Boyce & Neale, 2006; Patton, 2002).

## **Methodology**

The concept of narratives is embedded within critical race theory (CRT) (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012), as discussed in the previous chapter. The conceptual framework of critical race theory acknowledges that the detailed narrative accounts provided by the participants in this study are essential to understanding race relations at institutions of higher education and how they affect marginalized groups. Fisher (1984) suggested that all human communication can and should be conceptualized as narratives. Narratives contribute to the centrality of the experiences of people of color. The interactional rules of narratives make them different from ordinary conversations (DeFina, 2009). Narratives help individuals make sense of the past and present and allow them to make reasonable forecasts about the future (Beach, 2009). Fisher (1984) stated that “the character of narrator, the conflicts, the resolutions, and they style will vary, but each mode of recounting and accounting for is but a way of relating a ‘truth’ about the human condition” (p. 6). Narratives allow those who have been silenced by the dominant culture group to have a voice. The theoretical framework of CRT supported the selection of portraiture as an appropriate phenomenological methodology for this study.

Employing portraiture as the methodology enabled this researcher to examine how the men of the study described their professional experiences in higher education and to obtain deeper insight into the perceived institutional barriers African American male faculty face at PWIs, as well as into the strategies used to overcome obstacles to success (Glatthorn & Joyner, 2005). Portraiture is a qualitative research method in which investigators seek “to record and interpret the perspectives and experiences of the people they are studying, documenting their voices and their visions—their authority, knowledge, and wisdom” (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. xv).

Dixson, Chapman, and Hill (2005) noted that researchers who use portraiture investigate “ways in which subjects meet, negotiate, and overcome challenges” (p. 18). In this researcher’s opinion, qualitative research, specifically portraiture, is the study of people based on a particular context and learning about and understanding the people and their situation at a more intimate level. The rationale for using this qualitative method is that it is consistent with Patton’s (2002) conclusion that it is difficult to capture the rich descriptive stories of people through a quantitative study. This study is based on the philosophical assumption that reality is constructed by individuals in interaction with their social worlds, and it follows the traditions of qualitative research in that it employs interviews as a data-gathering technique.

The portraiture approach comprises five features: context, voice, relationship, emergent themes, and the aesthetic whole (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). The historical background, or *context* of the time and setting, allows the reader to connect, understand, and relate to the participant’s experience or situation (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 52). *Voice* is heard throughout the story and frames the inquiry through the questions asked and the information or stories shared (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 113). A connection built on good rapport and trust is vital to researcher-study participant interactions. In portraiture, the researcher works to develop a supportive and sustainable *relationship* with study subjects (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 135). *Emergent themes* are the result of data collection and data analysis processes. The themes emerge from “repetitive refrains, metaphors and symbols, cultural and institutional rituals, triangulation, and shared descriptions” (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, pp. 193–213). These themes are then used to develop and create the portrait.

### **Research Population and Sampling Method**

A purposive sample of African American male faculty who registered for the 20th annual Washington State Faculty and Staff of Color Conference (WA-FSOCC) were invited to participate in this study. The goal of the annual WA-FSOCC is to provide participants with the opportunity “to discuss issues and share strategies that promote career opportunities and advancement” (Washington State FSOCC, 2015, para. 3). For 20 years, WA-FSOCC has been an advocate of an increase in ethnic and racial diversity and of excellence in higher education. Though the event is open to all faculty, the conference primarily brings together faculty from the Pacific Northwest. Because not all of the African American male faculty who registered for the conference would be able to attend due to unforeseen conflicts, potential study participants were selected from the WA-FSOCC list rather than from the attendance list.

The purposive sampling technique provided this researcher with participants who have relevant information about the underrepresentation of African American male faculty and strategies used to assist African American male faculty in their quest for career advancement (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2011). The participants were selected based on the following criteria: The participants (a) self-identified as a male; (b) self-identified as African, African American, Black, or Black American; (c) worked at the time the study was conducted at a public, two-year community college in the Pacific Northwest; and (d) were willing and able to participate in the study. Faculty members were adults older than 18 years. Participants were not from a vulnerable population.

As the researcher, I chose to focus on community colleges as opposed to all institutions of higher education, because I am a faculty member at a public, two-year predominantly White



institution and want to learn about the lived experiences of African American male faculty working in a similar institutional context.

To solicit study participants, a letter of introduction (Appendix B) was emailed to potential participants to request their voluntary participation. A sample of five African American male faculty members from public, two-year institutions in the Pacific Northwest was selected for individual face-to-face or Skype interviews. This sample size provided for “reasonable coverage of the phenomenon” (Merriam, 2009, p. 80).

### **Instrumentation**

A letter of introduction (Appendix B), along with the informed consent form (Appendix C), was e-mailed to each participant before the interview. The signed informed consent was collected from the participants prior to the start of the first interview. Working from qualitative methods guidelines, the researcher assured study participants that their participation in the study was completely voluntary and that they could refuse to answer any question or choose to stop participating at any time without repercussions.

### **Data Collection**

The purpose of data collection in qualitative research is to learn the meaning participants attribute to certain actions, problems, issues, or events and to understand the participants’ experiences related to the phenomenon being investigated (Creswell, 2013; Merriam & Simpson, 2000). When little is known about a phenomenon, a qualitative methods approach can be used to gain a better understanding by applying it to uncover findings through the expression of lived experience (Sherman & Webb, 2001; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The qualitative data were collected through interviews, field notes, and biographical questionnaires. An interview guide (Appendix D) composed of open-ended questions was developed; interview questions were

based on the primary research question and subquestions. A biographical questionnaire (Appendix E) was also developed to help create a portrait of the participants. The information enabled the researcher to examine similarities and differences among participants.

The individual interviews were conducted in the spring of 2016. Information was gathered through 60–90-minute individual interviews with African American male faculty at their preferred locations. Conducting the interviews in a neutral location meant that participants felt more comfortable, and therefore were more inclined to reveal certain interactions or experiences and to openly assess the impact that perceived barriers had on their job satisfaction and organizational commitment. The interviews were conversational and open-ended to build rapport and to encourage participants to talk freely about their experiences (Creswell, 2013; Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997).

The interviews focused on the participants' personal backgrounds, their academic journeys, their professional backgrounds, and their careers in higher education. Open-ended questions were used to encourage the participants to share their perceptions, feelings, and other elements of their lives that might be of significance to this study (Patton, 2002). The interviews were audio recorded. All of the recordings were professionally transcribed by a third party—GMR Transcription. The researcher reviewed the typed transcriptions for accuracy. Each participant was asked to conduct a member check of the typed transcript for accuracy and to address any misinterpretation or misrepresentation of the data.

Though the guided interviews began with some preliminary questions to start the conversation, the direction of the conversation followed the lead of the participants. Field notes were taken to supplement the interview data by capturing nonverbal information, such as the interviewee's body language, that cannot be captured on an audio recording. Field notes and

explanatory comments were written directly on the question guide used during each interview. Descriptive information, such as time, place, and setting, was noted, as were researcher's observations during the interactions. Interviews combined with field notes helped create a "narrative constellation" (Garvis, 2015).

### **Data Analysis Procedures**

According to Merriam (1998), "Data analysis is a complex process that involves moving back-and-forth between concrete bits of data and abstract concepts, between inductive and deductive reasoning, between description and interpretation" (p. 178). To gain a clearer understanding of the phenomenon being studied and reach a meaningful conclusion, the researcher conducted data analysis using the Merriam data management system. Merriam (2009) divided data management into three stages: (a) data preparation, (b) data identification, and (c) data manipulation.

*Data preparation* refers to the transcription process (Merriam, 2009, p. 194), whereas *data identification* refers to the process of separating data into appropriate and meaningful categories and themes (p. 194). Miles and Huberman (1994) referred to this process as *coding*. Coding was originally done on the hard copy transcripts. This researcher marked and labeled text data using concept-driven coding (Holloway & Wheeler, 2010). Initial coding categories were derived directly from the research literature and topics in the interview script. Text was read reflectively to identify additional significant categories based on common word and phrases. Field notes were also analyzed and coded in efforts to interpret the underlying context. The third phase of the Merriam data management system is *data manipulation*, in which data are searched, organized, and rearranged (Merriam, 2009, p. 194). In this phase, key concepts were identified and arranged to reflect the narrative of lived experiences of African American male faculty in the

Pacific Northwest. Data manipulation enabled this researcher to create the narrative constellation. Defining narrative constellation, Garvis (2015) explained, “This is not the interview transcript, field notes or other raw data sources. Rather it is all of the data written together into a meaningful explanation of the context” (p. 16).

### **Limitations of the Research Design**

#### **Internal Validity**

Poor study design or instrumentation can affect internal validity (Card, 2012). Two strategies were used to ensure the internal validity of this study: coding and member checks. As previously noted, the collected information was coded. Coding is a vital component of qualitative data analysis. Coding enables the researcher to analyze patterns of similarity, difference, frequency, sequence, correspondence, and causation (Saldaña, 2009, p. 6) and allows the researcher to gain an understanding, generate meaning, and eventually draw conclusions (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Interviews were coded for content analysis, and the development of an accurate and descriptive coding scheme helped to address internal validity. Consistent participant responses is a sign of internal validity (Seidman, 1991).

*Member checks* played an invaluable role in helping to qualify the data and ensure internal validity (Merriam & Simpson, 2000). Member checks take place when, according to Lincoln and Guba (1985), “the provisional report (case) is taken back to the site and subjected to the scrutiny of the persons who provided information” (p. 236). Member checks are an effective means by which to measure the validity of a qualitative case study, because the primary goal of a qualitative project is to accurately understand the participant’s perspective (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). After the transcripts were received from the professional transcriptionist, study participants received copies of the transcript to check for accuracy and had the opportunity to

address any misinterpretation or misrepresentation of the data. Member checks allowed participants to clarify their responses and helped the researcher to correctly report and share their narratives.

**Credibility.** Lincoln and Guba (1985) defined credibility as “the probability that credible findings and interpretations will be produced” (p. 301). This researcher attempted to enhance credibility by capturing rich data concerning lived experiences from multiple perspectives. Moustakas (1967) claimed that every individual and every experience is unique and that “only the person can fully know what he sees, what he hears, and what he feels to be fundamentally true” (p. 13).

To further enhance the study’s credibility and to ensure that participants’ narratives were analyzed and interpreted as intended, the African American male faculty were consulted during and after each interview to check for understanding and to determine whether what was heard reflected what they actually said or meant to say (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993). After a review of the data was conducted, categories, code themes, recurring ideas, language, and patterns of belief were created that linked African American male faculty and their respective settings.

**Dependability.** People make sense of their experience by narrating it from their own unique viewpoint. Audience members are able to pick out a narrative’s themes, make sense of what happened, and reflect on their own realities, progress, and personal growth (DeFina, 2009). This study’s results are not generalizable given that the study examines the paths of African American male faculty in public, two-year, PWIs in the Pacific Northwest. Some of the experiences shared by participants may differ from those of faculty members teaching at four-

year colleges and universities, private institutions, historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs), or at institutions outside of the Pacific Northwest.

### **Expected Findings**

African American male faculty face several institutional barriers that hinder career advancement at public institutions of higher education. Because interview participants were from the same geographical area, there was an expectation that study participants would have had comparable experiences and have faced similar challenges with regard to racial and gender bias and discrimination within academia. As McCoy and Rodricks (2015) noted, “Faculty of color employed at predominantly White institutions frequently experience racial microaggressions” (p. 26); it was expected that such microaggressions would be reported by the participants.

### **Ethical Considerations**

According to Bogden and Biklen (2007), there are two main considerations in the ethics of qualitative research: (a) having informed consent and (b) refraining from doing harm. To protect the participants in this study, this researcher complied with the Concordia University Institutional Review Board’s guidelines concerning the protection of human subjects. Prior to volunteering to participate in this study, potential participants received a description of the study and a copy of the interview guide and the biographical questionnaire. Participants received and signed an informed consent form that provided details of the study and also served as a confidentiality agreement. Participants were also informed that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any time for any reason. This researcher informed the participants that their identity would be protected with anonymity and that all audio recordings and transcripts would be kept confidential.

Each participant received an electronic copy of the signed informed consent form within 24 hours of signing it. Informed consent forms were scanned and emailed to each participant. All informed consent forms were saved on a password-protected computer; the computer file containing the informed consent forms was also password protected. The original hard copy informed consent forms are on file with the researcher, in a locked file cabinet in the researcher's home office, and will be a part of the research record for 5 years based on APA standards. Data will be destroyed in June 2019.

Another ethical issue has to do with protecting participants from harm (Bogden & Biklen, 2007). Talking about personal, private issues that pertain to the workplace can be threatening. It can also be a difficult, emotional task. The identities of the research participants were known to the researcher; however, to prevent social and political backlash, pseudonyms, rather than the participants' real names, were used to protect the confidentiality of the study members. A professional, third-party transcriptionist from GMR Transcription had access to the audio recordings to transcribe the interviews. The recordings do not contain personal data: Only pseudonyms were used and the participants' names, employers, and departments were not be identified.

### **Summary**

This chapter provided detailed information regarding the methodology used in this study. The sampling procedure appropriately matched the study's purpose, which determined the participant criteria. The interviews provided rich and illuminative data offered from the participants' perspectives. The audio recordings from the interviews were transcribed and analyzed to identify themes that emerged from the data. Chapter 4 provides a detailed analysis

of challenges and barriers experienced by the study participants during their journey to full-time, tenured, or leadership positions in the academy.



## **Chapter 4: Research Findings**

The purpose of this qualitative study was to research the lived experiences of African American male faculty at public, two-year, predominantly White institutions (PWIs) in the Pacific Northwest. Data from the Washington State Board of Community and Technical Colleges (D. DuPree, personal communication, February 12, 2016) mirrors national statistics denoting the low number of faculty of color working at state-funded, two-year institutions of higher education. The data showed that as of 2014, people of color made up only 16% of full-time faculty and 12% of part-time faculty working at community and technical colleges in the Pacific Northwest; African American faculty was the third largest minority group, behind Asian/Pacific Islander and Hispanic faculty. In 2014, more than 3,000 White faculty served in a full-time capacity and nearly 5,000 Whites worked as part-time adjunct faculty at community colleges in Washington State. However, only 111 African Americans served as full-time faculty, and 137 African Americans served as part-time adjuncts. A report generated by the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (n.d.) showed that 25 African American males served as full-time faculty members in Oregon and 50 worked the community colleges in Washington State during the 2013-2014 academic year. No African American males worked as full-time faculty in Idaho. See Appendix A.

The information presented in this study will not only shed light on the ignored realities of Black male faculty and add to the body of knowledge of African American male faculty working at state-funded community colleges, but also may be useful in determining effective strategies for recruiting, promoting, and retaining African American male faculty. This chapter will discuss the concepts that emerged from the qualitative data collected during in-depth interviews and provide an analysis of the data obtained from study participants. As this researcher analyzed

the data, information was divided into emerging themes and subthemes. Themes are deductive codes that correspond to the study's main research question; subthemes are inductive codes that emerged from the collected data. The emerging themes form the framework of the analysis in an effort to answer the following overarching research question: (1) What are the possible perceived institutional barriers that contribute to the underrepresentation of African American male faculty?; and subquestions: (a) How have perceived barriers hindered the successful advancement of African American males in obtaining full-time, tenured, or leadership positions?; and (b) What strategies have such males used to cope with or overcome perceived institutional barriers?

This chapter presents the lived experiences of five study participants: Edward, Jack, Gary, Hiram, and David. Each participant had his own unique experiences and stories to tell. Their stories speak to their personal and educational backgrounds as well as to their journey to the position that made them a subject of interest for this study: an African American male faculty member at a predominantly White, public, two-year community college in the Pacific Northwest. Participant demographic characteristics follow.

Each participant self-identified as African American. One fell in the age range of 35–44; two in the 45–54 range; one in the 55–64 range; and one in the 65–74 range. Only one participant was raised in the Pacific Northwest. The highest degree attained by two participants was a Ph.D., by two a master's degree, and by one a J.D. Two participants received their graduate degrees from a private PWI, and three received their graduate degrees from a public PWI. Of the three participants who had doctoral degrees, two had received them at a public PWI and one had received the degree at a private PWI. Two participants had one parent who graduated from college, two had parents who had both graduated from college, and one

participant's parents had not graduated from college. Two participants had 5–10 years of teaching experience in higher education; two had 16–20 years; and one had more than 25 years of teaching experience in higher education. Two of the participants had been in their current position for 1–3 years at the time of the interviews, whereas the time in their current position of the other three participants fell in the 3–6-year range, the 6–9-year range, and the 25+-year range, respectively. One participant had part-time/adjunct status and the other four had full-time/tenured status. One had a leadership role at his institution, and the other four did not.

The men were given pseudonyms to protect their identity and confidentiality of statements. Edward was 47 years of age. He had more than 15 years of experience teaching in higher education. He did not serve in a leadership or administrative capacity when the study was conducted. Edward was not raised in the Pacific Northwest. He earned a master's degree in student development from a public, predominantly White institution. Both of Edward's parents had graduated from college.

Jack was 45 years old and had 10 years of experience teaching in higher education. Jack was not raised in the Pacific Northwest. He earned a doctorate degree in science education from a public, predominantly White institution. Neither of his parents graduated from college.

Gary was 56 years old. He had more than 25 years of experience teaching in higher education. Gary had worked at his institution full-time for more than nine years at the time of the study and at that time did not serve in a leadership or administrative capacity. Gary was a native of the Pacific Northwest. He earned a law degree from a private, predominantly White institution. Neither of his parents graduated from college.

Hiram was 41 years old and had worked part-time at two different institutions. At the time the study was conducted, he did not serve in a leadership or administrative capacity. Hiram

was not raised in the Pacific Northwest. He earned a doctorate in education from a public, predominantly White institution. Both of Hiram's parents graduated from college.

David was 66 years of age; he had more than 25 years of experience teaching in higher education. David had worked at his institution full-time for more than 9 years. He did not serve in a leadership or administrative capacity at the time the study was conducted. David was not raised in the Pacific Northwest. He earned a master's degree in psychology from a public, predominantly White institution. Only one of his parents graduated from college.

### **Patterns and Themes**

Data for this study were derived from the review of interview transcripts of the five participants. For this phenomenological study, this researcher employed a basic interpretive strategy with three iterations of coding. After receiving the transcriptions from a transcription service, this researcher began the process of analyzing the data by reviewing commonalities between the participants, and highlighting and writing notes on each transcript. For the second iteration, notes were reviewed on each transcript and each note categorized. The categories were then analyzed for similarities. The patterns were grouped into categories representing key themes from the interview data. The data were coded into key themes and sub-themes. During the third iteration, this researcher interpreted and correlated the key themes with critical race theory (CRT).

Table 1 presents the five key themes of this study as they pertain to perceived institutional barriers that contribute to the underrepresentation of African American male faculty at PWIs: racism, microaggression, Black masculinity, recruitment, retention and promotion, and coping strategies. The themes associated with the corresponding concepts are linked in the

diagram below to show how the concepts were grouped based on participants' responses and commonalities.

Table 1  
*Key Themes and Subthemes*

<b>Key Theme</b>	<b>Subtheme(s)</b>	<b>Corresponding CRT Tenet</b>
<b>Racism</b>	Racial bias Exploitation Systemic racism Oppression	Critique of liberalism
<b>Microaggression</b>	Microinvalidations Microinsults	Structural determinism
<b>Masculinity</b>	Aggressiveness Sexual preference	Revisionist interpretation of history
<b>Recruitment, Promotion and Retention</b>	Niche market Affirmative action Purposeful diversity	Interest convergence

The identified themes are evidence that African American male faculty, regardless of their degrees and experiences, are relegated to specific positions, have limited opportunities, and are silenced. All of the participants had factors that were challenges and successes, sometimes at the same time. The words of the men are presented as they were spoken by the men.

### **Racism**

African American men experience institutional barriers, such as racism, sexism, discrimination, and academic bullying, that negatively affect their professional careers (Cornileus, 2012) and obstruct them in being hired, retained, and promoted in academia (Jackson, 2006, 2008; Turner et al., 1999). Allen et al. (2000) confirmed that African American faculty are disadvantaged due to racial bias. Though openly racist acts are considered to be

immoral and socially unacceptable (Bonilla-Silva, 2003), racial bias toward and oppression of African American men continues to be a problem in the U.S. workplace.

Edward described two incidents that he perceived as racially biased. For several years, Edward's institution touted him as an expert on social diversity, multicultural communications, and intra-American studies. The institution even had a link on its website to allow organizations to hire Edward as a consultant and/or guest speaker. Several months previous, Edward realized that his paycheck was short \$700. As he described this incident, Edward's voice intensified. He leaned in slightly and said,

And come to find out that because I do consulting and diversity training, someone had decided that I shouldn't get paid for not being on campus for two class sessions, two hours' worth of class, and so they docked my pay for two full days of my annualized salary. They've subsequently reimbursed me for everything, but two hours' worth of my salary annualized and that's an ongoing issue.

Not long after this incident, the administrative secretary questioned Edward about the syllabus for a new seminar he was developing for the next academic term.

Well, the same person that ended up filing this form to get my pay docked is asking me these questions like, "Well, what are you gonna do in that class? What's it really about? Can you send me a better description?" I said, "Well, they're writing a description on the website and we have it listed on the class page. I haven't developed fully the syllabus." And my chair, a White man, jumped [in] and said, "Why are you asking him for this? You don't ask me for this. This is not what we do as faculty. It'll be ready when he's ready."

Edward said that he was used to experiencing racial bias at his PWI, particularly in his own department. His tone revealed the consternation he felt regarding his PWI's longstanding pattern of mistreating faculty of color as he said,

I call it exploitation, simple as that. They're advertising me as an expert and then they dock my pay for doing what they are boldly telling everybody I'm an expert for. . . . They are promoting us to the community and trying to solicit the donations by saying, "Look at what we have. Look at what we have on our campus. Look at what we bring." And it's no different than if you go to many web pages for predominantly White institutions; you see the sea of faces of people of color all over the front, you know? Faculty and staff and students. But then you look underneath the numbers and the numbers don't match up to what they're showing you. . . . So part of the challenge is, you know, do you say something?

Edward paused and then reflected,

As people of color, you don't want to believe this. You want to believe that it'll happen to anybody, but it doesn't. So what are you supposed to do with that, you know? And you feel bad for being a whining, complaining, Black faculty, but the fact is this doesn't happen to anybody else. And I ask, "Would you have done that with a white faculty member?" . . . . This was done three times to three people of color in the sociology department.

Jack described the racial bias he experienced at the hands of administrators rather than from colleagues:

I have three master's and one Ph.D. I'll talk about what my godfather told me. My godfather is a retired ER doctor in San Francisco. He said, "A Caucasian male's worst

nightmare is an educated Black man.” OK? And as a result of that, that’s what I’ve run into no matter where I go. When I went and saw my previous institution’s president, I was like, “Give me some advice on how I can get to this level.” I gave him my CV. He looked at it and he was like, . . . “You know what? You are more qualified for my position now than I am.” I said, “Oh. That’s good to know.” So then I kept doing this, meeting with administrators, and I kept seeing the same pattern. It was like, “Oh, you got tons of credentials and can potentially take my job.” In other words, these people have been hired and promoted as a result of what we call back home “The Good Ol’ Boy Syndrome,” meaning that you have this small group of Caucasian males—well, actually, here [in the Pacific Northwest] what I’m running into now is they have this small group of Caucasian females that actually start to regulate things—but, either way, it’s a small group that feels that “This person isn’t correct. Let’s keep him out, then, because if they can break that barrier then they might just take over and thrive.” And I feel like that’s one of the biggest barriers for educated African American males.

Angry and cynical, Jack brought up the issues of systematic racism and oppression.

According to The Aspen Institute (n.d.), structural racism and systematic racism are the same thing and result in

a system in which public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations, and other norms work in various, often reinforcing ways to perpetuate racial group inequity. It identifies dimensions of our history and culture that have allowed privileges associated with “whiteness” and disadvantages associated with “color” to endure and adapt over time. (p. 1)



Specifically, systemic racism is the way racism is built into every level of our society; it is “a feature of the social, economic and political systems in which we all exist” (The Aspen Institute, n.d., p. 1). Feagin (2014) developed the theory of systemic racism and proclaimed that systemic racism is a means by which minorities are oppressed for the financial and emotional benefit of White people. Feagin defined systemic racism as “a diverse assortment of racist practices; the unjustly gained economic and political power of Whites; the continuing resource inequalities; and the white-racist ideologies, attitudes, and institutions created to preserve white advantages and power” (Feagin, 2014, p. 9). Deliberating on systemic racism, Jack stated,

They like quiet minorities. If they feel that you’re going to be too vocal or that you’re going to stand up for what is right and not let them do whatever they want, then they don’t want you in that circle because you’re going to hinder their progression. You’re going to hinder or make them feel a little bit uncomfortable. And I think that’s the way it’s set up.

Gary was a tenured faculty member and had been at his current PWI for more than two decades. Gary was soft-spoken, yet firm in his beliefs. He stated that African American men are employed at a lower percentage than African American females, and we’re the only group like that in the country. . . . It says something about this country. I know that on the other floors of this school, you can hardly find an African American. If you do, it’s a Black woman or woman of African descent, not a male. I was naïve at first, but I soon realized that there are a lot of White faculty who appear to be friendly but are working behind my back. Not all of them. Maybe not even most of them, but enough of them that it became very dangerous. I really almost lost my job because there was a real letter circulating to kick me out of the department because I supposedly didn’t have the right

credentials. When I found out, I became suspicious of everyone because I didn't know who was doing or saying what. This was not something I started. I thought it was some dirty politics, some dirty ball, some real hardball that was played and I didn't like it. I'm more of a go-to-the-person and talk-to-them and work-it-out kind of a person. . . . There are plenty of White faculty that teach courses outside of their scope, but I've never, in my time at this school, heard of a petition going around them to get them terminated. That only happens to us.

Like Jack, Gary discussed systemic racism and oppression. Leaning back comfortably in a brown leather desk chair with his feet rested on the hard guest chair, Gary stated,

On many occasions, there were faculty that felt like the minorities were running everything and that they [White faculty] have got to do something about it. I found that working at a predominantly White school, it's harder to find a nurturing place to grow as a professor, as a man, as an African American, and more so as an African American male professor. The country is against—is slanted against—African Americans. We're the last hired, the first fired. We get justice; we don't get mercy. Our judges are reviewed harsher than non-Black judges. It's just like that in the society, and it's especially hard for African American males, is what I'm seeing. But what I'm basically just trying to tell you is sometimes, when you're an African American male, the rules are used more harshly against you. And you're given justice and not mercy unless you can do a great job defending yourself and find them to be in the wrong or get enough political, legal influence from the outside.

This statement directly reflects the work of Feagin (2006), who noted that systemic racism is “a broad range of racialized dimensions of this society: the racist framing, racist ideology,

stereotyped attitudes, racist emotions, discriminatory habits and actions, and extensive racist institutions developed over centuries by whites” (p. xii).

Hiram, a young scholar who worked as an adjunct instructor, had also experienced racism while working at PWIs in the Pacific Northwest. Hiram’s experience, however, related more to culturally responsive teaching practices as opposed to racism personally directed towards him.

Hiram stated,

Some institutions have—there’s this real resistance to culturally responsive education and teaching. The idea that if you are not being culturally responsive, then you are being racist. White faculty in that department, they were like, “We’re not racist,” and in my reaction, I’m like, “Racism doesn’t mean that you say mean and nasty things to people.

It can be that you are inherently nonresponsive to have these specific cultural practices by race.”

Hiram continued,

You really start to dig into those things that can shed light on why there are so few African American male faculty. But people don’t want to because then people get uncomfortable. . . . There is a real desire to be not racist, which is very different from being anti-racist—to say that “We don’t do these things” as opposed to “We are a part of a system that is fixing these things or changing it.” Students have been trying to school them and to help them in their ability to survive and resist the inherently racist practices that they engage in.

David was a fair-skinned Black man, a tenured instructor who had worked at his current PWI for more than 20 years. David proclaimed that he had not experienced racism on the job.

He stated,

I don't feel that there was any, for me, racial bias or that kind of stuff. I mean, this was one of those questions that's difficult to separate the issues from being African American, or, shall I say, a Black person, versus being in an institution. Because I think just being Black and going into a school setting, things come up. We, Black folk, me—I think about things. Like, if something happens at the school, I can think, “Well how am I going to be evaluated?” But, not only that, but “How am I going to be evaluated as a Black person or as a male? And, maybe more specifically, a Black male?” I mean, are they—they, I mean, White people—really thinking, “This is a lazy Black guy.” I don't know. They could just be thinking, “Hey, that guy is not doing his job.” Whether it's true or not, it doesn't matter. This is just what I bring into, basically, anyplace, including this place. It's easy to assume that a situation has racial undertones—it almost goes with the territory. But it doesn't make it true.

### **Microaggression**

Microaggressions are negative comments used to intimidate and demoralize people of color (Solórzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000; Sue, 2013; Sue et al., 2007). Microaggressions are usually hostile or derogatory racial slights and insults toward people of color. Microaggressions can take the form of microinsults, microinvalidations, or microassaults (Sue et al., 2007).

Edward reported experiencing microaggressions from administrators. Edward stated,

Our school has about 700 faculty total, which includes adjuncts, and only a handful of African American faculty . . . I was told by someone . . . “You gotta go back and get the Ph.D. or you'll never get tenure here. Everybody here's getting tenure these days and you'll never get it.” A few White faculty have gotten tenure, but they don't have a Ph.D. How'd I break through? How'd I make it for so long? How did I get schools to hire me?

How is it that I'm a speaker and consultant for two statewide organizations? The person that when there are lawsuits to go down and I come and clean it up. . . . I'm good at what I do, so why are my credentials constantly questioned? If I was somebody else, I think it wouldn't be haterism; I would be respected and revered. It'd be "Wow, isn't that amazing? Isn't that a great thing?" I can't win. So you want to believe that it isn't about you, about your skin tone . . . You want to believe that it's got nothing to do with it, but I don't know.

Jack described the microinvalidations he experienced when he applied for full-time positions at his former PWI. According to Jack,

At my old institution, the biggest challenge that I found was not being heard.

Administrators, they loved my ideas; they would snatch my ideas and they wouldn't give me credit for them. I didn't care as long as it got implemented. . . . I also felt that they had already pre-planned my pathway through that institution rather than letting me do it myself. . . . I applied for this position, it was actually a dean position at my previous institution, and my application got weeded out. So I went in and I talked to the chair that was leading that hiring committee and I said, "Let's talk, I just want to know why I didn't make the cut." . . . He goes . . . . "Let's just say your CV is for a four-year school, but this is two-year institution." I said, "So you all couldn't understand my CV and anybody that has a CV similar to mine got eliminated? I would love to see what type of resumes that you all had so I can know this example of a two-year versus a four-year." And he just looked at me . . . And I was like, "You're serious?" and he said, "Yes. We need you to write at a two-year level." . . . Now mind you, I have a Ph.D. and have taught at both the two-year community college level for some time, as well as at the four-year university

level. They invalidated my application because I wrote [at] a four-year level. I also had an experience in which I did not get the position I applied for because the hiring committee said my CV was too neat. I'm like, "I'm too neat?" Couldn't they have come up with something else, like my tie was crooked? My shoestrings didn't match or something? Come on. Too neat? I was starting to see that there were roadblocks being placed in front of me and it was almost like they were telling me which path they wanted me to take rather than having me choose my own path.

Gary explained his lived experiences with microaggressions from colleagues. According to Gary,

When I gave one of my first school talks, I didn't know at that time that I should have had a lot of scholarship, you know, to frame what it is I was saying. I came from one main text and included my research and experience as an attorney. I got criticized very hard by a White professor, one of those "I got a doctorate, you don't" kind of a person. She went to the dean and basically said, "That was one of the worst talks I've ever heard. What's going on with him?" The dean just said, "Uh-huh. All right. Thank you. I appreciate your feedback." After she left, the dean called me and said, "Listen, you got a complaint. I'm not going to tell you who said it, but you can just about guess. Here's what she said. Don't worry about it."

Gary, smiling and sounding a little amused, said,

Oh, let me tell you about an incident where another White professor had decided that I didn't know anything about political science. . . He came in and said, "Hey, you know what? I need a good definition of a republic. What is a republic?" He thought he had me. It just so happened I had come out of—in law school I had come out of a seminar on

the Federalist Papers, and I knew in Federalist No. 10, James Madison had defined republic. Instantly, I grabbed the book, opened it up to No. 10, and I said, “You know, this is a decent definition here.” He was a little surprised and a little stunned. Then he said, “Okay, well, thank you,” and walked out. I thought it was curious, but . . . I didn’t have time to really process it. I didn’t understand the political dynamics I had stepped into. It took me about a year after I started before I really started realizing that we got tunneling going on here, silos, and issues.

Hiram also reflected on the microaggressions he experienced by way of his colleagues.

Hiram stated,

Yeah, microaggression happens. So, most recently, I was teaching a small grassroots class—there was only four students in the class. And so an older, White stereotypically professorial type . . . was like, “Are you all scheduled to be in here?” And he said something along the lines of, “Are you authorized [to be] in this room?” . . . Nobody in there looked like the professor because there wasn’t an older white guy in room. The students were a lot more defensive than I was and I wanted to see how they would respond. And they were like, “No, this is Dr. So and So’s class.” They were like, “If I were you, Hiram, I would have snapped.” I said, “No, I’m just curious. I just wanted to see . . . I need to have a chat with him later.” So, unfortunately, you have to, one, get used to it or two, find ways to exist in specific and purposeful ways in order to change the institution and then, three, make it so that everything is a lesson. The students learned exactly what was going on and were able to come to some conclusions without me prodding them, and then we were able to engage in the discussion. It’s similar to something I experienced at another institution. My focus is the students, especially

because they're going to be teachers and administrators themselves one day. . . They're going to be the ones who push.

David stated that he had not faced any microaggressions. David said, I have job descriptions, and I basically know what I'm supposed to do, but you don't really know until you actually get in there and start doing things. . . . There was a guy who had a position before I did, and he was doing some things. These weren't bad things. These were good things. But I thought, "Well, I don't know if I really want to do this, or should be doing this. But I'm a new person in the school." So I talked to some other colleagues about it and learned that was really not something that I had to do. . . . I had to evaluate, "Am I going to do that, or not?" . . . . These boundaries issues, deciding what you do, what you can't do, that kind of stuff, those are big adjustments, but I was never insulted or invalidated because I chose not to do those things.

### **Black Masculinity**

Black masculinity is different from the stereotypes perpetuated by mass media (Coltrane & Messineo, 2000; Pierce, Carew, Pierce-Gonzalez, & Wills, 1978). African American men have multiple identities that result in a hybrid form of masculinity (Lester & Goggin, 1999; McClure, 2006). This, however, does not prevent African American male faculty from being stereotyped as angry or aggressive, or from being bullied in the workplace (Cornileus, 2012; Hollis, 2012; Matthiesen & Einarsen, 2010).

Edward spoke of a recent experience:

I was at a meeting last week and one of my White faculty colleagues was talking about Guided Pathways and she was taking issue with it. She talked about being poor and having to work her way through school and [said] that her parents didn't have money, but



she didn't mind exploring in the liberal arts and that there's no need for a guided pathway or a structured path to give students more clarity on where they should go. And I was promoting this program as a diversity thing because I think that when you have at-risk students you need to give them clarity on where they go next. But she's like, "No, they should explore and float around and take their time." I said, "They don't have the financial means to float around for five, six years if they have to repeat classes when they transfer because they didn't have a clear pathway. That breaks their spirit." And she's like, "Oh, it's fun for me and I never had a problem finding a job after I got out of college. I just was a liberal arts student." And I, at that point said, "But that's your privilege as a White woman in our society. You can say that because you have more opportunities to find jobs after you get out of school with a liberal arts degree. That African American woman that gets out of school, the Latina that gets out of school, there's not as many jobs that we can just say 'We're gonna get a job.' That's your privilege." Well, apparently, that hurt some feelings. And so my colleague, my mentor, saw me at another meeting a couple days later and he said, "Yeah, I had to do a little cleanup work after that meeting. She was pretty upset." I said, "Oh, really?" And he said, "Yeah, I said the same thing you said, literally, and she says, 'I understand. I just don't know why Edward had to be so angry about it.'" And this goes back to microaggressions as well as masculinity. Even though I didn't raise my voice or physically become aggressive, this White woman accused me of being angry simply because she disagreed with the words that I spoke, and her accusatory stance against me is dangerous because others can perceive me a certain way, as angry and aggressive.

Edward's mentor, a White male, initially had a similar response to Edward's words. Edward reported that his mentor said about the incident, "My own reaction was kind of like visceral, like that's not true, that's not fair," *and then added*, "But I had to stop and think about it and understand my privilege and realize that, yeah, that's probably true." Edward concluded, "That example I bring up because we need to coach those folks to get the institutional change that would promote a more welcoming environment for men of color, African American men—it's a comprehensive, big picture shift."

Edward paused and reflected for a moment. He then said,

But I think that kind of the way in which African American sexuality is perceived and all that stuff . . . We don't need that. In the situation I described earlier where my pay was docked, I wrote an email and I said, "Hey, what happened?" And I cc'd all the appropriate people and the person I know who did it. And her response back to me was, "This is not like you. Why are you being so aggressive?" I responded and said, "You took money out of my bank and you didn't tell me. There's nothing more, you know, more of a challenge to anybody than that. So I don't know why you're asking me that." And so immediately, whenever a Black man speaks up, we are automatically labeled as angry, aggressive, belligerent, when in truth all we're doing is speaking against the wrongs we're encountering. I'm too Black for some White folks on campus.

Jack explained how his masculinity was challenged based on how his colleagues perceived his sexual preference.

At my previous institution, they didn't know what I was. Meaning that they didn't know if I was homosexual, bisexual, or a womanizer, so I fell into all these different categories because I never told anybody. I'm like, "Why do you need to know? I'm supposed to be

here to teach.” And I noticed that, with certain groups, they thought I was gay—they felt a little bit more relaxed around me. You could tell. They were doing all sorts of weird stuff that I was thinking, “This is kind of odd for a female to be doing this in front of a male.” There was one lady, she was wearing a tight miniskirt and she was sitting toward me with her legs open and we were talking and she either overlooked or simply didn’t care that I’m a male. I let her talk, but I was like, “This is completely inappropriate. How close am I to the door? I’m going to give myself a little more room so I can make a quick exit if I need to.” But that was probably the weirdest thing where they thought I was gay so they starting to do all sorts of things to, I guess, test the waters. Either you’re a homosexual or a playa play, if you want to call it that. I don’t think they felt threatened by my masculinity but I think they were just trying to probe and find out what would make me respond or react.

Gary noted that there were attempts to challenge his masculinity early in his career. Gary stated,

Yeah, yeah, those things have happened. I’ve had conversations with people. They usually are more informal conversations because I already know the person. I’ve told people “You can’t say it like that,” or “I don’t let people talk to me like that.” They usually say, “Oh, Gary, you know I didn’t mean . . .” And then I deal with it right then and there and keep it moving.

Though he had not personally had his masculinity challenged or sexual preference called into question, Hiram stated,

Because there’s so few of us [Black male faculty], there’s no quorum, there’s no critical mass. Our voices tend to be—they’re some really powerful voices, but they can be

marginalized easily because none of us want to be labeled as aggressive or angry. Those are trigger words, especially in the workplace, so many Black men back down and clam up to avoid being placed in those categories. Black men are the only group that does not have freedom of speech.

David neither confirmed nor denied that he had experienced situations that challenged his masculinity. Instead, he said,

For Black males, if you're in a position, maybe something comes up where you react to something. Maybe you get angry or something. Are they [White colleagues] going to think, "Oh, this is one of those angry Black men going off? That's the way they are." Whether that's true or not, it's still a thought that, I think, a lot of Black folk would have. So, those issues, I think, are brought into almost any place. And the more isolated [they are], the more non-White people they have in the institution, or the fewer people of color, the more on-guard Black folk are going to be about those sort of issues. You sort of say, "Hey, I'm the only one [Black man] here. How are they going to adequately assess me? They don't have anyone else that looks like me. So, what if I step out of line and do something? Am I going to have as much leeway as, maybe, my White counterpart?"

### **Recruitment**

The recruitment of faculty of color is a challenge for many colleges and universities. Many argue that the lack of African American male faculty is simply due to the limited number of students earning master's and doctoral degrees (Myers & Turner, 1995; Ottinger, Sikula, & Washington, 1993). Some assert that the lack of African American male faculty is a result of unfair, biased recruitment and hiring processes (Knowles & Harleston, 1997; Tierney & Sallee, 2008; Turner & Myers, 2000). Participants in this study suggested that poor, narrowly-focused

recruitment strategies and passive hiring practices contribute to the underrepresentation of African American male faculty at two-year institutions of higher education.

Speaking about how he was recruited from another state to the Pacific Northwest, Edward said,

Even though my master's is in education, because I'm Black and there are so few of us here in the Northwest, I'm usually tapped to teach courses related to African American studies. . . . So the typical way that adjuncts have been hired is that there's an immediate need, a class comes online, they want somebody to teach it, they need you in two weeks. And not a lot of people will take that gig. But I always took it, so I think that's part of it. I also think being African American and speaking up about diversity and presenting at different conferences and that sort of thing has been my inroad. And that has opened up a lot of doors for me. I think that we find ourselves often looking at people who are just like us and we want to hire clones and so there isn't nobody who looks like me. You know, there's a problem there. Oftentimes, when hiring a new person in the department and introducing that person to us on the staff, the introduction includes things like, "Yeah, we've known each other for years; we went to school or played softball together." And I'm like, "Wow! All you did was bring your buddy onboard and your buddy looks just like you." Nepotism is alive and well in academia.

Regarding potential strategies to recruit faculty of color, particularly African American male faculty, Edward paused to reflect, exhaled, and then said,

You got to get out there in the community and let people see, understand what it is to be faculty, what—a lot of people know it to be a prestigious job, but we have not done enough to promote that role in the broader society. I mean, young kids don't know what

a professor is. So let me go ahead and sit and read to kindergarteners, let me go into the community and show them who I am; bring them on campus and let them meet me and others. The student of color conferences, career fairs, and those type of things, we need to be there, and I say “we” as in not just the faculty of color, but White administrators as well, to recruit new faculty.

When asked about recruitment efforts and strategies, Jack smiled and gently shook his head. He stated,

We need to place ourselves in those higher positions—one way or another—and then pull some others up. And I’m not saying selectively, just “Okay, you’re a minority, move into it,” but if they qualify for it, let them go for the running. Like right now, what’s going on at my current institution is the diversity movement. The last two dean positions have been given to minorities. So the new deans are making this push to say, “Yes, we need to get more minorities in leadership besides White women.” The president is supportive of it. Other institutions are going to have to do something similar. They got to get the president to not only support it but help do something to actually get that movement going and then they’re going to have to make people feel uncomfortable in order to move forward. You have to have that talk.

Gary’s experiences and observation of recruitment mirrored Edward and Jack’s sentiments. Gary noted that his floor was more inclusive than most, saying,

They were very open to affirmative action, open to diverse programming, open to people of darker color. . . . I know that on the other floors of this school, you can hardly find an African American. And if you find an African American, you’re more likely to find an African American female. And so the other floors look like the country generally looks.

And the country is against, is slanted against African American males. And the deans and other administrators say, “We are diverse.” What they mean is, “We got blondes, brunettes, and redheads.” The diversity becomes just different aspects of Whiteness.

In terms of recruiting, Gary opined,

First of all, I believe that they don’t have a high enough regard for historically Black schools. It’s when they try to act like they can’t find people who are qualified, it’s like did you go to Howard? Did you go to Clark Atlanta? Where did you go? Secondly, I feel like where we can still push affirmative action we should be, and we’re not. Folks act like I-200 has ended affirmative action. That’s not true, that’s only if it’s state money. Some of the money our institution receives is national government money. And if it’s national government money, affirmative action should apply. I feel like we don’t take advantage of all of the opportunities we have at our disposal.

Hiram stated that there were several challenges in recruitment, including corporate curiosity and niche markets. According to Hiram,

There is one thing that’s unique to African American as people of color, and that is whether or not you indicate that you are African American. Indicating you’re a person of color is one thing but indicating that you’re African American is whole another . . . and I think this is how I ended up getting a callback. There’s a curiosity that—I think specifically in dealing with an African American male, like, “Oh, African American male, Ph.D. Let’s see what he’s all about.” I don’t think we’re taken seriously; I think there’s a novelty factor that could cause people to waste your time, unfortunately.

However, with that said, I think it is a function often that African Americans often do and that is “me-search”: the research that is about my history and experience as an African

American. “Me-search” has its advantages and disadvantages. The advantage is that, as a person of color, you will maybe be hired and will probably be asked to teach every ethnic studies course the college offers. The disadvantage is that you’ll be pigeonholed.

Regarding the recruitment of faculty of color, Hiram gently slapped his index finger against the wood table and suggested that it was the responsibility of educational institutions, particularly state-funded ones, to

be doing specific, purposeful things—programmed, open houses, and recruitment where they are going to those kids and saying, “We know what we’ve done in the past. We know the times that we’ve come to this high school, that it has been to get basketball and football players, but this is what we’re doing now. We want you to know about these education lapses. We want you to think about terminal degrees. These are the types of things we are actively recruiting, so just as hard as we recruit you to come carry our football down the field, we actively recruit you just as hard to join our educational faculty.”

Like Edward and Gary, David also acknowledged his institution’s limited number of African American faculty and stated,

I think most of us, Black people, would feel much more comfortable if, when we go into a situation, we see some folks who look like us. You add up—how many Black, full-time, tenured faculty do we have on this campus? Well, I don’t know the number, but I know it’s not a lot, which is not surprising at all to me. If we don’t have many at this school, there are probably not a lot at other ones either. This kind of gets into the institutional versus kind of the personal, too. And, again, it’s a little hard for me to



separate these. I think in certain institutions—for instance, if they had never had any people of color, or hardly any, in the school, then you go to apply.

David cautioned against having an overly suspicious attitude, saying, “If you don’t get the job, it doesn’t necessarily mean it’s a result of racial bias. It could just mean that a more qualified person got the job.” At the same time, he suggested that biases undeniably exist, although not necessarily overtly:

A lot of them are unconscious. I mean, normally speaking, I don’t think you’re going to find outright racist people who say, “No, we don’t want any Black folks here in this school.” I think that’s pretty rare. But there are all these different levels of bias. And I think with a lot of, probably, institutions that a lot of Black folks would be applying for, there could be some exceptions to that. But that certain bias is going to be much more hidden. And maybe even hidden from people who have the biases. All of us have biases. But if there were someone who, somehow, didn’t have any, and someone went in and tried to get a job, a Black person in particular, and maybe a Black male, didn’t get the job—again, you’d be thinking, like I said, “Is this because I’m Black?” Did I say something? Did I get evaluated fairly? It’s hard to know, but in my own personal experience and observation of potential candidates, I think it has more to do with a person’s experience and qualifications more than anything else.

### **Retention and Promotion**

Turner, Myers, and Creswell (1999) identified six barriers to the recruitment and retention of faculty of color: social isolation, occupational stress, devaluation of minority research, the idea of being a token hire, racial and ethnic bias in recruiting and hiring, and racial

and ethnic bias in promotion practices (pp. 30-31). Interviews revealed that participants have experienced three of the six barriers.

Edward's voice again intensified, as it had when he described how administrators docked his pay when he took on a consulting gig. He rolled his eyes when he began to talk about retention and promotion and explained,

Everybody wants to talk about how they want to promote people of color and help us become social deans and deans of things and VPs for instruction. But then somehow, some way, those promotions don't come. It's a consistent fail. And when those of us who are on hiring or promotion committees, we bring up these issues. "OK, well, let's offer this person a promotion or we offer this person extra because we need to retain them." There's always some backlash about "We can't do that; we can't give this person a higher level of retention pay."

Edward continued to discuss retention from his personal perspective.

I'll explain it this way in my own recent situation. I said, "The institution basically tells us we're a precious gem. We're a precious diamond, a blue diamond almost, right? But they don't treat us like that. Because if I'm a precious gem, you're going to do everything you can to protect me, nurture me, and I have a lot value too, so I expect you to treat me accordingly." But examples I've been giving you, there are people in my department in the last 6 months that have demonstrated that they talk it but they don't walk it. And it starts to become real easy to see that they don't know—there's no congruence, there's no walking the talk. It's just a lot of telling us that they want us few faculty of color to be this or that. They want us, but they don't want to do what it takes to keep us. It doesn't come to be real and really quickly hurts retention.

Like Edward, Jack rolled his eyes when he began to talk about retention and promotion.

Jack said,

What I'm hearing now is that some of the institutions that I applied to are targeting the LGBTQ staff for promotion. They aren't supposed to ask the questions, but hiring committees are starting to promote individuals that are open about their sexuality and sexual preferences rather than promoting people of color. At my old institution, one thing that they were doing is they were pulling the plug on homosexual Caucasian females, pulling them up the ranks faster than anybody else. That population was not underrepresented, but the president, an old, homosexual White man, went along with it.

Gary stated,

Diversity is listed as one of our school's core values, but we have to make that real by making sure that the committees are made up of people that are really trying to achieve the diversity. These folks know what they're doing up here. They will promote that as a value even though they're not excited or doing anything about it. When the time to pick the committees comes, they work so hard to put on these traditionalists and Eurocentric-thinking folks on the committees. . . They're simply hiring and promoting faculty and staff that are just replicas of current committee members. . . Things are starting to turn around for the better now that the school has a new president. Many members of the old guard or Good Ol' Boys club have resigned or retired, so this administration is creating a whole new cabinet, which in my opinion is a good thing.

When asked about retention and promotion, Hiram did not appear to get frustrated.

Instead, his tone remained upbeat, yet matter of fact. He explained,

I think often we, people of color, are seen as playing a specific role or niche. Sometimes we get pigeonholed and relegated to “me-search” and sometimes it’s forced upon us, as in, “The only class we can offer you is an ethnic studies course.” I am weary of how I describe my own degree. My Ph.D. is in curriculum of instruction and multicultural education, and so I will describe it as either one or both depending upon the scenario, because the assumption that I run into is, “OK, well you can be the hippity-hop guy but when it comes to your knowledge in general of pedagogical curriculum instruction, you probably don’t know much because you’ve been immersed in your Black culture.” I find myself preemptively reminding people that my degree is in curriculum instruction and that I am a capable researcher and teacher in several disciplines. Do I want to be promoted to full-time? Yes. I have the experience and the credentials to warrant a promotion. I’ve applied for several jobs and have received only one call back.

Hiram suggested that these difficulties are not new.

It goes all the way back to the beginning of American education. A lot of people talk about two different perspectives in American education. One, that it is failing specifically when it comes to how African American males fare in education. As we know, Black boys disproportionately get behavior referrals, suspended, expelled, detention, with continuously the lowest graduation rates, attrition, the lowest matriculation to four-year college universities, lowest SAT scores, GPAs, whatever measure. The perspective is either that those dudes are failing because those results are replicated everywhere, or that it is working exactly how it is designed . . . I tend to think it’s working in a way that is designed. Schools are designed for African Americans, and

African American males in particular, the people to be alienated and so they are working to that design. That design is also created for African American male faculty to fail.

David admitted that he has never applied for a promotion and stated,

It's important, I think, to kind of keep your perspective on things. I would say that it's important to have support. I would say, yeah, it would be a challenge to get a promotion if you don't have that support, for sure. You go to apply, or maybe get promoted. Again, it's automatic for most folks of color to assume you didn't get the promotion because of race. Me, I'd think, "OK, so, if I didn't get this job, why didn't I get it? Did it have something to do with whether I am a Black person or did they simply have a more qualified candidate?" And by the way, just because there's diversity in the institution, doesn't mean that there isn't other stuff going on, too. Because this can happen with all kinds of folks.

### **Coping Strategies**

African American males face many challenges related to career advancement in higher education (Heggins, 2004; Jackson, 2008; JBHE, 2001). African American male faculty members experience feelings of doubt, frustration, stress, and tension as they attempt to navigate the barriers at their PWIs. The study participants found ways to cope with the stress they experienced.

Edward reflected on the awareness of people of color on faculties, saying,

By the time we've gotten to this level of the academy, we're almost well-tuned to just kind of know how to be political[ly] savvy. I just think we are, almost automatically.

You wouldn't make it this far if you weren't somewhat political[ly] savvy, know how to play the game. I just have learned. But I've learned it from talking to the elders, the

folks that have been here for—been doing it for a long time, and they tell me how to play it. I just pay attention. I mean, I still have the guys—I still have my network. There's no African American male faculty but just this past weekend, I went golfing with two colleagues from work, both African American men. And with the faculty realm, it's this networking beyond that though and of course the coping strategies. I've kind of become my own—like my wife and I, we [are] just much more kind of about life balance stuff. So personal boundaries are easier for me, which helps me cope.

When asked how he deals with what he perceives to be institutional racism or marginalization, Jack was very direct and stated,

I preemptively go in and I let people know exactly who I am, through the hiring process before and everything else. I don't hide or pretend to be anybody else. I let people know here are the things that for example I would study, here's the type of research that I would want to conduct, these are the classes that I would want to teach, here's who I am; if these things are happening on the campus, these are the types of things that I will bring up, for example at a faculty meeting. So understand who you're hiring and if this is not a match—and that's one of the things about having a terminal degree, I could say, "If this is not a match that's okay. I can go somewhere else and have no problem." That's how it goes with me.

Speaking of coping strategies, Gary's tone was cautious. He mentioned trying to be as good a scholar as possible and pointed to an article and a book he had written to evidence his thinking and writing. He added, "Another strategy is to reach out and be part of the community here, to everybody, no matter their race, because I realized that the people that are the most vulnerable are the ones that are the hermits and the turtle-in." Gary said his third strategy was

“to link up with African American professors that I can trust. We know how to call each other together when something is going on that ain’t right.”

Hiram described his coping strategies in his usual matter-of-fact tone, saying,

Even when I’m not comfortable I feel empowered enough to be able to speak to what I need to speak, and to change what I need to change, and make a decision when I have worn out my welcome. There are times where I’m—one of my coping mechanisms is temporary engagement. It’s the understanding that I will have to move and that my position might be temporary. That’s how I cope.

When asked to explain his coping strategies, David replied,

It was important for me to talk to some of my colleagues, so, that support was there. So, we all have an extended, some more than others, families, or friends, you can bounce this stuff off of. But it’s really nice if you can have that in the institutions.

### **Conclusion**

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the lived experiences of African American male faculty at public, two-year PWIs in the Pacific Northwest. This chapter presented the findings of this study and revealed six key themes relevant to African American men holding faculty positions at public, two-year PWIs. A synopsis was provided for each participant to reveal the men’s perceptions, challenges, and strategies. The concepts that were revealed by the data were expounded upon using statements from each faculty member to give a truer sense of their lived experiences.

Through the analysis of data gained from the participant interviews, the researcher was able to answer the research question and subquestions. Based on the findings of the study, the overarching question was answered. That question was: What perceived institutional barriers, if

any, contribute to the underrepresentation of African American male faculty at predominantly White institutions? The barriers most commonly cited by the men included racism, microaggressions, challenges to their masculinity, poor recruitment efforts, and obstacles to promotion and retention. The barriers were attributed to institutionalized racism, which was perceived as contributing to the underrepresentation of African American male faculty. The barriers were also instrumental in the participants' slow climb to tenured and/or leadership positions at their institutions.

The men also answered the following subquestion: How have perceived barriers hindered the successful advancement of African American males in obtaining full-time, tenured, or leadership positions? Four of the five participants were granted tenure; only one of the five participants was in a leadership position. Due to the barriers he encountered, obtaining a leadership position in higher education took longer than expected. The lack of African American males being prepared to obtain leadership positions at public, two-year colleges perpetuates these men's underrepresentation in administrative roles.

The second subquestion, which was also answered by the male faculty, was: What strategies have such males used to cope with or overcome perceived institutional barriers? Chapter 4 details strategies used by the men to overcome perceived barriers to advancement to obtain full-time, tenured, and/or leadership positions in higher education. Four of the men agreed that being confident in oneself and one's scholarly abilities were integral in having the strength to overcome barriers that hindered them.

By answering the research questions, the men were able to provide insight into their lived experiences in higher education, which included a detailed account of the barriers they faced.



The key themes were analyzed through the conceptual framework of critical race theory. These findings drive the conclusions and implications that will be discussed in Chapter 5.

## **Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusions**

The purpose of this study was to explore the challenges African American males face as they pursue career advancement in higher education. The lived experiences of these men allow researchers insight into the challenges African American males face in the academic workplace. Some of the literature reviewed, as well as information gained from the study, suggests that African American male faculty experience racism and sexism during their journey toward full-time, tenured, and/or administrative positions in higher education. The information shared by the study participants will assist other African American men pursuing faculty or leadership positions at public community colleges in creating strategies to cope with these, or similar, experiences.

The phenomenological approach brought together the stories of five African American male faculty at public, two-year, predominantly White institutions (PWIs) of higher education in the Pacific Northwest. The researcher analyzed data collected through face-to-face interviews, field notes, and biographical questionnaires to address the following research question and subquestions:

1. What are the possible perceived institutional barriers that contribute to the underrepresentation of African American male faculty?
  - a. How have perceived barriers hindered the successful advancement of African American males in obtaining full-time, tenured, or leadership positions?
  - b. What strategies have such males used to cope with or overcome perceived institutional barriers?

This chapter presents the findings discussed using the lens of critical race theory in relation to the key themes identified from an analysis of the data. A discussion of the

implications is also provided. Finally, this chapter includes recommendations for future institutional practice and future research.

## **Discussion**

African American men experience institutional barriers, such as racism, gender bias, and workplace bullying, that negatively affect their professional careers (Cornileus, 2012) and obstruct them in being hired, retained, and promoted in academia (Jackson, 2006, 2008; Turner et al., 1999). Allen et al. (2000) confirmed that African American faculty are disadvantaged due to racial bias. This continues to be a problem, not only in the U.S. workplace, but also in the larger society. The increasing enrollment of students of color (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016) has raised concern over the low number of faculty and administrators of color working at state-funded, two-year institutions of higher education (Collins, 1986; Howard-Vital, 1987; Knowles & Harleston, 1997; Menges & Exum, 1983; National Center for Education Statistics, 2015; Silver, 1988; Tierney & Sallee, 2008; Turner & Myers, 2000). The lack of African American male faculty is disconcerting because research has shown that having an African American male instructor improves educational outcomes for African American students (Grant-Thompson & Atkinson, 1997; Guiffrida, 2005; Harper, 2005).

For the African American male faculty who participated in this study, their journeys have not been easy. Through this study, I realized that African American men suffer from the convoluted effects of racism and sexism that make their encounters at predominantly White institutions different from those experienced by White men (Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 2008), White women (Maguire, 1980; Thomas & Hollenshead, 2001) and women of color (Smith & Crawford, 2007). African American men are more likely than White men to have their credentials questioned (Cornileus, 2012; Hollis, 2012), to face gender bias (Hoch, 2004; Jackson,

2006), and to have their masculinity connected to aggressiveness (Connell, 1995; White & Cones, 2013). The findings of this study highlight the challenges African American males face as they pursue career opportunities in academia. Increasing the knowledge associated with the challenges that some African American male faculty experience can provide aspiring male faculty of color with strategies to overcome those institutional barriers and can provide institutions with recommendations for supporting the recruitment, retention, and promotion of African American male faculty.

The men's stories were analyzed using the framework of critical race theory (CRT). This study generated three major conclusions: (a) African American male faculty tolerated negative perceptions of their race and gender; (b) predominantly White institutions created barriers to career advancement; and (c) personal coping strategies were used to evade and/or overcome perceived barriers. Delgado and Stefancic (2012) identified four tenets of CRT, which were used as a lens to help this researcher see similarities among the men interviewed. The tenets are interest convergence, revisionist interpretations of history, the critique of liberalism, and structural determinism (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012, p. 12). This researcher was able to see and understand the tenets of CRT through the narratives presented by the study participants.

## **Racism**

Delgado and Stefancic (2012) identified the critique of liberalism as one of the major themes of CRT (p. 12). The critique of liberalism states that many people believe that race does not matter, that society should be colorblind, and that individuals should be judged on "the content of their character and not the color of their skin" (King, 1963, para. 20). The narratives presented by Edward, Jack, Gary, and Hiram indicate that, at least on particular occasions, they were probably judged based on their race, not on their character. Some White individuals

support the concept of equal opportunity, yet they oppose offering opportunities for advancement to people of color or creating programs and initiatives to promote diversity because the prospects threaten their own White privilege (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Dovidio, Mann, & Gaertner, 1989). The entire American social structure is affected and shaped by the social construction of race.

Slavery was abolished in the United States 150 years ago; however, Black people continue to be suppressed based on their color. This subjugation continues to play out in the workplace and in the larger society. To maintain the power structure of privilege, White people formed and internalized the idea that African Americans were inferior to Whites and deserved to be oppressed (King, 1975). American political, economic, education, and social systems still operate under this notion.

In today's society, some White people believe, or pretend to believe, that race is no longer relevant (Brown et al., 2003; Dovidio & Gaertner, 2004). They suggest that they and other people are color-blind. Rather than embracing color-blindness, CRT encourages the adoption of race-conscious efforts to foster social change. The experiences the participants faced were issues of power, empowerment, and inequality, designed to maintain the existing power structure of White privilege and supremacy and keep the participants—and in Hiram's case, his students—in subordinate positions. Race-conscious efforts will do much to ameliorate the frustrations study participants expressed regarding the passive-aggressive approach to racism some of their White colleagues have demonstrated. CRT suggests that White liberals are more dangerous than White conservatives because the former believe in “color blindness and neutral principles” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012, p. 26) which provide a “false veneer of progress” (Francis as cited in Humanities Washington, 2016, para.2).

Interpretation of the study participants' narratives shows that the African American male faculty perceive they are targets of racial bias and feel exploited and oppressed due to the unequal power relationship between them and White administrators and faculty. Exploitation and oppression arise when opportunities for African American male faculty conflict with the self-interest of White administrators and faculty. The individuals on the stronger end of the power dichotomy cultivate an attitude that allows them to rationalize the mistreatment. The rationalizations include explaining, denying, or obscuring the nature of race relations in academia. Whites proclaim they are colorblind to defend and justify the racial status quo (Bonilla-Silva, 2003). As Doane (2007) noted, "Politically, 'color-blindness' has been employed to support the position that race-based policies for amelioration of segregation or racial inequality are unnecessary, 'unfair' to whites and in violation of basic principles of equal treatment in a democratic society" (p. 159).

### **Racial Microaggression**

Another hallmark of CRT is the concept of structural determinism, which suggests that a mode of thought determines significant social outcomes. Delgado and Stefancic (2012) defined structural determinism as "the idea that our system, by reason of its structure and vocabulary, is ill equipped to redress certain types of wrongs" (p. 31). In other words, due to their structure and language, systems cannot resolve particular kinds of injustices (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). Racial microaggressions are subtle insults directed toward people of color (Solórzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000); when these modes of thought are consciously embraced, their results are communicated to debase people of color and keep them in an oppressed state. Individuals who engage in racial microaggressions often perceive themselves as nonracist; they are unconscious

of their negative feelings toward minorities and unaware of how their behavior and lack of racial competency affect people of color (Constantine, 2007).

The study participants' narratives suggest that racial microaggressions are commonly committed by White peers. Microaggressions are so prevalent that people often dismiss them as innocent comments or simple misunderstandings, rather than recognizing them as an attribute of White supremacy, White privilege, or racist attitudes (Sue, Capodilupo, & Holder, 2008). Yet, according to Pierce (1974), "The major vehicle for racism in this country is offenses done to blacks by whites in this sort of gratuitous never-ending way. These offenses are microaggressions" (p. 515).

Delgado and Stefancic (2012) wrote that empathic fallacy is a component of structural determinism. Empathic fallacy is the belief that a person can change another individual's beliefs and attitudes simply by offering a positive narrative that dispels pre-existing negative thoughts. For example, a White administrator may have a preconceived notion that African American faculty are suited to teach courses only in ethnic studies. As Hiram explained,

The assumption that I run into is, "OK, well you can be the hippity-hop guy but when it comes to your knowledge in general of pedagogical curriculum instruction, you probably don't know much because you've been immersed in your Black culture." I find myself preemptively reminding people that my degree is in curriculum instruction and that I am a capable researcher and teacher in several disciplines.

When confronted with a new, positive narrative, the administrator may change his or her long-held belief and realize that African American faculty are intelligent and capable of teaching an array of academic subjects.

Interpretation of the study participants' narratives shows that the participants' credentials and credibility as competent scholars are routinely challenged or invalidated. This type of microaggression is classified as a *microinvalidation*. Jack, a highly qualified African American academic with four postgraduate degrees, described the racial bias and microinvalidations he experienced at the hands of administrators when he applied for positions:

[I] kept seeing the same pattern. . . . They have this small group of Caucasian females that actually start to control things—but, either way, it's a small group that feels that "This person isn't correct. Let's keep him out, then, because if they can break that barrier that we created, then they might just take over and thrive."

It is difficult to respond to microaggressive comments and change the negative thoughts and stereotypes embedded in White colleagues' minds. Individuals are socialized into a particular way of thinking and feeling; systems are unequipped and unprepared to change certain kinds of injustices (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). Pierce (1974) stated that it is important for individuals, particularly African Americans, to recognize microaggressions in order to construct a future for themselves. Most of the study participants recognized microaggressions and successfully created an alternative future for themselves by navigating barriers and receiving support from compassionate allies or by resigning and moving to a less hostile environment. Discussing coping strategies, Gary mentioned trying to be as good a scholar as possible and pointed to an article and a book he had written to evidence his thinking and writing. He stated that a second method was to "reach out and be part of the community here, to everybody, no matter their race, because I realized that the people that are the most vulnerable are the ones that are the hermits and the turtle-in." Gary's third strategy was to go to trustworthy African



American colleagues; he said, “We know how to call each other together when something is going on that ain’t right.”

## **Black Masculinity**

Revisionist interpretation of history is a CRT concept in which people amend historical facts for self-serving reasons. Historical revisionists usually deny or apply a more comfortable interpretation of events. Oh and Ishizawa-Gbrie (2000) stated, “The underlying objective of historical revisionism is to blur the distinct line that exists between the victims and the aggressors” (“Introduction,” para. 6). Masculinity, like race, is a social construct; it is characterized by attributes such as physical prowess, competitiveness, power and control, and aggressiveness. Though masculinity is commonly associated with being a male, Cheng (1999) noted that “masculinity is the defining gender performance of Euro-American males” (p. 297).

As slaves, not only were Black males stripped of their freedom, but the positive characteristics associated with masculinity were also divested. White people, males and females, exerted dominance and institutional power over African Americans (Franklin, 1984; Wallace, 1979). It is a widely known truth that even after slavery was renounced in the United States, African Americans were beaten and often killed for being assertive. Baldwin (1963) wrote, “The white man’s masculinity depends on the denial of the masculinity of blacks” (p. 91).

White aggression and sadistic violence toward African American men have been heavily documented (Feagin, 1992; Pettigrew, 1985; Solórzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000; Smith, Allen, & Danley, 2007). Historical revisionists have altered and exaggerated history to depict African American men as aggressive, treacherous criminals with violent tendencies. History shows that a general antagonism toward Black males has been widespread. However, the revisionist interpretation of history describes African American males as threatening rather than as

powerless, defenseless, marginalized beings. Interpretation of the study participants' narrative shows that African American men were often accused of being aggressive whenever they displayed assertive behavior or moments of frustration. Edward spoke of an experience of challenging the ideas of a White faculty member:

Even though I didn't raise my voice or physically become aggressive, this White woman accused me of being angry simply because she disagreed with the words that I spoke, and her accusatory stance against me is dangerous because others can perceive me a certain way, as angry and aggressive.

African American males are socially stigmatized when it comes to masculinity (McCready, 2009). Masculinity, and aggressiveness specifically, are considered a positive characteristic of White males, yet are considered adversarial characteristics of African American males (McCready, 2009). Black masculinity, as Collins (2004) noted, has been desecrated by White culture. African American male faculty face a dual burden of race and masculinity. Similar to the findings presented by Carr, Palepu, Szalacha, Caswell, and Inui (2007), participants in this study indicated that quiet minority faculty were favored more than those perceived as competitive, aggressive, and demanding, which are the traditional characteristics of masculinity. According to Jack,

They [Whites] like quiet minorities. If they feel that you're going to be too vocal or that you're going to stand up for what is right and not let them do whatever they want, then they don't want you in that circle because you're going to hinder their progression.

## **Recruitment**

Another significant tenet of CRT is interest convergence, which, according to Delgado and Stefancic (2012), maintains that Whites advocate for the advancement of people of color

only if it enhances their own personal interest. In other words, White people will support minorities if they themselves will gain socially, politically, or economically by doing so (Taylor, 2006). Recruiting efforts can be viewed as an issue of interest convergence. For example, Edward's institution promotes him as an expert on social diversity, multicultural communications, and intra-American studies and encourages organizations to hire him as a consultant and/or guest speaker. As Edward noted,

I call it exploitation, simple as that. They're advertising me as an expert . . . They are promoting us [African American faculty] to the community and trying to solicit the donations by saying, "Look at what we have. Look at what we have on our campus. Look at what we bring."

Affirmative action is an example of interest convergence. Though designed to benefit people of color, Aguirre (2000) and Ladson-Billings (1998) argued, the primary beneficiaries of this legislation have been White women. White women as a group are more socially privileged than African American males (Maguire, 1980). Some White faculty members and administrators are critical of or downright opposed to recruiting African American male faculty. These individuals are unaware of the overall benefit African American male faculty can have on students, institutions, and faculty. Research shows that having an African American male instructor improves educational outcomes for Black students (Grant-Thompson & Atkinson, 1997; Guiffrida, 2005; Harper, 2005). Hiram reflected, "My focus is the students, especially because they're going to be teachers and administrators themselves one day. . . They're going to be the ones who push."

Interpretation of the study participants' narratives reveal that some faculty members suspect that they were recruited only to fill roles in a niche market, as faculty of color are often

pigeonholed to teach ethnic studies-related courses. Participants reported that their scholarship is often questioned and criticized, which mirrors Baez's (2000) findings. Gary spoke of his lived experiences with microaggressions from colleagues. According to Gary, after he gave a kind of talk that was new for him, he was "criticized very hard by a White professor, one of those 'I got a doctorate, you don't' kind of a person. She went to the dean and basically said, "That was one of the worst talks I've ever heard."

Scholarship by faculty of color is ridiculed as being a passion project rather than thoughtful academic inquiry (Cleveland, 2004; Patton & Catching, 2009). This happens because the proposed research does not converge with the interests of White faculty and administrators (Baez, 2000; Cleveland, 2004; Patton & Catching, 2009). Study participants would like to see a paradigm shift that allows their institution to purposefully recruit qualified faculty of color whose scholarship goes beyond niche markets and "me-search." As Hiram put it,

"Me-search" has its advantages and disadvantages. The advantage is that, as a person of color, you will maybe be hired and will probably be asked to teach every ethnic studies course the college offers. The disadvantage is that you'll be pigeonholed.

### **Retention and Promotion**

Like recruitment, promotion and retention initiatives can also be viewed through the lens of interest convergence. African Americans comprise 6% of full-time faculty (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015) and are often at the bottom of the hierarchical structure at PWIs. African American faculty are represented in much lower proportions than the Black student population (Silver, 1988). African American male faculty are least likely to achieve tenure and promotion compared with other groups (Collins, 1986; Howard-Vital, 1987; Silver, 1988). The success of African American male faculty has been stunted by sexual and racial discrimination.

Interpretation of the study participants' narrative reveals that the negative outcomes they encountered are due to the institutional barrier of racial oppression and the marginalization African American faculty experience within predominantly White academic settings (Thomas & Hollenshead, 2001). Edward reported experiencing microaggressions from administrators, noting that someone at his institution told him, "You gotta go back and get the Ph.D. or you'll never get tenure here. Everybody here's getting tenure these days and you'll never get it." Edward said that he did not want to believe that this prediction was a result of prejudice, but could not help wondering: "Why are my credentials constantly questioned? If I was somebody else, I think it wouldn't be 'haterism'; I would be respected and revered."

Scheurich (1993) posited that the best way for members of minority groups to receive promotions is for them to imitate the dominant group. In other words, if African American males are to enjoy the rewards offered to White males, their scholarly output and personal behaviors should mirror those of White males. This belief has created conflicts for African American faculty at PWIs who choose not to assimilate to the White academic culture (Stanfield, 1993). When asked how he deals with what he perceives to be institutional racism or marginalization, Jack was very direct about not compromising his identity as a Black academic. He stated:

I preemptively go in and I let people know exactly who I am, through the hiring process before and everything else. I don't hide or pretend to be anybody else. I let people know here are the things that for example I would study, here's the type of research that I would want to conduct, these are the classes that I would want to teach.

For Jack, living out his identity as an African American was important, and he reported that he would let a job go rather than distort his sense of self.

That choice is not an easy one, because jobs for African American academics are relatively scarce. Two-year public institutions have a high number of students of color (Menges & Exum, 1983; National Center for Education Statistics, 2016); yet faculty of color are grossly underrepresented (Knowles & Harleston, 1997; Menges & Exum, 1983; Tierney & Sallee, 2008; Turner & Myers, 2000). Study participants suggested several ways in which PWIs can recruit, retain, and promote faculty of color, and the recommendations match those presented by Turner (2002), who suggested that schools adopt the following strategies: “Broaden the composition of search committees. . . . Create diverse communication networks. . . . [and] consider special interventions” (pp. 1–3). Regarding the recruitment of faculty of color, Hiram suggested that it was the responsibility of educational institutions, particularly state-funded ones, to “be doing specific, purposeful things—programmed, open houses, and recruitment” that would allow African American faculty to feel they are as wanted as Black athletes.

These proposals may help African American male faculty move into higher ranks, achieve greater levels of success, and experience increased job satisfaction. They will also indicate that PWIs are serious about and dedicated to promoting inclusive academic excellence by working to ensure that access to recruitment and advancement opportunities, benefits, and resources are equitable for faculty of color. Bell (1980) declared that the “interests of [minorities] in achieving racial equality will be accommodated only when it converges with the interests of whites” (p. 523). If people of color are to advance, particularly African American male faculty, the interests of White academics and administrators must first converge with that advancement, and Whites must advocate for and support racial social justice, rather than take a moderate, passive-aggressive approach. Racism is not only an African American male problem—it is a global issue with direct implications for other minority groups and for White

faculty and administrators as well. Nonminorities must empower African American males to speak, and must truly listen. By listening intently, White administrators and faculty can gain insights about the African American male experience, understand how racism and bias affect Black men's professional and personal lives, and become more empathic. Edward explained,

I was at a meeting last week and one of my White faculty colleagues was talking about Guided Pathways and she was taking issue with it. And so my colleague, my mentor [a White man], saw me at another meeting a couple days later and he said, "Yeah, I had to do a little cleanup work after that meeting. She was pretty upset." I said, "Oh, really?" And he said, "Yeah, I said the same thing you said, literally, and she says, 'I understand. I just don't know why Edward had to be so angry about it.'" Even though I didn't raise my voice or physically become aggressive, this White woman accused me of being angry simply because she disagreed with the words that I spoke.

### **Coping Strategies**

Like all other individuals, African American male faculty develop coping strategies to navigate their personal and professional circumstances. They create social structures that enable them to share their stories in a safe environment, with people they trust, perhaps with the hope of receiving empathy from the listener. Delgado and Stefancic (2012) posited that people fall short when it comes to empathy and that instead of resolving the dilemmas caused by repression and abuse, individuals rationalize the situation which potentially makes it worse. This certainly can be the case if a person shares stories of his lived experience with individuals who do not believe in the reality of racism, want civil rights on their terms, suggest that they are color-blind, or base their behavior on stereotypes about African Americans. David spoke about being a relatively rare person of color at a PWI, saying, "Maybe you get angry or something. Are they [White

colleagues] going to think, ‘Oh, this is one of those angry Black men going off? That’s the way they are.’”

This study suggests that the college environment is more unwelcoming and antagonistic toward African American males than toward other groups; this stance applies to Black male faculty as well as to African American male students. Four of the five study participants acknowledged that they had withdrawn mentally and emotionally from their colleagues, which is a symptom of *racial battle fatigue* (Smith, Allen, & Danley, 2007). Smith (2004) defined racial battle fatigue as “a response to the distressing mental/emotional conditions that result from facing daily racism” (p. 180). Communicating with supportive colleagues, friends, and family members is an important coping strategy to help combat racial battle fatigue (Smith, Allen, & Danley, 2007). As Hiram noted, “There are times where I’m—one of my coping mechanisms is ‘temporary engagement.’ It’s the understanding that I will have to move and that my position might be temporary. That’s how I cope.”

### **Implications**

A number of implications resulted from the findings of the research questions. Because CRT draws on the lived experiences of people of color, it is important that the voices of these African American male faculty be heard in efforts to bolster the dialogue on race and diversity in academia. Detailed accounts of the perceived barriers faced by African American male faculty were explored. The men were given the opportunity to verbalize their lived experiences in a safe, convenient, and comfortable environment.



Some implications associated with this research are:

- Institutions of higher education should be aware, sensitive, and responsive to complaints of racism and sexism and welcome feedback on their investigative practices.
- Institutions of higher education must encourage and support faculty professional development regarding recruitment search advocacy training.
- White faculty and administrators at PWIs should be aware of internal bias—particularly bias related to race, gender, and masculinity—that hinders the professional growth of African American male faculty.
- Administrators at PWIs must be aware of the challenges experienced by African American male faculty in order to actively encourage their success.
- Institutions of higher education should create internal leadership development programs for faculty and staff of color.
- College administrators must take shared responsibility in recruiting, promoting, and retaining African American male faculty.
- Hiring committees should be properly trained to recognize diverse approaches and ways of demonstrating scholarship that differ from the traditional White way.
- African American male faculty must be aware of the importance of obtaining both the required and the preferred credentials for advancement, as well as other factors that promote advancement.
- African American senior male faculty should serve as mentors to aspiring or junior-level African American faculty to help mentees understand academic roles and responsibilities and become more aware of the professional culture.

- White faculty would do well to engage in the reflective process to examine their own privilege and biases, become culturally competent, and gain experiential knowledge regarding issues of race.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations are for PWIs administrators in the Pacific Northwest to address the disparity in the number of African American males serving as faculty.

- Establish dialogue between the State Boards of Community and Technical Colleges and local community colleges to identify and address institutional practices of racism and sexism, and other challenges that hinder the professional growth of African American male faculty.
- Organize cultural competency trainings to allow White and non-White faculty to examine their own personal biases and prejudices, enhance their understanding of culture and identity, and provide knowledge and skills to navigate the dynamics of difference and improve interpersonal interactions with faculty of color. Case studies indicate that cultural competency training mitigates the instances of racial microaggression and nonintentional bias at college campuses (Sue, 2005; Willow, 2008; Young, 2003).
- Conduct a benchmark study to identify how other two-year colleges throughout the United States are able to attract and retain highly qualified African American male faculty, as well as to identify tenure and advancement rates. These data can be used to paint a more concise picture through comparative analysis.
- Conduct a diversity study to assess the institution's capacity to effectively develop a strategic, long-term, sustainable approach to diversity and inclusion management.

- Conduct district-supported recruitment advocate training for faculty and human resource staff to use the most innovative, equitable, and valid practices available in employee recruitment and selection processes.
- Coordinate efforts of human resource representatives and community outreach staff to broaden recruiting and hiring efforts by hosting open houses, attending student of color conferences, and scheduling talks and informal interviews with graduate students at historically Black colleges and universities.
- Establish a diversity board, comprised of both Whites and non-Whites, to develop strategies for improving the academic institutional culture and design, to identify and minimize structural barriers, and to implement and evaluate diversity initiatives.
- Establish relationships with other faculty of color who have had similar experiences with racism and can empathize and support African American male faculty.
- Collaborate with current faculty of color to develop leadership and mentoring programs that provide the most effective approaches to recruitment, support, and retention of African American male faculty.
- Create a strong framework of mentoring for standing faculty members, including leadership development workshops, cross-campus networking opportunities, and workshops with experts in the field of academic mentoring.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

The following recommendations for future research are suggested:

- Replicate this study across other regions and other types of academic institutions, because the Black participants in this study were located in the Pacific Northwest and

worked at public, two-year institutions of higher education. It would be valuable to see whether the findings are consistent with other institutions nationally.

- Conduct research designed to compare and contrast responses provided by African American male faculty with those provided by African American female faculty.
- Conduct a quantitative study to gain more specific data regarding the challenges African American males face and coping strategies they employ to navigate institutional barriers to career advancement as faculty as well as in administrative and leadership positions.

### **Summary**

This chapter provided a discussion of the research findings, identified implications, and made recommendations drawn from the findings of the study. Findings suggest that African American male faculty experience forms of racism and gender bias during their career journey to full-time, tenured, and/or administrative leadership positions. A number of implications were drawn from the study. The recommendations in this chapter offer strategies that public, two-year PWIs in the Pacific Northwest can implement to increase the number and support the academic career advancement of current and aspiring African American male faculty. Finally, recommendations are offered for future research that will draw attention to challenges and strategies African American male faculty can use to overcome institutional barriers and successfully advance their academic careers.

### **Conclusion**

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the lived experiences of African American male faculty at public community colleges in the Pacific Northwest. Critical race theory was used as a framework to explore the key themes of this study. Study subjects shared

narratives of their lived experiences of racism and sexism in the workplace. Four of the five African American male faculty who were interviewed expressed the opinion that racism and gender bias hindered them and other African American males from advancing in their academic careers. Barriers faced by these men provided insight into barriers aspiring African American male faculty, and other faculty of color, may face. The lived experience of African American male faculty revealed the challenges they encounter in obtaining career positions and advancing in academia. Study participants perceive themselves as targets of racial bias and feel exploited and oppressed. These sentiments are echoed in the findings by Anderson, Frierson, and Lewis (1979), Harvey (1999), Hollis (2012), and Lewis (2007). Predominantly White institutions must be receptive to diversifying their faculty and their administrative leadership structures. White faculty and administrators at PWIs must be taught to realize the overall benefit that results from hiring and advancing African American male faculty—for students, for faculty, and for the institutions themselves. The focus of this study was African American male faculty teaching at public community colleges in the Pacific Northwest. However, other institutions of higher education will find that the results of this study provide insights into their current practices and policies, which will encourage them to purposefully create sustainable strategic race and diversity initiatives. Institutions of higher education will find that the results of this study provide insights into their current practices and policies, which will encourage them to purposefully create sustainable strategic race and diversity initiatives.

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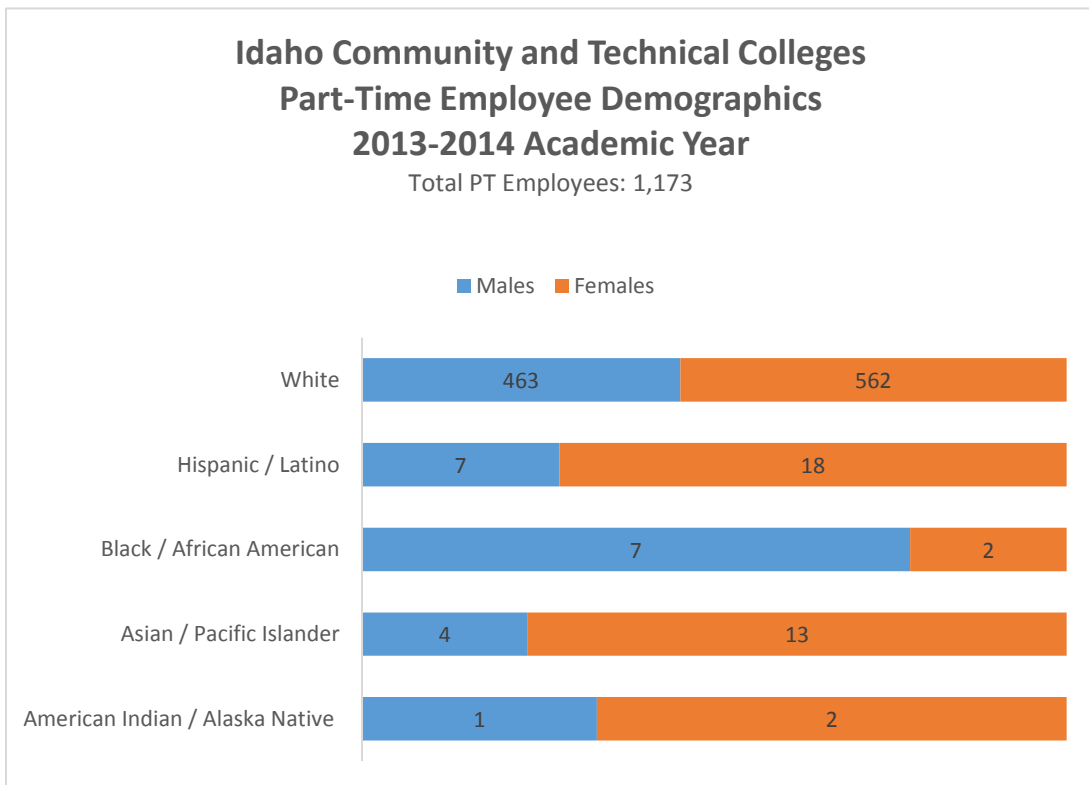
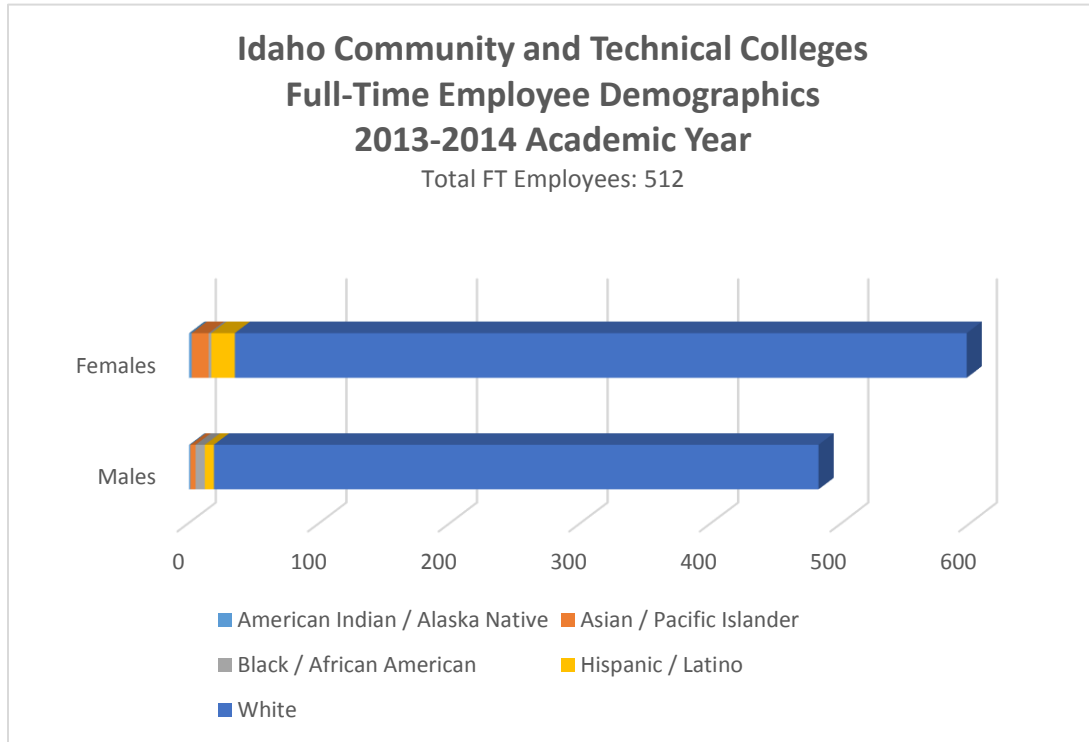
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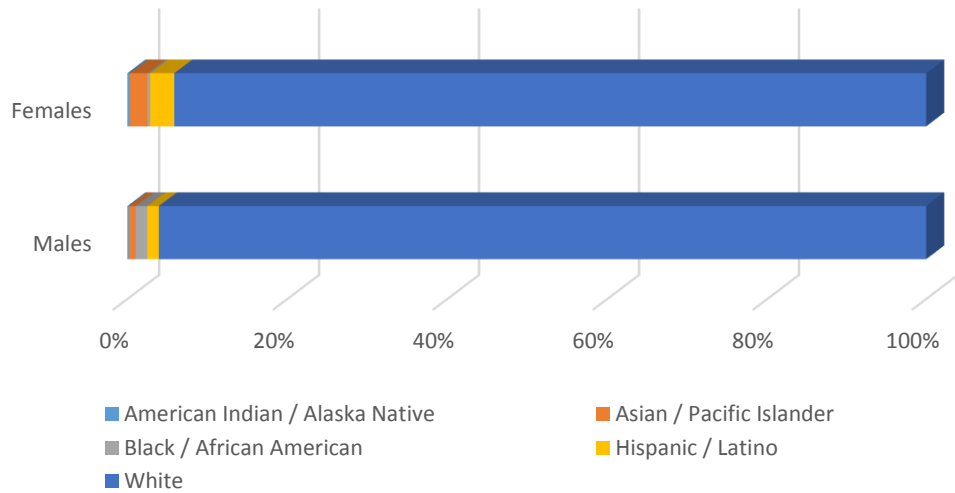
## **APPENDICES**

## APPENDIX A: Pacific Northwest College Employee Demographics



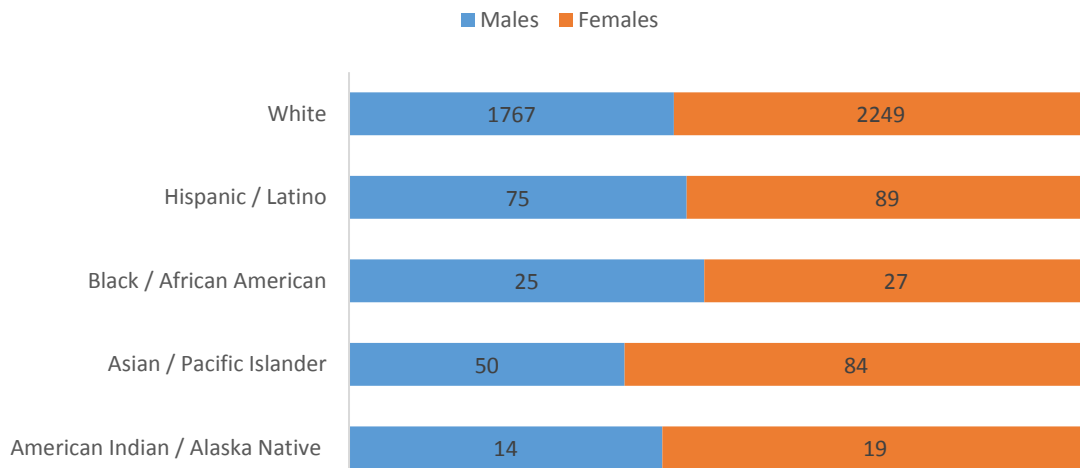
### Oregon Community and Technical Colleges Full-Time Employee Demographics 2013-2014 Academic Year

Total FT Employees: 1,782



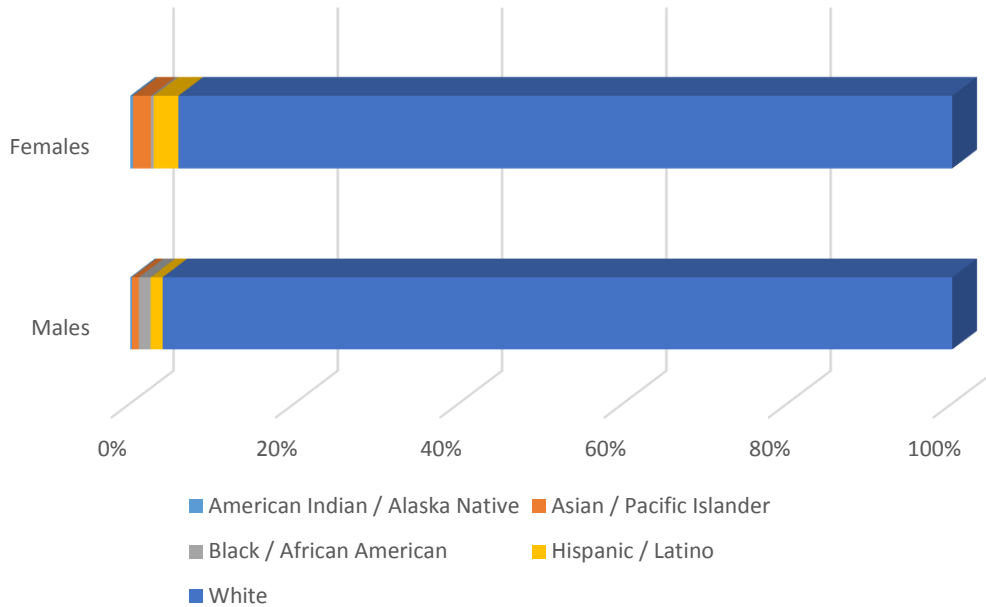
### Oregon Community and Technical Colleges Part-Time Employee Demographics 2013-2014 Academic Year

Total PT Employees: 4,954



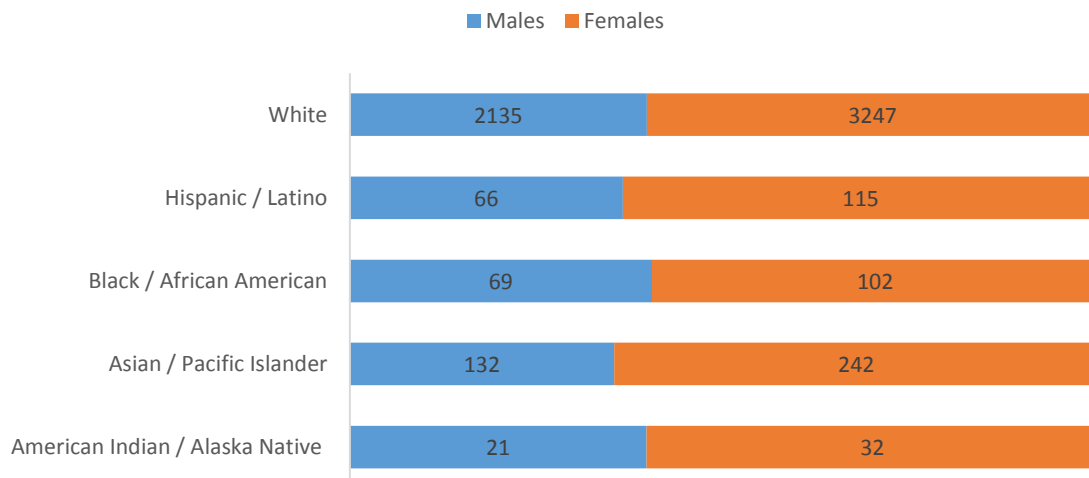
# Washington State Community and Technical Colleges Full-Time Employee Demographics 2013-2014 Academic Year

Total FT Employees: 3,552



# Washington State Community and Technical Colleges Part-Time Employee Demographics 2013-2014 Academic Year

Total PT Employees: 6,412








## **APPENDIX B: Letter of Introduction**

Greetings! My name is Kimberly Harden; I am a doctoral student at Concordia University in Portland, Oregon. I am currently pursuing a degree in Educational Leadership with an emphasis in Transformative Leadership. The purpose of this email is to request your participation in my dissertation research exploring institutional barriers that contribute to the underrepresentation of African American men in full-time, tenured, or leadership positions in higher education. This qualitative study will examine the lived experiences of African American male faculty at public, two-year institutions of higher education. The study will investigate what institutional barriers African American male faculty are facing that hamper and prevent recruitment, retention, and advancement to full-time tenured positions, identify what strategies, if any, enable the faculty to successfully navigate the barriers, and identify coping mechanisms and support systems that aid in navigating barriers.

Based on your current position, I am confident that your story will strengthen my study and benefit other African American male faculty in navigating barriers to career advancement in higher education. Your participation in this study is strictly voluntary. If you agree to voluntarily participate in this study, I will schedule a 90-minute in-depth one-on-one interview with you at a location of your choice. You will receive a formal letter of Informed Consent and a Biographical Questionnaire prior to the interview. I hope you will agree to participate because the information you can provide will be invaluable to this research. Thank you for your attention and response to this request.

Best regard,

Kimberly Harden



## APPENDIX C: Informed Consent Form



Concordia University – Portland Institutional Review Board  
Approved: April 5, 2016      will Expire: April 6, 2017

### CONSENT FORM

**Research Study Title:** This Is My Life: African American Male Faculty and Institutional Barriers at PWIs in King County, Washington

**Principle Investigator:** Kimberly Harden, M.A., Ed.D. Candidate

**Research Institution:** Concordia University

**Faculty Advisor:** Julie McCann, Ph.D.

**Purpose of the Research:** The purpose of this qualitative study is to examine the lived experiences of African American male faculty at public two-year institutions in the King County district of Washington State.

**What You Will Be Asked to Do in the Research:** You will be asked to discuss institutional barriers you, as an African-American male faculty member, are facing or may have faced, that hamper and prevent recruitment, retention, and advancement to full-time tenured positions; identify what strategies, if any, enable you to successfully navigate the barriers; and identify coping mechanisms and support systems that aid in navigating barriers. Participating in this study will take 60–90 minutes of your time. You will not be paid for participating in this study.

**Risks:** There are no risks to participating in this study other than providing your information, which will be protected. Any personal information you provide will be coded so it cannot be linked to you. *Pseudonyms will be used for your anonymity and safety.* Any name or identifying information you give will be kept securely via electronic encryption. None of the data will have your name or identifying information. Your information will be kept private at all times. I will not identify you in any publication or report. All study documents will be destroyed 5 years after I conclude this study.

**Voluntary Participation:** Your participation in the study is completely voluntary and you may refuse to answer any question or choose to stop participating at any time. This study is not required and there is no penalty for not participating. Your decision not to volunteer will not influence the treatment you receive or the nature of the ongoing relationship you have with the researcher or with Concordia University.

**Confidentiality:** Interviews will be audiotaped to allow the researcher to analyze the data. All information you supply during the research will be held in confidence. Your name will not appear in any report or publication of the research. Your data will be safely stored in a locked facility; only the researcher and a professional third-party transcriptionist will have access to this information. Confidentiality will be provided to the fullest extent possible by law. Your personal information will not be distributed to any other agency and will be kept private and confidential. The only exception to this is if you tell us of abuse or neglect that makes me seriously concerned for your immediate health and safety.

**Withdrawal from the Study:** You can stop participating in the study at any time, for any reason, if you so decide. Your decision to stop participating, or to refuse to answer particular questions, will not affect your relationship with the researcher or with Concordia University. Should you decide to withdraw from the study, all data generated as a consequence of your participation will be destroyed.

**Questions about the Research:** If you have questions about the research in general or about your role in the study, please feel free to contact Kimberly Harden (email [REDACTED] or call [REDACTED]). This research has been reviewed and approved by Concordia University's Institutional Review Board under tracking number \_\_\_\_\_. If you would to talk with a participant advocate other than the investigator, you can write or call the director of Concordia University's Institutional Review Board, Dr. OraLee Branch (email obranch@cu-portland.edu or call 503-493-6390).

**Legal Rights and Signatures:**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, consent to participate in the study, "This Is My Life: African American Male Faculty and Institutional Barriers at PWIs in King County, Washington," conducted by Kimberly Harden, Ed.D. Candidate at Concordia University. I understand the nature of this project and wish to participate. My signature below indicates my informed consent and voluntary participation in this study.

_____ Participant Name	_____ Date
_____ Participant Signature	_____ Date
_____ Investigator Name	_____ Date
_____ Investigator Signature	_____ Date

## **APPENDIX D: Interview Guide**

**\*\*The primary research question and subquestions are in bold.**

1. Tell me about your journey in obtaining your current teaching position.
2. What influenced your decision to work for current institution?
3. What are some of the challenges you experienced during your journey as faculty at a public, two-year, predominantly White institution of higher education?
4. How did you determine some of the obstacles you experiences were a challenge?
5. When was the last time you applied for a promotion to a full-time, tenured, or leadership position?
6. Did you receive the promotion? If not, do you know why?
7. Are there any challenges you feel are unique to African American males attempting to secure a full-time, tenured, or leadership position?
8. Do you believe there are institutional barriers that prevent promotion?
9. What institutional barriers do you believe contribute to the underrepresentation of African-American men in higher education?
10. What strategies have you used to cope with or overcome the challenges and institutional barriers that you identified?
11. What can predominantly White institutions of higher education do to support the recruitment, retention, and promotion of African American male faculty?
12. What advice would you offer to aspiring African American males that are interested in a faculty position at a public, two-year institution of higher education?

## APPENDIX E: Biographical Questionnaire

1. Participant's Pseudonym: \_\_\_\_\_
2. What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Were you raised in Washington State?      Yes      No
4. Highest Degree earned:
  - a. Master
  - b. Doctorate
  - c. Other (please list) \_\_\_\_\_
5. Type of undergraduate institution attended:
  - a. Historically Black Institution (Public)
  - b. Historically Black Institution (Private)
  - c. Predominately White Institution (Public)
  - d. Predominately White Institution (Private)
6. Area of undergraduate study: \_\_\_\_\_
7. Type of graduate institution attended:
  - a. Historically Black Institution (Public)
  - b. Historically Black Institution (Private)
  - c. Predominately White Institution (Public)
  - d. Predominately White Institution (Private)
8. Area of graduate study: \_\_\_\_\_
9. Type of doctoral institution attended:
  - a. Historically Black Institution (Public)
  - b. Historically Black Institution (Private)
  - c. Predominately White Institution (Public)
  - d. Predominately White Institution (Private)
  - e. Not applicable
10. Area of doctoral study: \_\_\_\_\_
11. Did one or both of your parents graduate from college?
  - a. One parent
  - b. Both parents
  - c. Neither

12. How many years of experience do you have teaching in higher education?

- a. Less than 5 years
- b. 5-10 years
- c. 10-15 years
- d. 15-20 years
- e. 20-25 years
- f. 25+ years

13. Are you:

- a. Full-time/Tenured
- b. Full-time/One-year contract
- c. Part-time/adjunct

14. How many years have you taught at your current school?

- a. 1-3 years
- b. 3-6 years
- c. 6-9 years
- d. 9+ years

15. Are you in a leadership/administrator position?      Yes              No

16. Have you experienced any institutional barriers do you perceive as hampering and preventing the recruitment, retention, and advancement to full-time tenured positions?

- a. Yes
- b. No

17. Do you have any strategies that enable you to successfully navigate the barriers?

- a. Yes
- b. No

18. Do you have any coping mechanisms and support systems that aid in navigating barriers?

- a. Yes
- b. No